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MUSEUM, MEMORY, AND MENTAL HEALTH

Making Sense of Contestation over the Interpretation of Violence in the *Contested Spaces*
exhibition at William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley, South Africa

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of
Anthropology, School of Gender and African Studies, Anthropology and Linguistics

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Kimberley, 1 July 2023

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own original and unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology, at the University of Cape Town. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other University.

Théogène NIWENSHUTI

Kimberley, 1 July 2023

In Loving Memory

Elie, Agnès and Pacifique Iyamuremye

Muruhukire mu mahoro

For

Izi and Unu

Acknowledgements

When I first wrote down the word acknowledgements as a heading of this section, it struck me that I did it automatically, following a convention, but the word itself seemed not to do justice to a deep feeling of gratitude I wanted to express. So instead of saying I acknowledge you and thank you, I would like to say I gratefully acknowledge you! May you please accept my deepest thanks everyone who has participated and contributed to this study and to my whole journey of learning which resulted in this worthwhile dissertation. To you who are named below, and to everyone I am unable to name for now for ethical reasons, asanteni sana, I gratefully thank you!

Most especially, I express my gratitude to my supervisory committee made of Professors Susan Levine and Fiona Ross from the University of Cape Town, and Jesmael Mataga from Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley. Wenner-Gren Foundation: Wadsworth Africa Fellowship 2019 - 2022, Wenner-Gren team, most especially Danilyn Rutherford and Judy Kreid, and your colleagues and families. Social Sciences Research Council: Next Generation Social Sciences African Scholars Fellowship 2019, all the SSRC team, facilitators, and fellows. William Humphreys Art Gallery (WHAG) and the South African Department of Sport, Arts and Culture under which WHAG operates, particularly the former Chair of council David Robbins and the former Director of WHAG Ann Pretorius, WHAG staff and council members. McGregor Museum and all the staff. Mayibuye Dance Academy and all its staff and students, most especially Charles Maema and Letlhogonolo Nche and their families and friends.

I am grateful to innumerable individuals and institutions, too many to be able to write all of them down, so here I name a few. Late Dumisani Mabaso and family, late Alfred Sekunkwe and family, Chwaro Kgotlagomang, Kim Berman, David Morris, Hanlie Wells, Manfred Zylla, Reshada Crouse, Sam Nhlengethwa, Johannes Phokela, Willie Bester, Tali Nates, Bongilegoce-Zulu, Fouche JB, Nthabiseng Afrika, Yvone Magxala, Lesedi K., Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, Robert Gordon, Petro Esterhyse, Garth Benneyworth, Christian Williams, Katlego Mpotsang, Jason Marenda, Patience Setlholoeng, Bokamoso Setlholoeng, Mammosa G., Elzaine McCarthy, Lesego Kgatitswe, Yunus Ballim, Patrick FitzGerard, Patty Abozaglo, Dionysia Ferreira, Laura Arnold, Selloane Mokuku, Ayanda Simelane, Peter-John Goeieman and family, Nokubonga Mazibuko-Ngidi, Carina Truys, Jakoba Meyer, Angelique Harsant,

Beulah Kruger, Annette Killian, Memory Muturiki, Nandipha Qangule, Tian Chen, Pengfei Zhu, Liling Yan, Ntesang Makutu, Khanyi Mulan Zulu, Fonki Nqakala, Charles Maema, Siza Nkosi, Hadley Edwin Bassoon, Byron Harvey, Fiona Barbour, Carey Moraladi, Thelma, Bonelwa Nogqaza, Tabitha Nqighi, Clementine Tlhole, Sadi Ulalia, Nosipho Mtabani, Sharonique Sass, Kopano Sebe, Marisca, Oratile Mokwa, Frans,, Jenice, Latetitia Galant, Mieke, Amore, Mellah, Faith Chabalala, Ntsiki, Joney Moss, Andrea Esau, Pelonomi, Karabo, Kamogelo, Tuelo, Keneilwe, Matshidiso Mayeng, members of the provincial planning and research forum, all students and staff in Anthropology, Education, and Student Affairs offices at SPU and UCT. UCT libraries staff, especially Kashiefa Shade-Lucas, Dianne Steele, Niel Mostert, Greg Jacobs, and the Library security staff. The Ampersand Foundation award, and other prestige scholarships, merit awards and various forms of recognition, encouragements and generous collaborations I received from UCT, UFS, SPU, Northern Cape Provincial Department of Health, office of Mental Health Services in the province, Provincial Research Forum under the Premier's Office Research Directorate, Sol Plaatje Municipality, High Court, museums, art centers, colleague researchers, friends, families and all spaces and individuals I have encountered and from whom I have learned so much, I gratefully express my thanks!

Abstract

The study sought to understand responses to *Contested Spaces*, an exhibition at the William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley, South Africa. The long running exhibition (2016-2021) curated artworks dealing with colonisation, Apartheid and Post-Apartheid periods. It aimed to surface diverse views of the past by openly confronting contestations over colonial and Apartheid's violent histories. As artist and scholar in residence, my role was to document and facilitate responses to the exhibition. Initially, the 'gaze'-focused and silent engagement with the exhibition did not generate much interaction. Through performance, hosting seminar conversations at which key artists engaged with their works, and inviting students, township residents, mental health practitioners and government officials to the gallery, I drew in new audiences. Immersive and experiential methods produced engagement in ways that the purely visual seemed not to generate. This enabled difficult conversations, including about generally taboo topics such as mental health and its relation to legacies of violence.

Living with, and being exposed to memories of violence, can cause social and mental distress. These include feelings of being trapped, despairing and depressed. However, facilitated exposure can also enable a questioning of perspectives and an opening up of possibilities. Performance and conversation enabled participants to raise awareness of the impact of violence on social and mental wellbeing, and facilitated the formation of new subjectivities, enabling new ways of relating to each other.

Through engagement with artistic expression, naming experience, reflecting on violation, and biometaphorisation, the dissertation argues that contestation is a complex embodied social phenomenon manifest in various forms. I have characterised these as *Reactive*, *Strategic*, *Decorative*, and *Ritualistic*. These forms overlap with three key qualities: *Entrapment*, *Resistance* and *Flow*. I propose *Exit-Opening* as a way of thinking beyond the state of what coparticipants described as feeling "trapped", haunted by enduring violence. I argue that carefully facilitated conversations can generate potential exits from the 'stuckness' of repetitive violence. The study shows how an anthropological and performative engagement with a context dominated by visual arts, museum and heritage studies can generate understanding and possibilities for social and mental health.

Museum, Memory, and Mental Health: Making sense of Contestation over the Interpretation of Violence in *Contested Spaces* at William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley, South Africa

Introduction

Contestation is a deeply embodied phenomenon which manifest differently in diverse contexts. In public museums, contestation can be approached through what Ivan Karp, Corinne A. Kratz, Ciraj Rassool and colleagues have termed *museum frictions* (Karp et al. 2006). These frictions, or contests, arise at the intersections of local and globalising processes involving the contemporary and historical politics at play in these public spaces. Karp et al. suggested that one might fruitfully ask what kinds of political and representational power inform contests in particular spaces. The study which informs this dissertation attempted to make sense of contestation in the context of an exhibition called *Contested Spaces* (CS) at the William Humphreys Art Gallery (WHAG, 2019) in Kimberley, South Africa. CS's curators put together artworks recording histories of violence in Southern Africa, mostly South Africa, from the advent of colonization to the present day. It included artworks about the heroes of the Anti-Apartheid struggle, such as Nelson Mandela and Sol Plaatje, and writers such as Antjie Krog, as well as a map and works alluding to the precolonial past. Ann Pretorius, former Director of WHAG and David Robbins, former Chair of the Council of WHAG, officially opened the show in 2016, and it ran until 2021. They invited public visits and dialogues about the exhibition, and it is within their vision to promote public conversation that my research was welcomed. The guiding research question was finding out how 'the public' – visitors, curators, and WHAG's staff, I generally refer to as coparticipants – understood and defined contestation in the context of CS.

I argue that contestation is a social phenomenon manifest in various forms and fulfilling functions I have termed *Reactive*, *Strategic*, *Decorative*, and *Ritualistic*. These forms feed into and are fed by other kinds of manifestations I identified as three key qualities, or modes, namely *Entrapment*, *Resistance*, and *Flow*. CS is a specific context in the sense that (1) art, or artistic expression, is the medium through which it was presented. (2) Naming was the way the

coparticipants identified and defined spaces they saw as being contested. (3) Violation, hurt or wound, was a common thread across different forms of violence and related memories mobilised in the exhibition, and (4) biometaphorisation consisted of how the public mobilised biomedical/psychiatric [(bio)psychiatric] terminologies as interpretive commentaries.

WHAG, it is important to note here, is classified as a type of museum by the *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage* (South African Cultural Observatory [SACO], 2019; Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology [DASCT], 1996). As early as 2016, when I asked for the names of museums in Kimberley, some members of the public included WHAG. Pretorius insisted on the non-commercial aspect of WHAG: it is not a gallery that sells art. She and her staff were committed to facilitating public access to art, collecting and preserving it, and engaging in community-oriented projects such as bringing art to schools and prisons to the site. Hosting a research project of public interest such as my study was part of this commitment. Her vision was different from the usual understanding of a gallery, which is a much more commercially-oriented institution. In the contemporary broad definition of museums (British Museum, 2023; Franklin, 2020; Message, 2018), the art galleries and sites of heritage are understood as types of museums (Janes & Sandell, 2019). In this thesis I approach WHAG as a type of a museum, more precisely a public art museum.

From colonial times to the present, changing contexts of power in South Africa, and elsewhere, have sought to mobilize particular narratives of the past to the exclusion of others. Museums and other memory and heritage spaces were shaped and ordered to produce knowledge, citizenships, and subjectivities in line with governing interests and ideologies. Such contexts would silence and erase, purposefully or not, contesting voices. Some research participants, henceforth referred to as coparticipants because of ethical and collaborative relationships that developed during the study, argued that colonial powers sought to impose a single colonial narrative, and during Apartheid ‘we had an Apartheid narrative’, and now ‘we have the ANC narrative’. However, the coparticipants and scholars I engaged noted that though attempts were often made to repress and then write contestations out of public spaces, contestation has always been a reality throughout history, sometimes taking the form of counter-discourse, other times taking on violent forms, even wars, or in certain cases, genocide.

The District Six Museum, hereafter D6M, is one example of a museum space that was opened consciously as a site of contestation over Colonial-Apartheid narratives. My work is interested in the significance of the narratives from the present that challenge, compete, or contradict

those put forward within contexts of historical colonial violence. Rassool, a historian and researcher with an interest and connection to the D6M wrote how former, forcibly removed residents of District Six (D6) mobilized their own memories and experiences not only to build a museum, but more importantly to play leading roles in curating their own exhibitions. The group spoke out and acted against the official narratives fabricated by the Apartheid regime to justify their removal. They challenged what they perceived as persistent discriminatory categories and interpretations inherited from the past by the present. Additionally, they challenged conventional collections or objects-based exhibitions by incorporating and focusing primarily on memories, stories, and experiences. However, museums and their practices are affected by constantly shifting contexts. Some critics (Soudien, 2019; Rassool, 2006, 2001) expressed anticipation that growing economic and bureaucratic demands dictating curating exhibitions and managing a museum, pressures from local and international heritage and tourism industries, academic research collaborations, and evolving political dynamics posed challenges and would likely affect shifts in the D6M, most likely diminishing its foundational ethos as a site of contestation, an ethics reflected in its forum-like meetings of the 1980s and 1990s (Rassool, 2006; D6M, 2000) where community participation and debate were central.

Unlike the D6M which officially opened in 1994, a year marking the official end of Apartheid, WHAG opened in 1952, in just four years following the legalization of Apartheid. Its building rose on the grounds of Malay Camp, a former multicultural and multiracial residential area that was destroyed in the 1940s, and its residents were forcefully removed. WHAG, like other institutions, followed the policies of the time. Pretorius noted that, based on archival pictures, the visiting school children at that time appear to have been separated into racial categories (Robbins, 2015), and the collection and display focused on imported art, mainly from Europe (ibid.). After 1994, WHAG became more open and inclusive; it collected and exhibited works from artists who had been previously discriminated against. For example, it displayed artworks from Manfred Zylla and Sam Nhlengethwa among others. Their work critically engaged colonisation and Apartheid. Robbins (2015) observed that ‘from its origins as a typical colonial repository of imported culture, WHAG now holds one of the finest collections of the diverse streams of South African art’ (n.p.).

While WHAG was engaged in the move towards increased public inclusion and becoming a space for public dialogue and participation, the climate in Kimberley and the country in general became marked since 2015/2016 by the #Rhodesmustfall (#RMF) and #Feesmustfall (#FMF) protests (Nyamnjoh, 2016; Ndebele, 2016; Goodrich & Bombardella, 2016; Mbembe, 2019, 2015).

These were followed by #fallist and #decolonising movements and debates which took on various forms. In Kimberley, students protested close to the WHAG, at Sol Plaatje University (SPU) and elsewhere in the city. According to its staff, though WHAG was called by some passers-by protesters a ‘western’, ‘white institution’, no violent physical attacks were recorded. But, the perceptions of the protesters in Kimberley echoed the argument of students who initiated the #RMF in Cape Town. They advanced that ‘the portrait of Rhodes served as “a constant reminder for many black students of the position in society that black people have occupied due to hundreds of years of apartheid, racism, oppression and colonialism” (Schmahmann, 2019:184). These arts reminded people of colonial violence. Local and global museums were historically implicated in colonial violence through different ways, such as the dehumanizing depiction of human beings in the zones of museums reserved for animals (Ngcobo, 2018; Davison, 2018, 2001; Karp et al. 2006; Skotnes, 2002, 2001) and through what Mandela and some students saw as the glorification and perpetuation of colonial violence through continued particular modes of interpreting and representing. The colonial logos of Othering permeates the modern museums’ practices and thinking (Macdonald, 2023; Minott, 2019; Mbembe, 2015; Mignolo, 2011). They are referred to by Chipangura, Bond and Sack (2020) as ‘outmoded’. The authors propose that they should give way to a new approach based on “dialogical” (768,784) not “didactic approaches” (784). The same colonial logos was at the root of some of the sociocultural and psychological ills being denounced by student protesters such as racial-based inequalities, historical trauma, and education, economic and health disparities. While originally set up in public places to honour and celebrate life and contributions of such people as Cecil John Rhodes, his statues and representations of other colonial figures were mobilized to foreground non-mainstream interpretations. For protesters, these artworks were also embodiments of contemporary ills. They became like canvases on which buckets of unresolved old and new frustrations were splashed.

Underlying the students protests was the removal of the “offending” artworks, “a call to end racism” (Schmahmann, 2019:184). But according to some viewers in Cape Town (Schmahmann gives an example of advocate Rod Solomon), the protest was “a code for something bubbling under” (ibid.). In Kimberley, as elsewhere, this ‘under’ was, among other things already mentioned, frustrations over corruption, crime, failures of service delivery, and so on. But the ‘under’ may also mean the need and attempt at opening up a public space capable of listening, holding, considering, recognising and possibly caring for multiple readings, voices and lived experiences of colonial violence and ‘post’colonial failings.

For some coparticipants, artists, for example Nhlengethwa and Reshada Crouse, and the curators, the student protests brought to memory the violence of the 1970s, 1980s, and especially the 1990s. For others, the chaos, burning, and other violent acts during the protests (Ndebele, 2016) were seen as a warning sign. Robbins described violence from countries such as Cambodia and Rwanda were referenced by Robbins as examples of how violence could escalate and worsen due to ‘unresolved wounds’ or ‘unfinished businesses’ of the past. Artworks that depicted or evoked violent protests were among those on display in the CS. For example, *Riot* by Cobus Van Bosch, *Sharpeville 1960* by Harold Rubin and others (see appendix:....The fact that WHAG put such works in a public space and invited critical conversations was testimony to the shift in the context of political power from a violent and oppressive context to a more democratic and inclusive one. Also, as WHAG signaled by curating CS, the gallery aimed to take the opportunity to become a space for critical dialogue, inclusive community participation, and research on various subjects, including historical colonial violence.

While the shift to a democratic and inclusive context enabled such an exhibition and the possibility of public critical conversation, there was no telling how the public, especially the inhabitants of Kimberley and the visitors who were not involved in its curating, would react to it and what meaning they would make of it. Given the perception that WHAG, and other museums in general, were colonial institutions, and at a time when the dream of a ‘Rainbow Nation’ (Krog, 2012; Mandela 1994) seemed to be in a ‘crisis’ (Mbembe, 2021, 2019, 2015; Jansen, 2019, 2017), marked by contestations which sometimes turned violent against art works perceived as offensive and perpetuating colonial violence and inequalities, was it productive to set up such an exhibition and invite critical debates within its walls? What memories, interpretations, and experiences would be brought into the space or evoked by the artworks during the conversations?

Building on insights from the scholarship on contest in specific contexts, this study investigated how contestation manifests in the context of CS. I introduce the exhibition through a narrative account of its antecedents offered by David Robbins¹. This narrative, recorded in December 2018, was sent to me as a response to questions such as what was the meaning and

¹ Contrary to our numerous interviews and conversations, his narrative was not addressed just to me. It was meant for the public, specifically a group of over 50 mental health professionals and scholars from the Northern Cape Province (NCP) participating in a *CS#7*, the last in a public seminar series I had initiated and facilitated at WHAG from August to December 2018.

significance of contestation in CS and what he and Pretorius saw as the spaces being contested. These questions, initially provoked by my first visits to the exhibition in 2016 and 2017, were shaped by anthropological and ethnographic studies on exhibitions, some of which I have touched on in the first sections of this introduction, and which I will elaborate on in chapter one.

Thereafter, I introduce my first encounter and experience with the exhibition and how this experience informed the research focus and methods which I detail in chapter 3. The anthropology of experience, which includes the anthropology of performance by Victor Turner (Turner & Bruner, 1986, 1982), himself taking after Wilhelm Dilthey (1988; Dilthey, Makkreel & Rodi, 1985) and Erving Goffman (1959) among others, became theoretical and methodological points of departure to imagine and implement my own context-based methods. I adopted a long-term immersive participant observation framed under performance ethnography (Kondo, 2022; Denzin, 2018; Conquergood & Johnson, 2013; Fabian, 2007; 1990). The performative paradigm pioneered by Turner, and informed by ideas and work from others such as Jay Austin (1962), Jacques Derrida (1974), Erin Manning (2013, 2009), and Richard Schechner (2021), pushed me to constantly negotiate and creatively respond and adapt in conversation with what was going on in the exhibition, the coparticipants' inputs, and the general context. Throughout the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown I remained in the field and kept studying. My research was not negatively affected in any significant way by the pandemic or threats of violence that often occurred during the protests before or after the end of the pandemic. However, the context of the pandemic played a role in bringing mental health to the fore in public conversation through the media, and museum anthropologists have since joined a growing group of scholars interested in mental health in the context of the museum and arts exhibitions (Bruun, 2023; Mammana & von Oswald, 2023; Lanz: forthcoming; Tan & Tan, 2023; Tan & Chen, 2023; Kahambing, 2023; Peng & Chen, 2023; Chatterjee, 2020; O'Sullivan, 2020).

One of the key significant results from staying long-term in the field – paying attention to emergent meanings and new concepts – is a reflexive deepening of my anthropological sensibilities, methods, and ethics. For instance, participant observation evolved into what I ended up calling coparticipant-observation. I opted for a long-term approach as an attempt to find an ethical positioning which supported the generation of knowledge in a constantly negotiated setting, and at the same time taking into consideration the historic and present

moment, the country and the city I was living in, and how that moment was perceived and lived by those involved in my study.

I chose a kind of an anthropology of connection centred on an ethics of attachment and engagement rather than separation and distance. This approach resonated with some principles of Radical Humanism (Clarke, 2022), particularly the anti-positivist ideas of the uncertainty of relationality rather than clarity or truth claimed by modern rationality; the processual quality of knowledge and research rather than a deterministic and fixed view; holding a position that does not completely mark a break with the ‘field’ after which one is supposed to go back to university or somewhere else to do the writing – to produce knowledge. Rather, I stayed and completed the writing not far from the primary site. I could still access and be accessible to the coparticipants, keep sharing experiences and insights as they emerged, involve the coparticipants not just in the process of ‘collecting’, but also in the final stages of writing and how I was grappling with making sense of everything I had done to ‘produce’ a dissertation. I tried to create a space where coparticipants could, in a sense, bear witness, physically and virtually – for example knowing that I am around, or at what stage I am, even if we do not necessarily meet face to face. I deeply understood and strived to achieve a kind of studying that would inhabit and allow myself to be inhabited by the place and the people, in a caring and collaborative way, a kind of “honouring the world, and of offering something in return”(Ingold 2022: xii) even if it is just by listening, and being an attentive and caring presence, for “the gift of existence” (ibid.). In his latest book (*Imagining for real: essays on creation, attention, and correspondence*), written in retirement, Tim Ingold, discloses,

Over the years I have felt increasingly outraged by protocols of academic research that demand precisely the opposite. These protocols define our relation to the world on the basis of taking rather than giving, extraction rather than reverence. Researchers are expected to mine the world for data, and then to process these data by means of theory into so-called ‘knowledge products’ for human consumption’. I was determined to do things differently – to develop a way of study, or a method, that would join with the people and things with whom and which we share a world, allowing knowledge to grow from our correspondences with them. (xii)

Reading this, came as a kind of confirmation of my thinking and of what I had tried to do with my study and method. It was exciting, and humbling that I had come to a similar kind of realisation, or insight, from listening and entering into conversation with CS. I was brought to

respond and to adapt my study and method because of the historical context, mostly how it was experienced by the residents and coparticipants. In Kimberley, the ‘under’ that I described earlier runs deeper, perhaps deeper than anywhere in Southern Africa, and it has many names, one of them being extractivism.

When I arrived in 2016, the first thing I was asked was, what was I coming to do here because there was nothing in Kimberley except the ‘Big Hole’, and it was ‘empty’. I would hear the same words almost every day in every conversation and in almost every speech at official gatherings. For instance, at the Premier’s speech on 30 September 2019 while he opened a New Mental Hospital, over 500 people in attendance nodded and cheered in agreement when he said that the Big Hole was empty, and corruption, which had delayed the completion of the building, was intolerable. Natural resources extraction as well as new forms of extraction, the more obvious of them being corruption, underperforming or incompetent institutions and managers, researchers who ‘parachute’ and take what they want to know and leave ‘experts’ without participants and the community Northern Cape Province (NCP) never knowing or seeing the results of the study, were all among what was often denounced by coparticipants and other members of the public.

As early as 21 June 2018, by the time I received research clearance and officially started my fieldwork, I had decided to never visit the ‘Hole’ until my study was done or close to the end. It felt like I could learn about it and see it in every face, in every voice, in every space, wherever I walked including the exhibition space. Residents of Kimberley talked about how their wealth (diamonds) was taken away, enriching other parts of the country such as Cape Town, Johannesburg, and the world, leaving Kimberley and the NCP ‘empty’, with economic problems that are at the root of present challenges. But for others, current difficulties stemmed from the present itself independent of what happened in the past.

This contestation over the root cause and meaning of the present challenges is one of many. In the narrative hereunder, followed by photographs showing all four corners of the whole exhibition, Robbins describes it, explaining which spaces curators saw as being contested and what did contestation mean. You will notice that one of the key spaces he named is what he calls the internal space, the mental space. Most coparticipants used specialised and non-specialised medical and psychological words and ideas even those who had no medical or psychology background. Before the narrative and the ensuing body of the dissertation, I would like to note two interrelated clarifications.

At first instance, is that during the study I avoided confusing my role as a student-researcher anthropologist with that of a therapist or a psychoanalyst. I invited therapists and psychologists in the conversations, and some students were referred to my workshops by therapists and psychologists, and I always clarified that all academic and community activities I facilitated were not meant as clinical or therapy interventions. I am aware of initiatives where museums have been identified as effective in therapeutic mental health contexts, and museum visits have, in some countries such as UK and Canada, been prescribed by medical professionals. I became aware of the first case example from Canada, when the information was shared by two different museum Directors at different points in time, in 2018 and during COVID-19 (2020-2021). Both, Ann Pretorius, the former Director of WHAG, and Sunet Swanepoel, CEO of McGregor Museum, shared the same article titled *Montreal museum partners with doctors to 'prescribe' art*, which had been posted online on 26 October 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45972348>, the same month I started CS seminar series. During one of the seminars, Mental health professionals in Kimberley complained about the lack of financial and human resources at their hospitals. In discussing solutions, some viewed the museums such as WHAG as spaces which might be useful in helping to raise awareness and promote mental wellbeing without much cost. To my knowledge so far, there is no initiative yet in Kimberley about using the museum spaces or art exhibitions for clinical and therapeutic purposes as far as mental health is concerned. Their potential for advocacy and raising awareness in terms of mental health is still untapped. Some of the conclusions that came up after the seminar conversation and personal communications with coparticipants, is that arts, for example dance, drama, or physical theatre, are cost effective creative mediums of expression which could be implemented in museums, hospitals, communities, and even schools and universities for therapeutic, educational, and preventive purposes.

A last instance is that mental health was one of the reasons why I did not take the theoretical orientation of decolonisation (Ariese & Wróblewska, 2022; Mbembe, 2021, 2015; Olufemi, 2022; Message, 2018; Mignolo, 2011). I chose not to position myself as a decolonial scholar during my study because of two main reasons. First, decolonization, which was mostly associated with student protests then, #Rhodesmustfall (#RMF) and #Feesmustfall (#FMF), was seen with suspicion at WHAG, and it seemed to cause a certain emotional and physical anxiety. "What are they decolonization about?" is one of the phrases I often heard during our informal conversations in 2016 and 2017. It was most often reduced to being about burning and breaking things. Whenever there was a protest nearby, gates closed and the staff, especially

security guards remained on high alert. Positioning myself or being seen as a ‘decolonising student’ or decolonial scholar would not have facilitated the access and rapport I needed to conduct the study. But most importantly, and this is the second reason, by the time I started conceptualising (2016/2017) and then officially start conducting the study (2018), there were not much data and thinking available to me with regards to mental health in the contexts of the museum and public art exhibitions. Particularly, there was no talk about the possible impact of protests such as #RMF, #FMF and #decolonising movement on the mental wellbeing of protesters or activists and those witnessing or on the receiving end of the protests, for example the museums and universities, staff, students, parents, and researchers not directly participating in the protests or in the debates. As some of the emerging studies (Fadji, Luescher & Morwe, 2023; Omodan, 2022; Naidu, 2022; Swinger, 2022; Luescher, 2022; Jansen, 2020,2019) indicate, some of the students and staff involved in the protests have had to attend long-term therapy because of having been mentally or physically affected by violence during the protests. Framing protests and conversations as decolonial and conducting them without considering the mental health dimension had consequences that are only starting to be made sense of now. While the enduring consequences of colonial violence on mental and physical wellbeing may ethically and legitimately inform intellectual engagement and decolonial activism in the form of public protests and debates, the emerging insights flag the possibilities of serious impact on mental well-being if such actions are not framed and run with a certain level of awareness, attention, knowledge, and care. By knowledge, however, I do not mean expert or biomedical knowledge only.

While I did not frame nor conduct the study as decolonial, I can think of a number of ways it contributes significantly to the current thinking of decolonisation in the context of the museums and art exhibitions. The study shows the potential of performance ethnography and other creative epistemologies and methods in informing museums' collaborative engagements such as community participation (Tinius & von Oswald, 2023; Chipangura & Marufu, 2019; Dahre 2019; La Salle, 2010, Simon, 2010), co-creation and co-curation (Chipangura, 2020; Hansen, Henningsen & Gregerse, 2019; Schorch, McCarthy & Durr, 2019; Janes & Sandell, 2019), and shared authorship (Hansen, Henningsen & Gregerse, 2019; Janes & Sandell, 2019). With notions such as *Biometaphorisation (BM)*, *Exit-Opening (ExO)*, *Coparticipant observation (CO)* and others, the study offers insights into how meaning and knowledge can be co-created and co-generated, while systematically and ethically opening up the whole research process from start to finish, and inviting participants on a shared journey, in ways that enrich and

expand anthropological inquiry. Further in-depth studies and discussion are needed on the value of (re)thinking the museums' decolonisation through the dimension of mental health and healing. Furthermore, it would be worth looking into mental health-related possible benefits (and potential harms) which may stem from various theoretical and methodological orientations in specific museum and art exhibition contexts.

'Think of a name for this thing'

Ann said think of a name for this thing. I'm responsible for the name. But the idea was to put together a collection, assemble an exhibition of art which dealt with contested spaces. One of the questions that Totto² has asked me to deal with is 'What did we see as the spaces that were being contested?' I mean early on, obviously, living in a society that has been profoundly molded by the European idea of colonizing the world to help with the sort of burgeoning capitalist ideas, consumers, we need markets, we need raw materials, all that kind of stuff. From there we, so, we started with geographic space which was contested. It was contested in landing in Cape Town. It was contested in that astonishing century of frontier wars. It was contested in the once the indigenous polities [that] had been destroyed and the demand on the mines and on the new industrialisation of South Africa. It was contested in terms of where were these people going to live, how were they going to live, they had to get to the cities, etc, etc. And so, there is this physical space...that has been contested all the way through our history.

And it certainly the case for example in Rwanda, people, people talk rather facetiously I hope about a cloud of evil that goes across the world and settles on places like Cambodia, Rwanda, South Africa maybe. We have the highest rape rates in the world and that's seems to me to be the cloud of evil. But that's something we can come back to. The reality with regard to the Southern African experience or if you like the colonial and the postcolonial reality in most of Africa is that there have been these contests over space.

But there's another space which is much more important, and that is the space, sort of interior space that colonialism, slavery, and post colonialism abuses by black leaders themselves ... the inside the psyche of white and black [there's] a contest going on, and

² A name I came to be known by.

it's not necessarily racist, it's not necessarily racism. It is a contest that seeks to preserve the integrity of humanity; and that to me is the most powerful message that comes out of the exhibition. So, we see redcoats fighting semi-naked black people. We see everything, we see the armoured cars during the 80's, the vans during the 80's, and in many respects right up until today where there is contested space.

Now what is that contested space actually look like? It is as if there is only a finite amount of human integrity and human dignity and people are fighting over it, they want it. Anyhow they want it and they want to control it...And so, the idea that Contested Spaces is a record of colonialism is superficially accurate. It is much deeper than that simply because it is art, and art has the ability to change the view of human beings And our motives, certainly my understanding of WHAG's motive of putting on an exhibition like that would be very clear. It would deal with that precise thing that art can open out, possibilities. So, you look at Contested Spaces to understand your so-called opponents and to understand your response to the space and to them. And so, it is in the end a healing process that is facilitated by the wonderful idea that art can actually open the mind.

... the idea that there is so much opposition is based on a superficial view of the world. The world is actually, it is ours but all of us; and unless we can understand that and that we should be dealing with the idea of the world first and humanity first, there is not a great deal of comfort for the rest of the 21st century. The idea I believe that art contains in itself, that you are...that it's individual, it's idiosyncratic, it's rebellious, ... all the things that humanity is quite good at are embedded in a creative principle. That to me is the strength. Is it working? I don't know! With more resources people like Totto, people like those who are working in the gallery could make much more of it. But you need resources. There should be kind of like multimedia stuff here. There should be the ability of the gallery to actually interpret in ways in which ordinary people can understand. But I think I have just about done my piece. I hope that the seminar is successful. Totto thank you very much And I hope that you guys have a good day or evening in Kimberley or wherever you are right now. Bye bye!

*~ David Robbins,
Johannesburg, December, 2018*





**Image 1: *Contested Spaces* exhibition
(WHAG, 2019)**

That's the gallery!

The first time I saw the William Humphreys Art Gallery (WHAG), I was with Ann Pretorius driving along Lennox Street (R64) from a local 'taxi rank', a station locally known as the Indian Centre. Just after we turned onto Jan Smuts Boulevard, she said 'That's the gallery'. From about a mile away, it looked like an over-sized box squeezed into the middle of green trees, surrounded by a darkish steel-fence of about 2 meters high. A small clearing between tree branches offered a view of a bronze monument of Queen Victoria³ set on a well-tended green grass garden. We took Hospital Street on the right side of the statue, passing between the gallery and the back side of the Garden Court Hotel. The street was a bit dusty and noisy, bustling with students from Northern Cape Urban TVET College – City Campus (henceforth TVET), which shares a fence with the gallery. The young people moved away slowly as the gate opened, offering a view of a burned-brick building. Once inside, the atmosphere was very quiet, cleaner and cooler compared to the outside. Pretorius introduced me as a student and an artist to her staff, who greeted me and smiled. The place felt friendly and welcoming. We had used a non-public gate leading directly into the administration side of the building. There, in Pretorius' and her staff's offices on the first floor, I was able to see the garden and some of the streets we had just driven, the college, the Kimberley hospital, and so on.

Visiting and learning about the gallery was fascinating, but the primary reason of my first visit was to see the CS exhibition to start drafting a research proposal and to plan how to engage this space. I could not wait. After a brief chat, with Pretorius we headed towards the exhibition rooms. From her office, we went downstairs where she opened a remote-controlled door separating the offices, storerooms, and exhibition space, and we walked straight into a vast room she referred to as the *Piano Room*; a huge piano sat covered on a stage. Our steps seemed soundless against the absorbing smoothness of the carpet. The atmosphere in the room was one of even more silence, making it contemplative, in contrast to the office area and even more so to the streets outside.

Several paintings hung on the walls. The unmissable pieces were two large bodies of work set on the floor. One was a curved piece of wood with shapes resembling entangled tails of human-headed snakes. The other was a wooden fishing boat sized for two or three people,

³One of three statues by Mr Raggis from the same mould. According to Pretorius, the other two are located in Hong Kong and Toronto.

which looked like it was recently dug up from an archaeological site. A label invited the public to watch the space as the exhibition was in the process of being set up. As we walked, to our right was a small stage about 5 meters long and about 2–3 meters wide, with the piano on it. Tapestries covered the wall next to it. For a moment I thought this was it, the CS exhibition. But Pretorius kept walking, leading the way into another vast room she called *The Blue Boy Room* because one window had a *Blue Boy* painted on the glass. It was an elegant Victorian style room with high walls and high roof. The floor was concrete cement, and there were several sculptures scattered across the room and paintings on the walls. On our right, about 10 meters away, were stairs leading up to a foyer, followed by a reception area, and then out through the public gate onto other streets and then the park. She kept walking as she spoke. I listened and looked intently. I did not write anything down then since this was the first of many tours and conversations I was to take. As an artist and scholar in residence at the gallery. I would have the opportunity to stay at the WHAG, to speak more with the Director and her staff, as well as enough time to contemplate the breadth of the exhibition. We passed an auditorium on our right side, while on our left was a large door that opened onto a small garden fenced in by high walls. Then I finally saw the name *Contested Spaces* ahead of us on another wall.

The *Contested Spaces* exhibition

Two large openings that looked like doors but without frames led us inside the CS room. Most striking at the front of the room was a piece from recovered steel objects that looked like a dog. A label read, *Dogs of War III* by Willie Bester. The dog's head and eyes seemed fixed on a large painting on a wall in front of it about three meters away. This artwork with abstract lines and shapes would, a year or so later, be replaced by a large piece with a naked woman at its centre surrounded by an area that looked like a busy train station. Pretorius drew my attention to a painting in a corner to the right of the dog. It was named *A Confused Rainbow Nation* by Dumisani Mabaso.⁴ This artist had created the work while in residence at WHAG, she explained. Like #fallist students and scholars, it seemed to me that Mabaso was also concerned with the Post-Apartheid state and was asking questions and making his own statements. Instead of street protests and academic debates, his site was art. He used it as a medium and a means with which to think, question, express himself, and communicate. Mabaso's, Bester's and

⁴ Mabaso was Artist In Residence at WHAG who had passed away in 2013. The flat he had occupied, annexed to the gallery, with its own living room, kitchen, storeroom, and an art studio, would be my home for the duration of my residency and PhD.

others' works that were set up in front of the room seemed like a cover of a book we had just opened. They appeared like the 'real' door frames, a short preview introducing what awaited inside.

Referred to as *the new wing*, the next room was the latest addition to the gallery's building as part of a plan to renovate and extend the space. The room seemed much larger and fuller than other rooms I had seen so far. Yet, Pretorius noted that there was so much about CS to include in this exhibition that the room was insufficient. Paintings covered all four walls, sculptures and bronze casts were interspersed across the floor, and a few benches were set here and there to allow visitors to sit down. On one wall was what seemed like the starting point of the exhibition because it had the name *Contested Spaces* in large letters. I took this as the beginning and from there I moved around looking at all of the artworks.

First, there was a map of Southern Africa on top right of which was a plate celebrating the arrival of Van Riebeck at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. Then moving clockwise, followed few pieces extracted from Pippa Skotnes' *White Wagons*. By the time I returned to this point in the room, I had seen *Games* by Manfred Zylla, *Humiliation* by Sam Nhlengethwa, *Rian Malan* by Reshada Crouse, *Patience on a Monument – 'A History Painting'* by Penelope Siopis, *Adelaide Myeke – The Nunny* by Lynnley Watson, *Archbishop Desmond Tutu* by Alan Grobler, *Swart Gevaar* by Jensma Wopko, portraits and casts of Antjie Krog by Angus Taylor, *Sol Plaatje* and *Nelson Mandela* by Momberg Anton, and others. An extract from the catalogue of this exhibition can be viewed in the Appendix 1. These works seemed to cover a vast historical context from 'pre-colonial' stories, geographical names, and landscapes, to protests from the present and the past; naked mine workers; memorial sites and monuments; and artworks dealing with themes of violence, peace, dispossession, colonization, Apartheid, the Anti-Apartheid struggle, the 'Rainbow Nation', and more.

As I walked across the room, the experience was like a journey of and across memories expressed through art. While this was a public space, it felt like walking in a private cave, encountering experiences and stories which were not my own, and yet they did not feel distant or foreign, perhaps because I shared life and humanity with everyone involved. I left with a sense of having travelled from the present to the past and back, guided by these bodies of art facilitating the journey. The artworks felt like markers, pathways, or doors in and out of spaces. Some artworks seemed isolated on the floor and on the walls, stuck in the specific spots where they were placed, frozen in space and time. Others seemed to resist their surroundings and any

attempts at making meaning of them. They seemed drawn in by, and yet competing with, other artworks, the space, and the stories around them; while others seemed to blend in and flow, a kind of movement connecting them as if they were one with other artworks and the space, and as if their stories were one with others’.

The placing of all these works in one room forced them to enter into a conversation with each other, in a Latourian sense of ‘the parliament of things’ (2016, 2014). Indeed, one of the curator’s intentions was that this exhibition would be a ‘free space’, to be open for dialogue, to facilitate conversation, and to serve for research and educational purposes. I was the first to be hosted as a scholar (and artist) in residence and the first permitted to do research on this exhibition. According to Robbins and Pretorius, the exhibition was set up to serve as a model or case study toward achieving a shared identity (Appendix 4: Pretorius’ Curatorial statement). In this sense, it brings to mind Richard Sandell and Robert Janes’ (2019) idea of Museum Activism which elucidates an untapped potential for museums as key resources to address inequalities, environmental challenges and social injustices. The work of D6M (Soudien, 2019; Rassool, 2006; D6M, 2000) fits well with this framing. Although WHAG was not established as a site of memory in the same ways as D6M the fact that it advocates for and educates about shared identity and social cohesion as a contribution to addressing historical injustices (WHAG, 2019; Robbins, 2015) indicates that even where institutions are not *established* with restitution in mind (as was D6M), through careful curation, they can take on aspects of activism, especially when guided by a firm belief in the power of art for social change. Pretorius and Robbins held that art was for everyone and that engagement with an art exhibition such as CS could facilitate a healing process and promote a shared heritage.

The terms – shared heritage, social change, social cohesion, transformation, healing, and so on – deployed by the curators, were of a specific moment in the 1990s widely described as ‘the transition’ from Apartheid to democracy. They are part of a discourse embodying ideals, promises, and aspirations inaugurated by the 1994 elections, enshrined in the new Constitution, and motivated processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). However, this discourse was questioned by protests over incidents of racism, crime, persistent social and economic inequalities, and other challenges related to access to health and education, which were portrayed as the failures of the government to deliver on the promises made in 1994. The curators’ assumptions were challenged by some visitors and staff who felt that the exhibition was reinscribing colonial and Apartheid violence and that it could fuel the already tense climate and heated debates and reported incidents of racism and other forms of violence.

Reflecting on some of these critical comments, Robbins offered that the idea that CS was a record of colonialism was superficially accurate. It was much deeper than that simply ‘because it was art’. He explained that the ‘motives’ for the exhibition were clear: ‘It would deal with that precise thing that art can open out possibilities...you look at CS to understand your so-called opponents and to understand your response to the space and to them’. His responses contained further assumptions. For instance, he used words such as ‘look’ to understand the ‘opponent’ (‘the Other’); the assumption being that looking at art may lead to understanding. Also, he spoke about the perceptions and expected outcomes, such as art being able to ‘open out possibilities’ and allowing for an understanding of ‘one’s response to the space and to the other’. All of these assumptions are subject to the context and various other dynamics. For instance, while art may have opened possibilities in colonial museum spaces to some groups because of selective modes of exhibiting and interpreting, art also served to close or diminish possibilities, sometimes going as far as advancing or giving pre-eminence to dehumanizing interpretations of ‘Others’. Like the students’ and scholars’ protests and debates noted earlier, the curators also acknowledged the persistence of what David Morris⁵ (2018), trained anthropologist and retired Professor of Archaeology and Heritage based in Kimberley, called the ‘colonizing idea’ and how it continued to mould society and shape CS. Complex dynamics and experiences of the present and perceived persistent legacies of the past would be brought to bear on the interpretations and conversations about CS; and they would inform what spaces and contestations the coparticipants would name.

Regarding names

In his opening remarks for CS seminars (CSSs) in August 2018, Morris said that ‘first up as you enter, to the left, is a map of Southern Africa, with its myriad named places, not one of them African’. In Anthropology, as in African cultures, we know that names do more than communicate (Vom Bruck & Bodenhorn, 2006). They are “mnemonics” (Connerton, 2009:10): “Placenames can be more than markers and delimiters of place, more than tokens used to mark out and negotiate positions in social interaction” (ibid). For instance, when Lord Kimberley – after whom the city was named – said “places should receive ‘decent and intelligible’ names” (Roberts, 1976: 115; van Niekerk, 1990:18), he was doing more than looking down and making

⁵At the time of our first meetings and conversations, he was Extraordinary Professor of Archaeology and Heritage at Sol Plaatje University, and Head of Archaeology at McGregor Museum in Kimberley, NCP.

fun of local languages and people. He was following an old power-game tradition with well-known aims and consequences the naming implied. CS as a name, therefore, embodies, marks, and delimits its space, its context, its intent, and content. It denotes a kind of power, a framing which, despite intentions to initiate conversations and possibly facilitate a healing process, may be doing so by performing (unintentional) top-down violence. Unlike the participatory and collaborative nature of the contestation space at D6M, the WHAG's CS as a space of contestation did not start as a participatory process involving a community with a shared memory. This leads to the realization that CS could be viewed as a composite of objects and their diverse interpretations shaped by intended and unintended dynamics. It opens up visible and invisible possibilities, setting into discussion memories and narratives behind two key types of spaces.

Two types of spaces

In his narrative, Robbins identified two types of spaces. First there is 'The Physical Space' and 'there's another space' which he defined as 'much more important, and that is the space, sort of interior space...inside the psyche of white and black' people. I will refer to this space as the Psyche Space or Mental Space. According to Robbins, the importance of the contest going on in this interior space is that it is 'not necessarily racist or racism', he said, but a contest seeking 'to preserve the integrity of humanity'. Human integrity and dignity are core values enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa through the Bill of Rights which takes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as its basis. A 'post-Apartheid' 'democratic, nonracialist, and nonsexist' society is imagined and premised on these values, among others. The anti-Apartheid movement, Pretorius explained as 'the struggle for liberation against colonization and Apartheid when people are trying to reclaim their dignity', was one strand in the exhibition. Another strand was the 'advent of colonization and its unfolding through violence, dispossession and discrimination against indigenous people' (Pretorius: see Appendix 4). Central to Pretorius and Robbins' curation of CS, therefore, is that colonisation and Apartheid were a space of denial of humanity and human dignity, and this denial is the focal point of contest. This observation is a key point of departure that informs my approach and understanding of what contestation means in the CS exhibition. The two Spaces and the two Strands are Robbins and Pretorius's key thinking and interpretations of the exhibition. They

are central lens through which to view the exhibition. Most importantly, they are expressions of their attempt to build and exhibit what Pretorius calls ‘a fuller story’.

A Fuller Story

Despite the challenging nature of difficult or sensitive heritage, its presence in a public domain such as CS may afford visitors what art historian and Curator Alice Procter (2020) calls “the whole picture”, an idea almost similar to Pretorius’ idea of ‘a fuller story’, something she often talked about throughout our conversations. As Procter suggests, the building up of a “whole picture” of the “colonial story of the art in our museums” involve becoming an “engaged” (18) and “critical museum visitor” (12), becoming aware of and engaging with “stories that have been left out of the canon”, being mindful that “all collecting [and displaying, and managing: my emphasis] is subjective” and that museums “coerce our emotional and intellectual responses to the things they display” (ibid.). As she notes, “that’s not necessarily sinister, but it’s something to be conscious of, as these selective narratives can very easily start to look like definitive histories, or binaries of right and wrong” (18). Procter’s ideas advance a sort of resistance against viewing “images with single-point perspective” (18). For Pretorius, ‘a fuller story’ would involve bringing together and engaging the past and the present, the disgraced and the glorified, all juxtaposed into one space where they could be looked at and serve as a catalyst for dialogue and for educational purpose to the young and old, students, and the community. In the CS curatorial statement (Appendix 4), Pretorius argued that if one brought together ‘some of the disgraced public sculptures of figures such as Verwoerd, Vorster, Botha and de Klerk alongside struggle heroes (Nelson Mandela, Kgosi Galeshewe, Sol Paatje and others) a fuller story would emerge’. Like some of the visitors, she also advanced that such an exhibition would also serve as a warning not to repeat the mistakes of the past. While I have no doubt that she, and all of us, understand that ‘a whole picture’ or ‘a fuller story’ of anything, let alone of sensitive and difficult spaces of violence, can never be fully grasped, it seems to me that the fact of putting up such an exhibition and allowing critical public conversations, is already part of that process of becoming aware and building up this fuller story. Such process is associated with a journey of knowing, acknowledging the fluidity and *incompleteness* of memory and knowledge, the prevention of further violence and, as the curators hoped, the possibility for facilitating change and healing.

Approached from this ‘fuller story’ or ‘whole picture’ perspective, CS would enable an appreciation of a problem Robbins and Pretorius had identified and were trying to draw attention to. They emphasized that ‘until we come to terms with our history and reach an understanding of those events that have polarised us as a nation, we will not be able to reach or achieve a shared identity’ (Appendix 4). This sense of polarity – separation, resistance, dehumanisation – is one of three impressions I had while visiting CS. The exhibition also gave me an impression of flow and oneness despite differing and competing histories, memories, identities, origins, locations, positions, and interpretations. Another impression, the third, was immovability, impossibility, and frozenness. It was as if certain memories; people; episodes of violence from the past, the present, and the future; or their interpretations and imaginations, were stuck, fixed in a certain time and space, remembered, and reimagined in particular ways that seemed tainted by logics, power dynamics, subjectivities, and sensitivities of particular histories and politics.

These three observations, my interpretations, were like effects, qualities I noticed because of my being and moving in the presence of these bodies of art and the memories and experiences they seemed to embody. I condensed them into three keywords I will be referring to as modes: *Entrapment, Resistance, and Flow*. For me, contestation was a phenomenon related to these three qualities. Subsequently, through continued years of study, I came to find and add elements, leading to my understanding that contestation was manifest through four functions it seemed to fulfil, namely reactive, strategic, decorative, and ritualistic. I identified four key elements which made CS a specific context: (1) art, or artistic expression, as the main medium through which the exhibition was presented; (2) naming, which had to do with the curators and visitors naming the exhibition and what they experienced in it; (3) violation, wound, or injury was a common thread to various forms of violence and related memories mobilised in the artworks and related conversations; and (4) biometaphorisation, which is my understanding of the way coparticipants used (bio)psychiatric terminologies as interpretations and comments on some artworks and lived experiences in their social contexts. Being exposed to, and living with, memories of violence depicted in the context of CS can cause anxieties, discomfort, feelings of being trapped, and other intellectually and emotionally complex responses. However, the exposure can also cause, and enable, a questioning of one's perspectives and an opening up of possibilities, for instance, raising awareness of the impact of violence on social and mental wellbeing, shifting, or forming new subjectivities, new ways of relating, interpreting, and

critically engaging stories and memories of violence. I explore these ideas in the remaining chapters.

In chapter one, I seek to provide a contextualisation for the meaning and notion of contestation. Pulling from the views and experiences of various coparticipants, and my own engagement with CS, I first search for the meaning of contestation. As points of entry into the search, I rely on: (1) stories, including interpretations and definitions, meanings offered by coparticipants in response to the question ‘what does contestation mean?’, (2) modes, which are my interpretations. They were formulated basing on my initial observations, perceptions, and experiences of contestation; and (3) functions, which were identified based on my analysis and understanding of different reasons and purposes of contestation. Insights from this search are reflected upon in relation to Victor Turner’s notion of liminality. CS is a contact zone, a space of friction and potential crises. It is a liminal space. I hold that contestation in a such a space is a phenomenon that takes on various qualities and forms subject to the context of transition, movement, and becoming – characteristic of liminal spaces. Through this liminal lens, I argue for, and clarify, the forms (functions) of contestation – reactive, strategic, decorative, and ritualistic – and the three modes (qualities) – entrapment, resistance, and flow. While focused primarily on the meaning of contestation, the discussion also aims to make use of the forms and modes of contestation to enhance the description of the CS exhibition as the primary and immediate context and to obtain a glimpse into Kimberley’s larger social context.

In chapter two, I present the literature informing the study which was primarily interested in anthropological thinking about contestation in specific contexts. In the discourse of student protests, and responses from coparticipants to the exhibition, memory was omnipresent, particularly the memory of violence in relation to its impact on mental health and to its display and interpretation in the public space of the museum. Museum, memory, and mental health were recurring threads that permeated streets and literary texts. This chapter is organized around these threads. Conscious of the large literature on museums, memory, and mental health, I pay more attention to the literature concerned with contestation, memory, and mental health in the context of museum art exhibitions. Exhibitions are forms of memory, and memory can be shaped by museums in changing historical, political, social, economic, and epistemic contexts (Macdonald, 2023, 2022; Schwarz & Radstone, 2010; Nuttal & Coetzee, 1998). Mental health is a component of mental life. It is fundamental to being human, to our ability to interact, feel and enjoy life (Bruun, 2023; Coleborne, 2020a, 2020b). This may explain why it has been a terrain, one among others, mobilised and constructed to justify regimes of control

such as racialisation and colonisation (Saha, 2013; Keller, 2007, 2001; Pols, 2007, 2006; Sadowsky, 1999; McCulloch, 1995; Lévy-Bruhl, 1923). Rather than assuming and prescribing particular ideas of mental health, anthropologists have tended to look at how people create their own meanings. Anthropologists are more interested in how specific groups or individuals take on, use, or reject mental health and mental health-related conceptualisations and services. The anthropological study of mental health in the context of the museums is still young; its literature is small and scattered across its branches and other disciplines. But it has been growing rapidly, especially during and after COVID-19 as reflected in the already published (Mammana & von Oswald, 2023; Lanz, 2023; Yates-Doerr & Maes, 2023 [2019]; Onchev, 2019; Dudley, 2017) and upcoming literature (Lanz: forthcoming⁶). Anthropology, precisely an anthropology focused on the study of mental health in museums and art exhibitions has much to find and to offer, by engaging such a context of complex and potentially violent frictions. My key findings from the literature can be summarized as follows. Exhibitions are forms of art (Walley, 2023; von Oswald, 2022). They were used in the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century as sites of colonial ordering and related politics of difference and dehumanization. But they were also used as sites of contestation by the colonized (and allies and critiques) trying to open up spaces of recognition for their humanity (Rydell, 2011; Shelton, 2011).

I use chapter three to present research methods and to reflect on how CS as research informed the choice of performance ethnography (Kondo, 2022, 2018; Denzin, 2018; Conquergood & Johnson, 2013; Fabian, 2007, 1990) as a general lens, and what I call ‘coparticipant observation’ as a core approach and method which evolved as a result of a long interaction and experience with the research site, the coparticipants, and the progress of the study. Turner defined ‘humankind as *homo performans*’ (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013:27; Turner, 1982). His naming captures the centrality of performance to humanity and social being. My reading of Turner was expanded by other ideas, mostly from the latest work of Mary Louise Pratt (2022), reflecting on whether we should be talking about a ‘multispecies contact zone’. Thinking from a post-humanistic view and taking into consideration the Anthropocene, she posits not just the agency of humans but also of non-humans. However, she suggests finding alternative methods and concepts to help understand human/non-human interaction and unlock possibilities beyond the *contact zone*. Tim Ingold (2022), Anna Tsing et al. (2017), Donna Haraway (2010, 1991), Bruno Latour (2016, 2014), Alfred Gell (1998) and others have, in their

⁶ *Mind Museums: Former Asylums and the Heritage of Mental Health*

own ways, engaged with the idea of the agency of the world and objects, including the arts. While these different authors have specific takes on the subject, one of the commonalities relevant to my study is that arts, and other objects are performative. This means that they have the capacity to induce or provoke certain responses or expressions from humans.

Gell, for example, considers any object, from idols, ritual objects, and so on, to be works of art, arguing that they are always situated within a network of relationships. This forms a relational network which in turn defines the art. We live in a performative world, and we are *homo performans*. Perhaps the most accurate expression would be something like *dunia performans* – the world⁷ is because of performance – meaning the centrality of performance to the world.

From these perspectives therefore, my being and presence, as well as the being and presence of staff and visitors in the CS, automatically implied interaction, performance, perhaps more accurately a ‘coperformance’ (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013; Denzin, 2003). Conducting a performance ethnography in that space meant being involved in a ‘conversation in its deep and wide sense’ (Geertz, 1973). I took this to mean that doing research in that space required a much wider and deeper sense of conversation – the verbal as well as the non-verbal, the symbolic, and the artistic – and a caring improvisatory flexibility to method, ethics, and the whole research process.

My ethical position was informed by the local context and how my study progressed. Due to the history of extractivism in the city, and the province in general, some coparticipants, for example Joy Furaha, a student in her late twenties, compared some of her past experiences with academic researchers to miners and tourists who ‘parachute in’ the area, take the knowledge and material they want, and then disappear. I called coparticipants like her regularly, sharing my progress. I stayed reachable and continued to live in the area. Angelique Harsant, Director of Research development in the Office of the Premier, used the expression ‘getting to the DNA’ to describe my methods. During a group discussion she organised and invited me to, she spoke of my study as an example, emphasizing that I was doing ‘things’ differently.

I stayed in the city for a long time and was actively engaged in order to get to the core of what life was like in Kimberley. I was reminded of Harsant’s feedback when I read ‘deep hanging out’ from Dwight Conquergood (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013:10). Taking after Zora Neale

⁷ Dunia in Kiswahili

Hurston, whom Conquergood saw as the foremother of performance ethnography; he wanted to be in a place, ‘be there’ to know the place. For instance, for his study of a building called ‘Big Red’ which was “the home of members of street gangs, ethnic immigrants, refugees, and the working poor” (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013:10), Conquergood “moved there not merely to make the residents the objects of academic study but to understand through his own body the pressures of living under siege” (10; Hamera, 2013:307–308). The core of my methodological approach was a kind of long-term ‘deep hanging out’ I came to understand and refer to as *coparticipant observation*. Unlike Conquergood, I stayed in the same building on the research site for five years (2016–2021) combining classical observation as well as performing, creating with coparticipants, doing a kind of observation ‘from the inside’, and continued to stay in the same city until the dissertation was completed and submitted (2023). Like Conquergood, my methodological and ethical approach privileges “the body as a site of knowing” (Hamera, 2013:307), a key idea at the centre of corporeal and performative epistemologies (Kondo, 2022, 2018; Manning, 2014, 2013, 2009, 2007).

In chapter four, I focus on naming. To name is to give a certain type of expression and presence to what is named. Certain ways of naming confine into bounded categories, while other ways of naming are more open and imply generative motion. Some coparticipants, for example Morris and Peter-John Goeieman reference Chimamanda Adichie’s ‘dangers of a single story’ (2009) to clarify their arguments of the dangers of single narratives. For example, colonial naming attempted to mark and classify according to a narrative of humanity it had itself created. It was a violent act, and it caused wounds (it was a wounding act). According to Martin Heidegger (Heidegger & Krell, 2011[1978]) to name is ‘to call into presence’. Naming in this sense is an act of starting something, rendering visible. Close to this idea is what Turner calls “putting into circulation” (Turner & Bruner, 1986:12), which means, for instance, giving an expression to a text by performing it. In this chapter, I analyse the naming of CS by the curators and the coparticipants. Some names were short, for instance, ‘Transition zone’, ‘Paradigm shift’, ‘Humanity | Inhumanity’, ‘Boswajwa rona’ – meaning ‘our heritage’ or ‘our inheritance’. Other names were longer phrases in poem or in prose form. Through the lens of performativity (Derrida, 1974) and performance theory (Schechner, 2021; Turner & Bruner 1986), central to which is the idea that performing is constitutive, I argue that the names proposed by coparticipants are not just reproductions. They add more meaning and generate new complexities and significance to the understanding of the exhibition. Naming is one of the specific ways through which coparticipants gave expression to some of their knowledge,

memories, and experiences. Furthermore, the diversity of names and related meanings and experiences challenge colonial types of naming and highlight the potential CS had to be a site of thinking and enacting counters to the dangers of ‘single-story’ types of naming.

In chapter five, I introduce violation, a common thread to various forms of violence and related memories depicted by artworks or that emerged during conversations. Drawing on a discussion focused on Crouse’s painting *Rian Malan*, I invoke the notion of ‘Hot Interpretation’ (Uzzell & Ballantyne, 2007; Uzzell, 1989) as a way to acknowledge the emotional response to heritage, especially what Daniel Uzzell calls *heritage that hurts* (Uzzell & Ballantyne, 2007; Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998) I argue that at the core of all forms of violence lays a violation, a hurt, which influences the expression and formation of particular subjectivities and perceptions behind certain interpretations. I concur with Kelly Askew and Richard Wilk (2002) that in making meaning of an artwork, viewers weave together their own experiences and sensibilities. Coparticipants proposed divergent interpretations to *Rian Malan* because of their divergent lived experiences and their personal perceptions of what the painting represented. Violation also informs how other people’s interpretations are perceived and related to, included, and whether or not they are fully engaged with. I summarize some of the key insights into the idea of violent performativity, which seeks to account for the ways in which certain performative responses were provoked among coparticipants.

The central idea of chapter six is Biometaphorisation. If ‘sickness is not an isolated event, nor an unfortunate brush with nature’ but “a form of communication – the language of the organs – through which nature, society, and culture speak simultaneously” as Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock have argued (1987:31), so are the terminologies about health and context, metaphoric or not. I coined the term biometaphorisation in order to describe the way coparticipants mobilise mental health language, for example (bio)psychiatric terminologies to describe and share their views and experiences. The notion also implies how the coparticipants take into their bodies and thoughts the language, behaviours, and events happening in the social space and are affected by them (physically and or mentally), making them their own. These biomedical terminologies are expressive embodiments of coparticipants’ experiences, perceptions, and responses. I take these terminologies to be part of a mental health discourse where (bio)psychiatric knowledge is entangled in a multidirectional relationship with local knowledge, histories, traditions, and popular values and beliefs that circulate in the public space.

I conclude the dissertation with the idea of *Exit-Opening*. In the context of historical and ongoing violence where some coparticipants feel ‘trapped’, what I call *Exit-Opening* is that which provides an opportunity to get a sense of what else that context could become. CS conversations, particularly the conversation centred on Crouse’s *Rian Malan*, and the study of contestation proved productive in thinking about the feeling of entrapment described by a number of coparticipants. To take the exit from a space which is historically and continue to be divided, wounded, and violent, and journey toward opening an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991 [1983]) which is healed or healing, is to engage further beyond the ‘rite of passage’ and momentary ‘catharsis’ (Mandela, 1994; Meredith, 2010; Turner, 1986, 1982, 1957). Key insights about this critical journey include having difficult conversations; embracing, not repressing, difficult questions and emotions often provoked by competing or contradictory interpretations of violence; and becoming more aware and critically engaged in contributing to the building of a ‘fuller story’.

Chapter 1. Searching for the meaning of contestation

In his ethnographic explorations on power and performance in Shaba, Zaire, currently the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Johannes Fabian (1990) found “most remarkable” the “form in which the villagers rebel” (1990:285): “Verbally they grumble and complain; when they pass to action it is to drink, sing, and dance, and have a good time. Revolt becomes an orgiastic feast”. To move away from the village and celebrate in the fields comes close to the traditional way of deposing a chief, which was simply to move out on him and leave him with an empty village. “Does the fun-and-dance folklorize contestation in the sense of making it harmless?” Fabian asks (*ibid.*). For him, the contrary could be argued. In his view, Nicholas Hopkins would probably argue the affirmative. He quotes Hopkins from his study of theatre in Mali (Hopkins, 1972:227) affirming it was “possible to argue that the players present symbolic behaviour that takes the place of real behaviour” (Fabian, 1990:285). Anthropological analysis from scholars such as Turner and Max Gluckman, Fabian reflects, “may have taken the rebellious feast as a ritualisation of conflict and dissent” (*ibid.*). From revolt and rebellion to conflict, dissent, dance, song, and ritualisation, contestation takes on numerous expressive forms and names, and it is mobilised for various functions.

As early as 2017, visitors and participants in conversations on CS wondered, as had I, what contestation meant, hence the focus of this chapter. Here, I contextualise the meaning and notion of contestation by drawing from the views and experiences of various coparticipants and my own engagement with CS. While searching for the meaning of contestation, I hold in mind that meaning, according to Turner (inspired by Wilhelm Dilthey), is a key principle of interpretation and understanding (Turner 1988). I explore what contestation means in the context of CS through the following three points: (1) stories, which include interpretations and definitions, meanings offered by coparticipants in response to the question what does contestation mean? (2) modes are my interpretations that were formulated basing on my observations, perceptions, and experiences of contestation in CS; and (3) functions, which were identified based on the functions and purposes contestation seemed to fulfil and how it seemed to manifest itself. Insights from this exploration are reflected upon in relation to Turner’s insights on ritual and the liminal. CS is a liminal space; it is a space of crisis, of movement, of observation, of knowledge ‘production’, of transition, of becoming. I hold that contestation in

a such a space is a phenomenon that takes on various qualities and forms subject to the context of crisis, movement, and the potential characteristic of the liminal space.

Contestation: What does it mean? How does it work?⁸

Contestation and its meaning seemed self-evident even for curators and other WHAG staff who were involved in the setting up of the exhibition. There was no single mention of the word ‘contestation’ in the exhibition’s catalogue, and it was nowhere on the labels and pamphlets. It was ethnographically intriguing and exciting when I asked what contestation meant. At first, coparticipants were hesitant to respond, sometimes appearing confused or reflective about the question. Master Artists, especially those such as Zylla who created protest or resistance art, considered their artworks as condensed stories, mirrors of society, containers holding memories and experiences of particular events, places, or moments in time. These artworks, which sometimes stand alone or are part of a series, were often meant to record, comment, or share collective and personal interpretations. Like dances and songs of the villagers in Fabian’s study, their artworks are embodiments of social performances, ‘contestation’ being one of their possible purposes and meanings. When I asked direct questions such as ‘What is contestation or what does contestation mean?’, most coparticipants, Artists included, at first gave short and direct answers. For Master Artist Johannes Phokela for instance, contestation meant ‘going against something, disagreeing with it’. For him, ‘contest is like competition’. Crouse reflected that she did not ‘know what CS really’ meant. ‘But I know what contested means’ and ‘contest is arguing, questioning’. But, when the same question was asked differently, when I asked coparticipants to respond drawing from the context of their daily experiences at work, in hospitals, art studios, universities, or their homes, about how their experiences there linked, fit, or spoke to contestation in CS, I noticed that they tended to provide narratives, often long personal stories. They engaged in more nuanced reflections and understandings, relating their stories to contestation in the exhibition. For example, Johannes Phokela, Rasheda Crouse, Nhlengethwa, and Peter-John Goeieman elaborated their understanding of contestation in the following manner during public CSS conversations at WHAG in 2018. For Crouse,

Rian Malan was a close friend of mine at the time I painted him. He had gleaned international acclaim for his book *My Traitors Heart*, published in the late 80s, his

⁸ A coparticipant writes on a feedback note during an anthropology seminar held on 28 March 2017.

services as a journalist sought after by well-respected American and English news outlets. Malan is a maverick. He thinks independently. Back home many colleagues were envious of his success and critical of his authentic pursuit of the truth, a truth which at times went against popular rhetoric and thought. The controversy he generated made him a good candidate for the notion of CS, the title of the exhibition.

For Nhlengethwa, the phrase that summarized everything, his story, experiences, and art in relation to contestation in CS, was ‘I paint what I like’.

Steve Biko said I write what I like and I said I paint what I like. If those things of the past still come back to us I will deal with them. What happened in Marikana now, I painted the Marikana scenes. What happened about students marching demanding their rights, #feesmustfall ... In 1976 I was a student demanding my rights ... If things from the past still confront us why ignore them?

As for Goeieman, a student and young businessman, contestation manifests itself in every space, from public and structural levels to the home and personal levels. He argued that, ‘we must not...look at things in a superficial manner. Because we’d be doing ourselves an injustice to solve the kind of backlog, the kind of educational disparities...that we’ve got’. He disclosed that he knew that going to a private school had afforded him ‘a world of opportunities that many other black South Africans don’t have’. This, ‘in itself is a contestation... Because going to a political space you might be side-lined....That’s a contestation. But I think at a very basic level, choosing the clothes you were going to wear that is a contestation, using the bathroom when someone else wanted to in your house is a contestation of space’.

Contestation in CS cannot be understood without stories, experiences, and historical context. These are like frames through which the present is viewed, lived, interpreted, and expressed. Contestation is about the present context, and yet as Jacques Derrida’s hauntology (1994) would have me notice, ghosts of the past are omnipresent in these frames. They permeate, for instance, the thinking, stories, experiences, and interpretations some of the Master Artists offered about their artworks. Phokela stated that, it was ‘about current affairs...using the past to explain the present. I am addressing current affairs by using a historical moment which I find personally relevant today’. This hauntological point mirrors another, Nhlengethwa’s rhetorical question, ‘If things from the past still confront us why ignore them?’ Nhlengethwa was a student in 1976, which, he noted, played a role in his relating to and making meaning of the current students protests. From this point, it is remarkable that contestation is also

understood in relation to stories, experiences, and pasts other than their own. It is relational, contextual, and, as Crouse observed, it operates ‘on many levels. My level, his level, people looking at it, their level’. It is multidimensional.

Willie Bester, the artist who made the *Dogs of War III* (see Appendix 1), added another dimension. ‘If you go around this room, my work fits into this’, he observed. ‘I think’ he continued; it is not surprising that ‘people stop to look at the work...The intention was to get the attention of the people and make them talk instead of having something beautiful that says nothing. And you can easily walk pass a piece that’s beautiful but says nothing’. His point about engaging beyond the ‘beautiful’ aesthetic, getting people to ‘talk’ and engage, rings with the above statements such as Goeieman’s: ‘We must not structurally look at things in a superficial manner’.

Both Bester and Goeieman’s observations advance a critical and in-depth meaning of contestation. They see contestation as being linked to creating work that could provoke critical conversations and as being about looking at things and spaces and engaging them beyond the surface. Perhaps inspired by such views, my study sought to be a kind of work interested in critical engagements and looking beyond the aesthetics and surfaces. This is reflected, for example, in this section resulting from having deeply engaged with coparticipants, using follow-up questions, inviting them to think from various contexts, brainstorming and discussing what contestation meant. In the following paragraphs, I share four samples of responses contributed by groups and individual coparticipants from different contexts. Their contributions allowed me to take note of certain key words and meanings associated with contestation.

The first sample is presented as a visual representation. I created it from contributions made by a group of university students participating in a series of workshops held in the CS. During one exercise, I wrote down on a flipchart the word contestation in big letters and placed it on a table. Groups of students had to take turns writing down keywords and meanings that they associated with contestation. What was remarkable in this group was that several words did not come up as in other samples despite certain similarities and repetitions, for instance, contestation as (or associated with) ‘war’, ‘dominance’, ‘avoid boxing’ (avoid putting people in boxes), ‘one Africa, one country, one currency’, ‘source of our past and present’ and so on. Being immersed in the exhibition; surrounded by artworks and maps about the African continent and histories of domination, war, and other forms of violence; and engaging in

conversations with other coparticipants about these artworks seem to have had an important role in shaping the words and meanings that the group contributed. I would qualify these responses as stemming from an involved or engaged perspective because of the physicality and proximity of the space and the artworks being directly observed and discussed.



Image 2: Some of the meanings associated with contestation.

CS#6, 21–23 November 2018

The second sample comes from a workshop organized by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), 26–28 June 2019 in Ghana. Here, I circulated a survey asking willing coparticipants to answer with one word what contestation meant for them. This group was composed of PhD students and professors from universities around the African continent and a few facilitators from overseas. They responded individually and did not know CS exhibition. Contestation was, they wrote,

contradictions debate conflict yes. against capitalism disagreement conflict
to oppose something contending positions problem disagreement

a struggle or competition between two or more forces conflict perspectives

_____ necessary controversy lack of consensus/different interpretations disagreement
conflict argument disagree protestation expected/normal different opinions that are
controversial _____ disputing or arguing over something disagreement conflict

Contrary to the previous sample, it appears to me that this second sample is much more distanced. Their contributions are more like dictionary-type definitions. The responses, while mostly resembling and repeating what other coparticipants said about contestation in CS, did not stem from direct and specific stories, memories, experiences, or close contact with the exhibition. Though some of them might be shaped by personal experiences in other contexts, they seem to emerge more from an ‘arm-chair’ point of view. It is a static perspective. It is also remarkable and worth noting that at least two coparticipants in this group did not know or did not write down anything (represented by a dash). Most similar responses came from another group (third sample), eight public servants who attended a workshop on 12 December 2019 at a conference centre in Kimberley. They, also responded individually, and even though all of them were based in Kimberley; only one out of the eight knew about the exhibition. Contestation for them meant, ‘resisting’, ‘differ’, ‘change’, ‘dispute’, ‘dispute’, ‘arguing’, ‘argue’, ‘differences in views and opinions’.

My last sample comes from a group of mental health practitioners who attended a seminar I ran at WHAG on 7 December 2019. Their responses were collaborative, emerging from small groups interactions and discussions. Contestation, for them, was, ‘an action or process of disputing or arguing’, ‘non-acceptance/disagree’, ‘being against’, ‘argumentative’, ‘controversial’, ‘competing’, ‘?’, ‘??!!’, ‘????’, ‘agree to disagree’, ‘debate: right vs wrong’, ‘pushing the limits’, ‘competition’, ‘\$\$\$ (pump in moola!)’. What was remarkable in this group was the use of symbols such as question marks, exclamation points, and dollar signs. Some coparticipants interpreted the marks as way of saying that they did not know what contestation meant, while others saw the marks as a way of saying that contestation was about questioning. Another remarkable aspect was a response about ‘\$\$\$’ which was informed by conditions from their working space. This meaning was further explored and deepened when I asked coparticipants to identify contestations within their sector of mental health. They highlighted ‘resources and lack of funding’, ‘lack of collaboration’, ‘limited employment opportunities’, ‘defaulters’, ‘poor implementation of mental health policies’, ‘lack of political will’, ‘unclear priorities’, ‘ignorance’, and ‘resistance to change’, among others. In this group, perhaps more

than in others, there was a deep sense of frustration, anger, and tension, as reflected in their strong statements.

The responses of coparticipants from different backgrounds helped me to notice that story, context, and experience inform the meaning of contestation. More meanings came to life when stories, experiences, and contexts were used to think and talk about contestation. This may be due to the fact that coparticipants were translating from familiar experiences. Coparticipants had words, language, and stories already from lived experiences, making it easy to draw on them. Contestation, a word and idea some of them might not have thought about or used before, could be related to, spoken about, and its meaning shared by drawing on previously known experiences and which expressions described them. “Translation is the very soul of the process of relating”, as Latour (1993:113) would have it. It is also the soul of generating meaning.

Another possible explanation, which overlaps with the previous one, is that initially, coparticipants’ understanding and meaning might have been beyond expression, specifically beyond the verbal. They had no words even though they had the knowledge and meaning. In this case, using the context, drawing from direct contact with the artworks and being in the proximity with the exhibition or other coparticipants involved in the same process, helped form and generate relationships that allowed them to translate from the non-verbal to the verbal, making it possible to find words, analogies, and metaphors for what contestation meant. What I mean by proximity and contact as sources or processes of meaning-generation is close to what Ingold (2022) discusses regarding the act of turning a page of a book or printing. He remarks that ‘concentrating on the words and their meanings, we are inclined to forget how central the act of page-turning is to reading.... Yet every turn is “a moment of profound revelation” (2022:206). I see touching and turning the page as an act of proximity – eyes looking at the page and letters from a certain distance and yet very close – and contact – direct physical touch by the hands and fingers – involved in the revelation and supporting the act of reading and making meaning. In the same way, printing “is bringing two surfaces together, in an intimacy of contact that is itself generative of life and meaning” (ibid.).

Most coparticipants, even those who initially said they did not know what contestation was or what CS meant, ended up sharing memories, experiences, and spaces they thought were contestations or were sources of contestation. Contestation is polysemic, multiple, and relational. The words and stories from coparticipants emphasized that contestation is experienced on multiple levels including the social, physical, and mental. For example, while

Crouse engaged the social and political context of the 1990s leading to the 1994 elections, the setting for her painting. She disclosed how her own individual internal processes were also engaged, which she referred to it as ‘internal turmoil’: ‘You have to argue with oneself’. This contestation going on inside (self-contestation) interacts with (and may be provoked by) the outside, the social contestation(s) at play in the public context. Perceived contestation, experienced socially and mentally, is also engaged physically, and expressed through her artwork. Art making is manual, very involved with contact, touching, and movement. Indeed “touch is about movement” (Manning, 2007:135). According to Erin Manning (2007), touch is the first of our sensorium to form, and this may explain the physical intimacy but also political and affective significance of touch and contact. Crouse’s use of internal ‘turmoil’ is suggestive of the affective and embodied dimensions of internal contestation. It implies a dynamic crisis, a chaotic, non-linear movement taking place internally and being observed (visited, perceived), experienced, and lived as it is taking place. This state makes a point that contestation can be reflexive and deeply embodied and affective.

Contestation is also retrospective. For instance, as Crouse and other artists (re)visited their works in CS in 2018 and as they spoke during the conversations, they were reflecting back to particular moments and their lived experiences of specific pasts. When she made the artwork and thereafter, she may not have thought of it and her experiences in terms of contestation. Like her, visitors, the observers of her painting and other artworks, are engaged in the reflexive, reciprocal, and retrospective levels of experiencing, interpreting, and meaning making, processes which imply motion or movement.

Movement makes it possible to perceive and make meaning, and it was key in observing and searching for meaning in CS. Ingold (2011) and James Gibson (1979, 1950) brought clarity to my position and helped make sense of my observations. Both, Ingold and Gibson support that meaning, observation, and perception imply movement. Meanings emerge from engagement with the environment, as the whole organism (body and mind) moves through it. Quoting Gibson, Ingold writes that what the organism perceives

...are not things as such but what they afford for the pursuance of its current activity. It is in the very process of attending to these ‘affordances’... in the course of their engagements with them, that skilled practitioners – human and non-human – get to know them. Meaning for Gibson, is drawn from these productive engagements. (2011:11)

With these ideas and my observations, I propose a perspective, or rather a model that I refer to as a '*movement model*'. I use it to clarify, but also to deepen, the meanings I encountered through stories, definitions, and experiences shared by coparticipants in their attempt to define and express what contestation is. This model serves to explain how the artworks in CS were viewed and how they were engaged with, in and beyond their frames. The aim in creating this model is to help show how some of the meanings, stories, and understandings were generated by focusing on the artworks and their relationship to the space. I use and explain the model while applying it to the following images while simultaneously pursuing the search for what contestation means.



Image 3: (3A & 3B): Jason Marendia improvising a dance, SPU, 2019.

Images 3A and 3B above show Jason Marendia, one of the coparticipants who regularly attended CS conversations, improvising a dance during an exhibition I organized at the Sol Plaatje University (SPU), 24 - 28 October 2019. Inside these pictures, one can see more images. On one wall are photos of some artworks from CS, and on the other wall is an image of a video projection of students, who, more than a year earlier were improvising dances and songs across the gallery at WHAG after they had visited CS. Unlike the video, the photographic images show arrested movement. Visitors of the exhibition at SPU could see the images and watch the video, including the full dances and songs. A dance is a flow of multiple moments. A picture makes a dance appear as separate steps. The dance seems to become a movement of consecutive images. The step captured in image 3A continues and leads into the other (image 3B). These images placed next to each other render visibility to a sense of continuity, movement, and flow. The movement breaks through (sets in motion) the boundary of one picture and expands it,

allowing a view of a larger (in-depth) field beyond its surface. The same Movement model may apply to the paintings and other artworks in CS and the whole exhibition itself. When looking at an artwork in this exhibition, the imagination is moved to wonder (and wander) about what came before it, what came after it, and what are the images that embody experiences and memories before and after that moment of stillness. Furthermore, the imagination is intrigued by what could have been the movements, actions, experiences, and memories of the artist that led to bringing forth ('producing') that image, and what, if any, images (experiences, memories) the artist imagined could come next.

Contrary to Bester who intentionally made his art to spark conversations, and Zylla who intentionally painted to protest and initiate change, Crouse's approach to painting is that it cannot bring revolution. It is more of a record of what happened in the past. For example, Pablo Picasso's 'Guernica' recorded man's inhumanity to another. In her reflection back to the context of the 1990s, especially 1994 when she painted 'Rian Malan', she noted some continuities and resemblances from her painting to some of the images circulating in the public context of the present. For instance, the tyre, as if it had jumped out of the fences (the frame of her painting is made of electric fences) into the present, was still burning in the streets she remarked, before adding that (I paraphrase), in her view, Rian Malan's state of emotional equilibrium (2018) had not shifted radically since 1994 when the painting was created. In my view, the background of 'death and destruction' which Rian himself suggested for use in Crouse's painting, evokes a sense of precarity, mental and physical tensions and anxieties, as well as social, economic and political insecurities and uncertainties which, to a certain extent, were also palpable in the public space between 2015 and 2018 when the #fallist protests took place, the exhibition was set up (end 2016), and the CSS conversations officially started (2018).

The country is currently grappling with many problems. Land redistribution is a complex topic, how to redress the injustices of the past in a way which does not destroy investor confidence and the economy, already in tatters from corruption and inefficiencies. All these problems are tainted by racial tensions created by politicians, deflecting from their own failures by rehashing and keeping open old wounds to deflect attention away from their own failures. It is all a grand conglomeration of contestations. (Crouse, 2018)

Crouse's painting during these conversations provoked explorations, memories, and experiences beyond the frame of the painting itself, beyond its initial context, and beyond the

immediate confines of the CS room. Her own painting set her into movement. It pushed her to look back and forth through time, space, and context. In doing so, she made more observations, remembered more details, and shared more stories and meanings in addition to the response and the story she had already provided about contestation. What contestation is and what it means, is involved with such a retrospective and a self-reflexive movement, both internal and external, along which more responses may be generated, and continuities (and discontinuities) may be identified.

The last story I would like to share is from Zylla. With it, I try to expand, clarify, and conclude on certain meanings shared and related insights about contestation, especially those related to its embodiment and movement.

‘A battle...in every space’

Zylla’s story is one of an endless battle. From Nazi Germany to being artist and activist in Apartheid and Post-Apartheid South Africa, he seems to have always been involved in an endless war. In 2020, as I was conducting follow up conversations and interviews, receiving additional responses, a student wrote back to me that contestation meant ‘a battle, almost in every space, from the body to the physical spaces which we occupy’. This understanding resembled much of Goeieman’s understanding of contestation that he contributed in 2018 (shared earlier in this chapter) in the sense that both saw contestation as taking place everywhere, ‘in every space’. What kept coming out strongly from these contributions is the embodiedness and the centrality of space and movement to contestation. Among all the stories that have tried to express their understanding of contestation with regards to CS, there is perhaps no story that provides details and defines best contestation’s embodiedness and movement across time, space, and contexts than Zylla’s story shared at length below does.

Father and mother were both deaf. NAZI wanted to sterilize her because she was not ‘norm, normal’. We formed a group and started teaching each other and that was the main training I had. I did not go to the army. We became conscious objector. We experienced Korean war, we were still close to the Jews genocide, gypsies and other people who were not recognized as human...For me art was like a tool. That was always the thing...I want to use art to change society. I was part of an exhibition against the Vietnamian war, travelling throughout Germany. I worked for Amnesty International and Handicap International. In 1970, I came to SA. I experienced Apartheid.... On top

of that I married a Muslim woman and lived in the so-called muslim area in Cape Town. It was all illegal, I experienced the 1976 uprising...In the middle of Apartheid I was teaching how to make posters, to be active and to fight against Apartheid...In Soweto, in Cape Town, it was really evil the way the army moved in shooting children and innocent people. I started making posters and would stick them up on police stations at night. I got involved in a community project mainly young who didn't have job to help them learn something in art, and professional people...In 1982, I painted big drawings of business people, army, police forces, etc., and put them up at the community art and invited the audience to paint over them and change it..It was an amazing thing...I painted landscapes which were in danger, in danger because some greedy is digging oil, or coal there...For me it was not something I was doing for pleasure...I must use art as a tool.

Zylla's story and his approach to art as a tool for change, allowed me to see and make sense of another level of movement and embodiedness. His parents' health, their inhuman treatment by the Nazis because they were people living with disabilities; the Nazi's denial of humanity to the Jewish and other groups of people; and his personal stories, experiences, and memories from within Europe to South Africa were key elements in Zylla's attempts to make sense and share what contestation and CS meant to him.

The key insight I received from interviewing and listening to him was that, for him to make sense of contestation involved a capacity to move, create, and engage critically across borders, identities, historical events and related memories, and ideological and political affiliations. In his case, it is important to notice that the movement of contestation is by choice, a reaction to another (prior) movement of violence, greed, and dehumanization. CS is concerned with movements of dehumanisation and the contests to it. Zylla as well as other artists who, consciously or not, used 'art as a tool for change', are all dealing with a problem of humanity, particularly human dignity in contexts of historical and contemporary violence and dehumanisation. His early years as an artist in a time that was still close to the Holocaust, and the wars that followed to which he became a 'conscientious objector, had a major influence on his artistic and political positions when he arrived in Apartheid South Africa. He acts and protests wherever his humanity, and the humanity of his relatives, friends, and others is denied. His paintings, for instance *Games*, and *Bullets & Sweets* (see appendix 1), and others, attest to this analysis.

Contestation, for him, means several acts of revolt and defiance he was involved in, such as teaching art to jobless community members, creating posters and sticking them up on police stations' walls at night, living in a non-white reserved area, marrying a non-white person, and so on. Contestation through painting and other means was not a 'harmless' symbolic act but was meant to contribute to real change in a context where the classification and denial of humanity were enshrined in laws. For him, contestation had to be 'a battle...in every space' to reclaim a key right, or a central characteristic of what Pretorius saw as one of the two strands of CS, 'dignity'. In light of his story and experience, contestation is involved with acts of reclamation.

Modes

This idea of understanding contestation in relation to 'every space...from the body to the physical spaces which we occupy', and the key element of Movement (in encountering, observing, and generating meaning about and from artworks) drive me back to when I visited CS for the first time towards the end of 2016 and most regularly in early 2017. To 'occupy' CS is first and foremost to move into it, entering the room where it is located. This physical space is then inhabited through an observation which involves walking, moving across the space, and or sitting or standing and looking around by the movement of the eyes and the head. During my first experience, I followed Pretorius's pace. She moved from one piece of artwork to another, stopping sometimes for few seconds and sometimes for up to three to five minutes and more sometimes, depending on the stories she had about a piece and sometimes depending on the time I took asking questions or reading some labels.

I left with a sense of having experienced a long journey, a kind of time travel between the past and the present with stops at numerous points in between. Each stop, each artwork, though visibly static, felt like a moving mechanism, a kind of a pedal perhaps, waiting to be stepped on and take me to the next story, or to enter another space. I had the impression that the room had a rhythm, or a path that could change anytime depending on which pedal one decided to move. I could either move forward, backward, or sideways towards the floor where a number of other artworks were scattered. I could also move towards walls at the opposite end of the room. The artworks and the space were performative in the sense that in addition to the stories they portrayed and the imaginations they provoked in my thoughts, they made me perform particular movements, affording, to use Gibson's term, my body with possibilities to take

particular postures, rhythms, and directions. Contestation seemed to be and mean many things for me as I looked and moved through all these works for the first time. It was like a conversation between different yet shared pasts and presents. Artists would later express the same view when they noted how their works fitted into and related to other works in the exhibition. There was a sense of connectedness.

Contestation was also confrontation and competition. Artworks representing colonial conquests, forced removals, mining, and student protests for instance, portrayed confrontation and competition which sometimes could become violent and hurtful. Some coparticipants spoke of confronting the ‘things’ of the past in the present. In Nhlengethwa’s story presented earlier in this chapter, he discloses his using of art as a way to ‘confront’, as a response. His ‘to confront’, may be referring to how his use of art get people to face and perhaps see what is either taken for granted, invisible or repressed, or what is not seen while it is present in plain sight. In some ways my walking in the exhibition felt like a way of confronting this space and to come face to face with the arts in it and the visible and invisible meanings they represented. But it was also a way of being confronted by the space itself, the art, their meanings, and the contestations they embodied. Contestation confronted me. My presence, in a way, afforded the exhibition its performative agency.

Furthermore, contestation was, I imagined, what these arts and this space meant in the opinion of other people, artists and non-artists confronted with and responding to the everyday outside the walls of this room. Even though this room is a public space, it is a different kind as it is situated within a building with steel fences. It is within high walls, protected by guards and under constant surveillance with cameras. It is public and yet feels hidden; inaccessible, yet highly visible; secluded like a cave in the centre of a city. This is perhaps the reason why encountering a sculpture of Sol Plaatje for instance in the exhibition room feels different from encountering it outside in the park right in front of the gallery or in the gardens in front of the Sol Plaatje municipality’s office just a two minutes-walk away from the main gate of the gallery.

What one can do or say and how the body moves in this room feels constrained, regulated not just by the material presence of the pieces and the memories they carry but also by the architectural, institutional, security, and disciplinary devices in place. These devices make contestation feel like a curated phenomenon, symbolic, dislocated from the ‘real’ life even though it is meant to represent contestations taking place in the ‘real’ public space ‘out there’.

While this may illuminate and facilitate thinking about the reality out there, it may be potentially damaging or non-productive to take one for an exact copy or mirror of the other. Artworks scattered across the floor and on walls express the best this sense of curated display and dislocation. These works gave an impression of being fixed in their spots, unmoving and stuck in space and time. While I moved, observing, the artworks evoked and provoked in me interpretations, perceptions, meanings I describe using three key words, *Flow*, *Resistance*, and *Entrapment*.

Flow

The first impression I had was one of flow, connectedness, continuity, and oneness despite their differing histories, memories, identities, origins, locations, and positions. These artworks were connected by being in one space. Some of them were previously in storerooms or in other exhibitions. During my research, some of the works were transferred to other exhibitions or other museums. For instance, Penelope Siopis's *Patience on a Monument* – 'A History Painting', was moved from CS, not because it did not belong there but because it was on loan. Pretorius and the artist herself saw it as part of CS exhibition. While absent physically, for those who knew of its former presence, it was still part of this flow, the embodiment of contestation displayed in the room. By extension therefore, flow implies a connection, a meaning, beyond the physical boundaries of the artwork, the room, and the gallery. Flow implies connection, and a sense of awareness thereof, among and between visible and invisible presences. Pretorius often said that there were so many more artworks that should be in this exhibition but there was not enough room and money to acquire more.

Artworks and the experience of the exhibition room aside, perhaps what made me think of flow was mostly the ways Pretorius interpreted CS. As touched on briefly in the introduction, she said that there were two main strands. The first being 'the advent of colonisation and its unfolding through violence...' and the second being 'the struggle for liberation against colonisation and Apartheid when people are trying to reclaim their dignity'. These strands express a historical flow where colonial power and the anti-colonial movement collide, initiating a contest across space and time. These are ways to think about the past. Colonial violence is shown and thought of as having negatively impacted, and blocked the physical, economic, sociocultural, and mental flows of the colonised through dehumanising wars and other violent means. In this colonial context, humanity became an object defined and regulated

by powers involved in the processes of othering and objectification, which evoke qualities characteristic of static, fixed, non-flowing ways of being. The Anti-colonial movement as reactive to colonisation confronts and resists this dehumanisation. It was an attempt to unblock the flow, to regain the humanity and dignity denied.

Resistance

The second impression was one of competition, repression, opposition, and resistance. This resistance was not just provoked by paintings about Anti-Apartheid resistances represented in *Riot* by Cobus Van Bosch, Liz Crossley's *When People run like buck I, II, III & IV* (see Appendix 1) and others; but it was also provoked by the way they were arranged, the styles and types of materials they were made from, and the various spaces, memories, or topics they dealt with. For instance, some sculptures that seemed to be made of clay or wood and some of the bronzes were scattered on the floor where they seemed to resist each other. At the same time they seemed to resist incorporation alongside works made of canvases and mixed media hanging on the walls. Not just the themes and imageries of violence, but also the distance, style, and the quality of material seem to have amplified my perception of resistance. Paying attention to these resistances and contradictions gave me a feeling of experiencing a disruption in the flow.

At the level of the narrative, the first to influence my impression comes from the two strands, or spaces, proposed by Pretorius. The two spaces were animated by movements engaged in a relationship of resistance. As noted in the previous section, they are part of a flow, and yet they also try to pull each other apart. Colonial and anti-colonial movements clash and conflict. Flow turns into confrontation. The balance of power fluctuates among colonising powers themselves, among them and the colonised, and among the colonised themselves. The fluctuation of this balance goes on across specific time and space. It feels like two groups competing over one rope, each pulling it towards themselves, each trying to gain more ground and more power from each other at the expense of the other. 'A game of tug of war'. Resistance is another mode through which I encountered contestation in CS.

Entrapment

The third impression was one of immovability, impossibility, stuckness, and frozenness. It was as if certain memories, historical episodes of peace, and violence, were frozen and fixed in time and space. It was as if they were represented, remembered, and reimagined in particular ways, tainted and trapped by subjectivities and sensitivities of particular political, economic, and power dynamics. Without the connecting elements I mentioned earlier, such as sharing the room, the artworks were isolated from each other, and this provoked a feeling that even the stories and experiences they represented were isolated, stuck, or trapped. A feeling of separation was exemplified by the fact that aesthetically the space was made only of still objects. For example, there was no video projection; there was nothing moving (locomotion). In a sense every material presence seemed lifeless. At the level of narrative, the past as represented, in the forms of the two main strands seemed already defined, stuck between the two opposing movements (colonizing/dehumanization vs resisting/re-humanization), and nothing else could come in between or could move or shift them because they were in the past.

Functions

In the performance of a proverb *le pouvoir se mange en entier*⁹ studied by Johannes Fabian (1990), contestation fulfils a particular function. It is mobilised by villagers to pose a challenge to the village chief's power, and it is involved with the expressive form this takes. The analytical bases of Fabian's explorations are ethnographic brainstorming with actors about the proverb, the creation and rehearsals of the play, and its performance. In the play, contestation is confined within the performance frame. It is like a ritual concerned only with the symbolic present in a specific clearing away from the village. But Fabian notes that at the time, there had been "a dance on the volcano" feeling for decades "about life in the cities" of the entire DRC (1990:285). He notes that, beer and music were reserved for the masses, while the more refined kinds of conspicuous consumption were for the *nouveaux riches* ('new rich': my translation) (ibid.). This "order of things" had been "the counterpoint to the dreariness of poverty, bureaucratization, and oppression" (Fabian, 1990:285). Daily life in the cities and what happens in the village seem as unrelated as the village and mashamba (fields where villagers

⁹ 'Power is eaten whole'.

stage their revolt). He states, however, that it would be wrong to assume that the people in the DRC, represented by the Troupe Théâtrale Mufwankolo, lived only in the present and that their critical expressions, and knowing, were limited in local boundaries: “The village and colonial past are very much on their minds and popular reflection is capable of looking at the state of affairs in historical perspective” (1990:286).

He adds that ‘there are no grounds for assuming that critical reflections on power and oppression expressed on political occasions (such as Independence Day) and in political imagery (the chief being the central figure in the play) are aimed at the political regime only’ (ibid.). The people “know of oppressive power other than political: economic exploitation for instance....They are very much aware that oppression is inherent in government under conditions of the current world economic system. Power is to serve well-being and progress, the play asserts repeatedly...”. They “know that their lot has been to be the victims of power which serves well-being and progress—elsewhere” (1990:286–287). Fabian’s study, the analyses, and the statements he makes bring forth a key point about plays and social performances. They are multi-layered both in their meaning and their analytical potential. Based on the kinds of functions it seems to fulfil in the CS exhibition, contestation manifests in the four main forms I have called reactive, strategic, decorative, and ritualistic. It is multifunctional. These forms of contestation overlap. This means that observation, engagement, or analysis of one artwork, activity or response at a specific space and time may reveal more than one form of contestation. In what follows I shall elaborate on each form.

Reactive

The reactive form manifests, for example, during spontaneous and often explosive protest activities, such as the explosive climate of tension and outrage embodied by crowds of people taking on the streets or debating (in support of or against) on social media, following the tossing of “a bucket of human excrement” at the statue of Cecil Rhodes (Schmahmann, 2019:183). Another example is the explosive reaction following the kidnapping and raping of a UCT female student, Uyinene Mrwetyana. CS documents some explosive historical points, for instance various clashes between colonial powers contesting over lands and mineral resources, uprisings of the 1960s and 1970s, and others. Artists, as we learned from their stories presented earlier in this chapter, often painted in reaction to some of these explosive moments, and sometimes they isolated a particular incident and worked on it. For example, in reaction to the

death of Michael Miranda, an eleven-year-old boy, who was killed by the railway police on 15 October 1985 (Erdmann & Zylla, 2012), Zylla made a drawing '*Death Trap* (1985)' in his memory (2012). The reactive form of contestation is more concerned with challenges of the present and addresses them immediately. Then it tends to fade out or move to become another form or something else. In the social context, beyond the walls of the exhibition room, I observed protesters taking to the streets to express frustration and to demand addressing of issues related to service delivery, crime, corruption, water, electricity, and other daily life-related challenges. These protests go on over a limited period of time. The explosive nature is amplified by the burning of tyres and the trashing of streets. The reactive aspect is one way of looking and recognizing the form that contestation takes in CS. It can also be strategic.

Strategic

The strategic is manifest when certain groups or individuals proactively mobilise to affect some sustainable change. It is most visible in proactive actions. For example, action that seeks to address, and possibly heal, entrenched Colonial-Apartheid legacies of violence and other enduring hurts from the past. This strategic aspect can be seen in CS. Setting up this exhibition as a space for education, dialogue, and possibly healing was a strategic move. The same strategic impulse is discernible in the works and interpretations shared by most artists such as Bester, Zylla, Nhlengethwa, and others. Painting for some artists such as Crouse was a form of 'passive resistance' and documentation. For most others, it was intentionally, therefore strategically, created to achieve some other strategic goals, be it being a catalyst for conversation or denouncing corruption or violence, such as Bester's *The Dogs of War III*; memorialisation, the *Death Trap* being an example; or some form of change.

According to Pretorius, art, especially abstract Anti-Apartheid resistance forms of art, posed difficulties for the Apartheid police, scholars, and other agents tasked to find, classify, and ban protest arts. Artists often strategically counted on the ambiguity and the polysemy of art, as well as on the 'illiteracy' of the censors, in terms of art. For this, and probably for other reasons, some artworks critical of the order of things then and now, can remain in the public realm, and some might be seen or interpreted ('rightfully' or 'wrongly') as 'harmless' or décor.

Decorative

The decorative is more concerned with itself, its form, and its aesthetic appearance. It is more of a public-relations exercise which may, directly or indirectly, contribute to change or serve the maintenance of *status quo*. Coparticipants mentioned how the time leading up to an election is the only time they see their leaders, candidates from their parties who are supposed to be their representatives. They come and make promises, distribute bribes in exchange for votes, and then they are never seen again until the next election campaign. Outside this election period, the attitude from some of the leaders was said to be one of looking down on the people in the communities, especially those most marginalized. They show off power and money. The leaders' actions in both contexts, during and post-elections, seem to be superficial and decorative. This reminds me of conversations with coparticipants about the progress of healing and change in what some coparticipants referred to as 'Post-Apartheid'. When I asked them to share their perceptions on the state of healing, some used terms such as 'artificial' and 'pretend', all of which alluded to *décor* or *decorum*. The implied meaning is that actions (artworks, social performances included) that characterize or reflect the decorative form are not interested in critical engagement nor change at a fundamental or sustainable level. In the following pictures, some coparticipants are expressing and discussing what contestation means.



Image 4: CS#6, 21 - 23 November 2018

Ritualistic

The ritualistic form is characterized by a pattern of repetition and what I perceive as a being stuck in being, doing, and thinking within particular modes of subjectivities, habits, and affiliations. Here I mostly use a general sense of understanding ritual as an act regularly repeated, consciously or not, in more or less the same manner. But my use of the word ritualistic also denotes an understanding of ritual as having a theatricality, often dramatic, and a symbolic function. The ritualistic form of contestation is situated in the sphere of the symbolic. I observed dozens of protests passing through the streets around WHAG. Some were by workers from various unions, others mostly from students, either from SPU or from the college that shares a fence with WHAG. Popular struggle dances such as toyi-toyi and songs such as *Senzeni na* and *Solomoni* and others alternated with the call-response slogans *Amandla! Awethu!* Sometimes police shooting of guns or other heavy explosions would join in. At times, they started in the earliest hours of the morning. If I was not up then, my bedroom would feel like it had been projected into the middle of the protest scenes in *Sarafina*, *Endgame*, or some pages of Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*. In a way, I was experiencing everything through a kind of veil or a screen, while for those present at the scene, it was more immediate and visceral. Vibrations of sounds and movements shook the ground from the streets and were felt in my room. They brought back memories of similar actions I witnessed in Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, and Cape Town. Some coparticipants included toyi-toyi dances, words like *aluta continua* and other popular struggle performances into their responses during CS conversations as they engaged and tried to express what contestation meant for them. Despite differing contexts and causes, the similarities in the aesthetic and modes of expressing contest were striking. Repetition and mirroring of content and forms were very visible. The burning tyre was unmissable in most protests.

Looking from the outside in, these repeated patterns defined, for me, the ritualistic form of contestation. According to some coparticipants who were directly involved in some protests at some points, their participation was not from just wanting to express frustration or to affect some form of change, but it was also a way of honouring and remembering forefathers and admired heroes such as Mandela, Galeshewe, Frances Baard, Sol Plaatje, and others. In the same vein, some students or lecturers not directly affected by the issue of fees for instance, would attend some of these protests out of symbolic solidarity or for academic (research) purposes. However, a symbolic action can turn, or simultaneously be actually transgressive.

When this transgression is wanted and intentional, I have termed this form as strategic. When it is concerned with itself and the *status quo*, it is decorative. When it is explosive and expressed to deal with the immediacy of an issue, it is reactive. These forms overlap, and I am hesitant to draw any definitive lines between them, but I would like to close this section by drawing attention to what I see as the potential directions a ritualistic form may take.

Potential directions

The ritualistic form has two potential directions I can think of based on my observations and analysis so far. One, it could evolve into a ritual with the possibilities a ritual could offer as discussed by Turner (1982, 1957), for example, the possibility of becoming a liminal space which could then lead into metamorphosis, change, restoration, and all other possible aspects and benefits a complete ritual could facilitate. Second, there is the possibility of remaining stuck at a particular pattern and possibly fall into the decorative form, or even degenerating (escalating) further. Turner explained that a block may take place preventing a ritual from completing its full course and thus be unable to reach a resolution. In a colonial context the block could be, for example, the use of force by colonial power.

Contestation over the interpretation of violence is as complex as the material, the perspectives, and the contexts it feeds on. According to Gerard Bluetooth, a lecturer quoted below, context could be positive or negative. Contestation starts around positive things in the positive context. In the negative case, he is concerned about contestation in such a context. For him, ‘the current post-94 South African society’, as an example of a negative context, the ‘CS’ are ‘around extremely negative things’ such as the lack of ‘broader social responsibility’. This context is rife with blocks making it difficult or impossible to build society. ‘How do you build a fractured society’ when ‘everyone is out just for themselves?’ he asked.

No two people are going to share the same interpretation or perspective around one thing. That’s absolutely impossible. So, within that the contestation starts. That’s in a positive context. Then you have the negative context too, which is what we are dealing with in post-94 South African society, the CS are in fact around extremely negative things, you’ve touched on it, the generation of self-gratification as opposed to a broader social responsibility. How do you build a fractured society if everyone is out just for themselves? You don’t! You don’t!

In searching for the meaning of contestation within CS, I identified three modes of contestation – flow, resistance, and entrapment – and four forms which contestation takes according to specific functions – the reactive, strategic, decorative, and ritualistic. I have argued that when an artwork or a social action expressing contestation is concerned with actual change, contestation takes on a strategic form. When it is concerned with itself and the maintenance of the *status quo*, it is decorative. When it is explosive or embodied as a temporary response to an issue of social concern, it is reactive. It becomes ritualistic when it is more concerned with symbolic repetition, mirroring, solidarity, or ceremonial remembering. Coparticipants summon up personal and social experiences and memories when they encounter the CS exhibition and share their meaning of contestation. Contestation is an embodied social phenomenon involved with interpretations of the past in the present. At the core of the CS is a historical contention over humanity and human dignity. The CS exhibition was put together in 2016 at a particularly historical moment of the 2015/2016 student protests during which some artworks representing colonial memories were burned. It was a moment perceived by some coparticipants, the curators included, as of heightened social fracturing, fuelled by a single narrative. For this reason, it is lacking in historical depth. There was need for critical public conversation to get a ‘fuller story’, look at and understand each other, and possibly heal unresolved social, mental, and physical wounds of the past and the present.

Chapter 2. Contestation in the context of the museum, memory, and mental health

Memory was omnipresent in the 2015/2016 students' protests, particularly the memory of violence in relation to its impact on mental health and to its interpretation in the museums. This chapter is concerned with reviewing literature on contestation in the context of museum, memory, and mental health. Karp et al.'s book on what they termed *museum frictions* (2006) referenced President Mandela's contestation over museums' depiction of 'African people as lesser human beings, in natural history museums' (Witz, 2006:115). In investigating frictions, or tensions and contradictions (Tsing, 2005) that arise in the museums, Karp et al. highlighted the contested context of the museum in South Africa. Museum frictions are specific to context because of its particular dynamics and agencies (Boast, 2011; Karp et al., 2006; Clifford, 1997).

The 2015–2016¹⁰ student protests which burned paintings, disrupted lectures and a rugby game, threw trash in streets and on some statue (Jansen, 2019, 2017; Ndebele, 2016; Mbembe, 2015) were also contestations. For the protesters, statues such as Rhodes' symbolized colonial violence and were reminders of traumatic memories (Luescher et al., 2022; Ngcaweni & Ngcaweni, 2018; Goodrich & Bombardella, 2016). Memory was everywhere, particularly memories of violence and its impact on mental wellbeing, and how it was interpreted in the museum. Museum, memory, and mental health were recurring threads permeating streets and literary texts.

I review the literature that helps get a sense of existing thoughts and case examples on contestation, specifically those occurring in the public space of the museum. Conscious of the large literature on museums, memory, and mental health, I do not intend to present a conventional nor a comprehensive review. I pay more attention to the literature concerned with memory and mental health in the context of art exhibitions. The aim is to provide an overview of contributions which speak to the thinking behind this study and to its main argument – that in the context of CS, contestation is an embodied social phenomenon involved with the meaning of the past in the present. This chapter is organized around the three key threads. First,

¹⁰ SPU and the college which shares a fence with WHAG have also been sites of students protests during the past few years. Some of the protesters saw WHAG as another colonial institution that needed to be 'decolonized'; others saw it as a neutral space where difficult conversations could take place.

museum as a ‘zone’ of contestation. Second, memory as a multidirectional tool and a site of contestation. Third, disciplinary power and the emergence of a concept of mental health.

Museum as a space of contestation

Writing about the history and politics of museums in South Africa, Ayanda Ngcobo and researchers from the South African Cultural Observatory (SACO, 2019; Ngcobo, 2018), also invoked Mandala’s critique. Mandela had emphasised in his 1997 Heritage Day speech that the meaning exhibited in museums about Africans was a painful memory. He denounced them for presenting a history that glorified colonisation, and he raised a problem of voice, remarking that most people had little say on how their own history was depicted. The current museum context has not altered much (Ngcobo, 2018) regarding memory and voice despite official shifts in ideological and political regimes in 1994. The establishment of the Government of National Unity heralded a new era of change in the public sphere including the museum space (Pick, 2009). A Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DASCT, 1996) was established and had museums and heritage under its portfolios; a new Medical Research Council was democratically elected and assumed responsibility for scientific research, including health and medical studies. These developments promised to address past pain and injustices, transforming museums from racialized, elitist and exclusive, to multicultural, non-racial and non-sexist spaces. In the domain of health, one of the priorities included psychosocial health, trauma being one of the areas of concern, and this was reflected in the South African Medical Research Council Act, *Act 58 of 1991* (MRC¹¹), and according to William Pick (2009).

Despite these and other changes, Ngcobo’s general argument is that legacies of ‘the colonial era and Apartheid era still prevail in South African museums today’ (1), and memories and voices of the formerly marginalized, women and youth especially, are still the most marginalised. Her observations remind me of an earlier contribution from Mbembe (2015) in an article which emerged from his conversation with #RMF. Mbembe issued an invitation to

¹¹“The new legislation, the South African Medical Research Council Act, *Act 58 of 1991*, changed the way in which the MRC was governed. For the first time, the board was chaired by an independent chairperson, and it immediately identified tuberculosis, malaria, nutrition intervention, trauma, AIDS, and urbanisation as research priorities” (Pick, 2009:192).

reclaim the museum as an epistemic space. He¹² spoke of the museum as an institution that, with few exceptions, had “hardly been subjected to the kind of thorough critique required by these times of ours in South Africa” (2015:n.p.). These ‘times of ours’ he referred to as a *negative moment* experienced by most post-colonies in the wake of their independence, that was characterized by uncertainties and turmoil, was fuelled by emerging new challenges while old ones remained unresolved. Such a moment called for different modes of critique and engagement with public institutions and spaces. Taking the museum as an example, Mbembe observed that a museum properly understood that it was not to be a dumping place nor somewhere where history’s waste was recycled. Mbembe’s and Mandela’s expressions of contestation added gravity to voices raised during Apartheid, and after its official end, for instance Hands of District Six protesters in the 1980s and 1990s (Soudien, 2019; Myers, 2006; Rassool, 2001; D6M, 2000) and the women and students’ protests, and the general defiance campaigns of the 1950s and 1970s (Mqolomba & Pillay, 2022; Witz, Minkley, & Rassool, 2017; Cele & Koen, 2003; Kurtz, 2010; Mandela, 1994). Like Mandela and Mbembe, the 2015–2016 student protesters invoked memories from the past and experiences of the present, mobilising them as tools and sites of their contestations.

Contestations can be understood through lenses of what Ivan Karp, Corinne Kratz, Ciraj Rassool, Lynn Szwaja, and colleagues (2006) have termed *museum frictions*, an idea which brings to mind an ethnography by Anna Tsing in which she introduced the framework of friction (2005). Friction implies contact. One of the arguments by Karp et al. linking the notion of friction to the museum is formulated in relation to James Clifford’s concept of the museum as a *contact zone* (1997). Clifford drew on the notion of *contact zones* by Mary Louise Pratt (1992, 1991) and a view that had emerged in the 80s–90s of a museum as a forum (Cameron, 1972) to advance the idea that the museum and heritage spaces were *contact zones*, meaning lively and contentious intersections (Clifford, 1977). The contact zone perspective opened them up “to contestation and collaborative activity. It helped make visible the different agendas – aesthetic, historical, and political – that diverse ‘publics’ bring to contexts of display” (Kratz & Karp, 2006:2; Clifford, 1997).

¹² In *Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive*, a text that forms the basis of a series of public lectures he gave at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER), Indexing the Human Project, Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Stellenbosch, and in conversations with the #RhodesMustFall Movement at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

However, the emphasis ‘on the museum primarily as a zone or place can also imply a sense of boundedness that obscures the way these contests...arise from both within and outside the museum, shaped by museum contexts yet still also related to and often embedded in other contexts, institutions, and processes’(ibid.). Tsing (2005) had also cautioned about the emphasis on a place or a zone. Drawing on her own study on Kalimantan's ‘frontier’ forests and people whose lives were being affected by rapid transformations of Indonesia’s Borneo landscapes throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Tsing observed that focus on the locality could obscure or silence how the local and translocal forces collaborate in the production of locality (Appadurai 1996). Equally a sole focus on the global could lead to missing how universal categories were produced out of tensions and contradictions at the specific local level. Tsing’s *friction* is a theoretical framework which helps to understand the dynamics and parameters of the Meratus Dayak people’s dislocation, affected by a conjunction of multiple dynamics and actors ranging from the state, multinationals, and the complicity of some of the Dayak themselves and their neighbours. Tsing talks about how old colonial fantasies of discovery and conquest were used to frame the locality as a frontier and a zone of savagery, making it a site of multiple forms of violence, from fuelling and obscuring reasons of gruesome violence within the group and between the group and other populations especially migrants to displacement and dispossession of land, cultural knowledge, and other resources in the name of development and other discourses and promises of progress.

This resonates, in my view, with Mandela’s observations. He was critical of not just of the dehumanising depiction of human beings in the zones of museums reserved for animals, but what he saw as the glorification of colonial violence and the perpetuation of its fantastic logos. This way of exhibiting colonisation was an interpretive approach which obscured the dark side of colonisation – its violent power and the enduring dehumanising effects it had caused. Tsing, herself devastated by the pollution and other environmental and socioeconomic deterioration witnessed in Kalimantan in the 1990s, spoke of the Dayaks as being traumatised by this context where, though sometimes collaborators, they were also marginalized victims given their structural weakness vis-a-vis other principal actors (Tsing, 2005; Willford, 2007). The promises and praises of progress functioned like dark masks which rendered invisible their social, environmental, and mental deterioration. This ‘trauma’, Tsing emphasises, “was largely obscured or silenced by the representational power of the ‘frontier’ in developmental discourses of the state, which, in turn, is semi-allied to diverse multinational interests” (Willford, 2007:178). Tsing argued that messy and surprising features of encounters across

difference should inform models of cultural production (3). For her, cultures were continually coproduced in the interactions she called ‘friction’ and defined as ‘the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference’ (5). Her work powerfully examined how some universals work out in particular times and places through friction (10). A key insight from her work is that paying attention to friction opens up rich possibilities of ethnographic accounts.

Viewed then through the lenses of Tsing’s *friction*, Clifford’s *contact zones* and Karp et al.’s *museum frictions*, the museum, and its processes – for instance the art exhibitions which were also viewed as *contested terrains* by Steven Lavine and Ivan Karp (1991) – become spaces of potential frictions arising inside and outside the conceptual, physical, historical, and local and global boundaries of the museums. These terrains of engagement stretch beyond the museum. Karp and colleagues suggested that “one might fruitfully ask what kinds of political and representational power inform contemporary negotiations and contests, how they differ from earlier situations, and what roles international and global interchange has played over time” (Kratz & Rassool 2006:352). One aspect of this suggestion guides this review, as it guided my research, the aspect that interrogates contestation in the specific context of the CS exhibition. In the next section, I look into the genesis of museums and exhibitions, and some documented specific cases of contestation.

Museums and their exhibitions: Origins and contestations

As reflected in the tense debates within the International Council of Museums (ICOM) over the conceptualisation of the museum and its function in contemporary society (ICOM, 2023; Etges & Dean, 2022; Seymour, 2022), museums are highly contested spaces, and so are their origins and exhibitions. One of the geneses of the modern museum is colonial expansion. In South Africa (and elsewhere), museum institutions are colonial institutions shaped by historical, economic, cultural, and intellectual canons and shifts in regimes of power, all of which are themselves a condition of modernity (Macdonlad, 2023; Bodenstein, Otoi & Troelenberg, 2022; Appiah, 2016; Connerton, 2009, 1989; Bennett, 1995). The modern museum, according to this literature, emerges at a particular time in Africa, at the advent of colonisation (von Oswald, 2022; Chipangura & Mataga, 2021; Modisane, 2015; Arinze, 1998).

Museum architecture, theories, and practices (Abbott, 2020; Butler, 2000, Bal, 1992) are perceived as ideologically and culturally elitist (Mammana & von Oswald, 2023), Western, and products of colonial powers in a postcolonial context (Chipangura & Chipangura, 2020; Peterson, Gavua & Rassool, 2015; Mbembe, 2015; Macdonald, 2011). Postcolonial leadership across Africa, for instance the Post-Apartheid government in South Africa, inherited the colonial apparatus of the museum and mobilised it to serve national imperatives and promises to build a 'rainbow nation' based on an inclusive and shared heritage (Ngcobo, 2018; Krog, 2012; DACST, 1996). The title, of DACST'S 1996 *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage: All Our Legacies, Our Common Future* embodied this vision. It spoke to how the new dispensation was intended to mobilise the past for the present. Museums were understood as sites with the potential to help overcome violent pasts, racial divisions, traumatic experiences, and economic, psychological, social, political oppression and wounds affected by colonisation (Goodrich & Bombardella, 2016; Meskell, 2012).

The museum is a 'disciplinary' institution alongside the 'hospital, the prison and the schools' (Rassool, 2006:304; Bennett, 1995; Foucault, 1977). In this sense, the colonial museum served as a site of production, advancement, and justification of certain memories, knowledge, and interpretations of the past. Often, those in line with official narratives, ideologies, policies, and interests of regimes of power in place were privileged over critiques (Ngcobo, 2018; Bosch, 2016, Rassool, 2015, 2009; Jeppie & Soudien, 1990). For instance, in Colonial-Apartheid South Africa, arts, literary works, and performances seen or suspected as being critical or resistant were banned, and some people were imprisoned or exiled (Dlamini, 2014; Erdmann & Zylla, 2012; Viljoen, 2012; Mandela, 1994). Museums and their exhibitions were among several physical, psychological, and ideological mechanisms, for example violent policing, censoring, spatial segregation, separate schooling, confining racially classified groups in specific areas and so on, seeking to block or to hinder freedom of expression, movement, interaction, critical engagement, and contestation. However certain movements and sites of contestation existed even prior to the official end of Colonial-Apartheid, for example, the toppling of first colonial marks and statues and the shooting of arrows at colonial explorers in the 1400s (Goodrich & Bombardella, 2016; Dias, 2009), attempts at peaceful negotiations, resistance wars, strikes and other forms of defiant organising, artistic underground, and art activism through exhibitions, performances, and teaching (Soudien, 2019; Robbins, 2015; Erdmann & Zylla, 2012; Jeppie & Soudien, 1990), and so on.

Post-Apartheid museums, such as D6 and Camp Lwandle, were named by Graham (2000) and Barnabas (2015) as “sites laden with a past of disinheritance” (2015:209) – referring to D6 in particular – and they have tried to position themselves according to the changing political landscape, particularly the economy and industry of local and global heritage and tourism. While trying to benefit from these changes, they have also adopted a critical stance over the stereotypes and histories they perceive perpetuate Colonial-Apartheid legacies (Soudien, 2019; Jeppie & Soudien, 1990). This stance, as Leslie Witz reflects, reveals a difficult context of conflicting demands and expectations in which museums have been operating since the 1990s. They trade in a self-contesting memorialisation of the past. This means having to engage, preserve, and represent a memory of oppression on one hand, and a memory of resistance and liberation on the other hand. The Post-Apartheid museum is expected to represent a past which is difficult and interpreted differently by the public, and still fulfil its mandate (SACO, 2019; DACST, 1996) to promote national imperatives of social cohesion, nation-building, and so on.

According to Witz, “the national government committed substantial resources to establishing new national museums built around a narrative of repression and resistance” (2006:108). The demand on museums as heritage institutions to contribute to a society engaged in processes of healing, reconciliation, and transformation seem contradictory to the simultaneous demand of remembering violence, injustices, and the wounds of the past. Museums as spaces for the visual management of the past in the present (Bennett, 2006, 1995) the visual memory of the past from which they emerge and try to manage, is complex, multi-layered, and contested. Here, like in other post-conflict spaces, the past is at the same time divided and glorified, forgotten and remembered, repressed and romanticised (Peterson, Gavua & Rassool, 2015; Witz, 2006). Museums engaging with such a past are necessarily sites of contestation (Macdonald 2023; Karp et al. 2006), and this means that they are “theatres” (Hughes, 1998:10) or “arenas of discourse and negotiation” (Karp et al. 2006: xi–xii) about the relationship between the past and the present. They are a place where regulated social routines and performances take place (Rydell, 2011; Bennett, 1995), or as Rasool (2006) notes about D6M they are a place “for the community to come together and share their experiences and memories” (291). Because of these possibilities, imaginations, different roles, perceptions and functions, museums and the heritage they exhibit are generally understood to be ‘inherently contested’. Some scholars have used other terms to capture contestation and this contested nature of museums and heritage.

For example, Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) use the term *dissonance* to describe the contradictory and competing nature of certain pasts and the challenges of inheriting them. Harrison et al. (2020) used the idea of *toxic heritage* when competing and contradictory pasts are buried and unexpressed or critically engaged. Living with and being constantly exposed to dissonant and competing interpretations of the violence from the past can cause social and psychological discomfort, anxiety, stress, depression, lack of closure, and other challenges related to or affecting mental, physical, and social wellness and wellbeing. Mbembe, Mandela, and students' contestations, ranging from academic and political debates to embodied sociocultural performances, are some among many possible reactions caused or made possible by such exposure and experience. The changing contexts of political dispensations and regimes of power and ideology has impacted the dissonance observed and expressed in the public and in the literature. The CS exhibition for instance juxtaposes the narrative of 'repression' – the advent and experience of colonisation and Apartheid – and the narrative of 'resistance' – the Anti-Apartheid struggle. From Tsing's framework, this is an example of a space of frictions. In addition, the curators invited critical conversations, opening it up not just to Tunbridge and Ashworth's kind of friction (dissonance) but to many other frictions and ideas or expressions associated with friction such as Mandela's historical and political contestation, Mbembe's epistemic contestation, or Ngcobo's voicing of the (in)visibility and lack of voice of the historically marginalised bodies in commemorative spaces.

Another example from the museum literature discusses a dynamic stemming from the contemporary economic global context, where memory and heritage are increasingly 'commoditized',¹³ incorporated and subjected to the same logic and rhetoric such as product, marketability, business performance, ratings, and competitiveness. As Fred Myers has observed, museums are also the "site of cultural production in a globalizing cultural economy" (2006:504). However, despite the impact of economic globalizing processes – tourism, market economy, and technology for instance – the experience of the museum is also localized. Somewhere in between these local and global worlds and related processes are zones of friction. It is within a local context influenced by international and national dynamics affecting

¹³Other term used by various scholars are 'commodified' and 'commercialized' (Ellis, 2015; Rothberg, 2009; Karp et al., 2006; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

heritage, arts, and memory – often packaged into unidirectional and rigid forms to fit certain sociopolitical contexts – that museums operate today.

Exhibitions are a “complex social process” (Kratz & Rassool, 2006:355; Myers, 2006; Butler, 2000). They are “performances”, ‘part of museum activities that offer an epistemologically interesting location’ (Myers, 2006:504, 505). An exhibition is a mode of engagement used by museums to de- and re-centre public debate, to commemorate, (re)contextualize, (re)formulate histories, notions and practices, among many other functions. In short, “the concept of the exhibitionary field” (505) is the defining and interpretation of relationships between people, things, and places. In 1989, Peter Vergo published *The New Museology*, which questioned the role of the museum in society. Drawing from postcolonial theory and debates about representation, it positioned the museum as a place of debate as opposed to monologic authority, and argued for a diversity of voices to produce polyphony and multidirectionality rather than causal or linear, singular representations (Macdonald, 2023; Lehrer et al., 2011; Clifford, 1977). This coincided with what Nick Prior called “postmodern restructurings” (2011:509). In New Museology, the museum becomes territory for contestation (Lehrer et al. 2011) as opposed to Old Museology which was defined by authoritative display, connoisseurship, and a public that is assumed to be passive and uncritical (Strydom, 2017; Boast, 2011; Clifford, 1997). In brief, the ‘Old’ theory conceptualized museums and their exhibitions as ‘bastions of high culture’ (Chipangura, Bond & Sack, 2020:768); in effect, ideological apparatuses in the establishment of hegemony. In 2010, Nina Simon’s *the participatory museum*, was a significant contribution to curators and designers of cultural institutions who were interested in the development, implementation and evaluation of participatory museum experiences. Written as a professional practical guide, one of the book’s central ideas is that “the idealistic mission statements of many cultural institutions to engage visitors with heritage, connect them to new ideas, encourage critical thinking, support creativity, and inspire them to take positive action can be attained through participatory practice” (351). According to Simon, cultural institutions which are objects-centered “are uniquely” equipped to support creative and respectful community dialogue” (ibid.) as objects can be useful to facilitate interpersonal interactions and relationships during participatory activities. From being consumers of content, visitors can move to interaction with content or objects. Ideally, this process would reach a stage where visitors also engage each other socially. This level of participation resonates with the ideas of *co-curation* and other approaches in the current parlance of decolonial thinkers and activists.

Responding to the current moment, the *decolonial turn*¹⁴ (Macdonald, 2023; Jansen & Walters, 2022; Mbembe, 2021, 2019, 2015; Mignolo, 2011), more new theories and approaches continue to emerge. For instance, Mamma and von Oswald offer the idea of *the resonant museum* (2023) which “can be understood as a place where knowledge is produced interdependently, and differences encountered” (23). They remark that there is a particularly urgent need for museums to open up in this century because “public places for dialogue and exchange appear to be rapidly dwindling in an increasingly polarised society” (22), a world rife with “multiple crises” (ibid.). In their account of anthropology and troubling colonial legacies in Berlin, Tinius & von Oswald (2020) quoted the curator and educator Nora Sternfeld asking, “how do we come together in a world that isolates us?” (22). The *resonant museum* seems to me to be one possible way of grappling with the question of ethical and democratic engagement with what French describes as ‘the potential to support social, political and ecological change’ (French 2019). Taking after Barbara Coutinho (2017), Mamma and von Oswald argue that where museums are a “resource that potentially belongs to and can be used by all members of society, and reciprocally has an impact on them, they have the potential for enabling ‘meaningful encounters’ ” (2023: 22). One of the museum processes involved with encounters between objects, other people and ourselves in the museum is curation. From taking place behind closed doors of the museum in a curator’s office, the process has been increasingly collaborative, being referred to as co-curation (Chipangura, 2020; Schorch, McCarthy & Durr, 2019).

Contrary to the “old” colonial museology “where objects were frozen in a timeless past in dioramas”, co-curation enables objects to be connected to the past and present in continuous ongoing relationships” (McCarthy et al., 2019 cited by Chipangura, 2020:768). One example is the participatory memory work co-curated at the District Six Museum by former residents, now turned curators, managers and produces of their own stories and exhibitions. Amie Soudien (2019) has described this as “participatory curation”. The ideal would be *Curatopia*, an imagined ideal of socially and politically engaged curatorial practice for the future (Schorch, McCarthy & Durr, 2019). However, to think about the future is not an easy task in the current context where violence and other forms of crises make the future look “dark” (Mamma & von Oswald, 2023:22) and “threatening” (ibid.), making it difficult to read the future as “open,

¹⁴Perhaps accurately the *New decolonial turn*, considering the previous decolonisation moment(s), for example the 1950s -1970s (Mbembe, 2019; Ngũgĩ, 1986; Fanon, 1986[1952])

full of promise”, and charged with “utopian energies” (Graf, 2021, cited by Mammana & von Oswald, 2023:22).

Thinking the museum as a space of potential for bringing about change and engaging different social, environmental, and other crises, Richard Sandell and Robert Janes (2019) proposed the *activist museum*. Museum Activism elucidates an untapped potential for museums as key resources to address inequalities, environmental challenges, and social injustices. Again, the work of District Six Museum (Soudien, 2019; Rassool, 2006; D6M, 2000) fits well with this framing. Although WHAG was not established as a community museum or a site of memory in the same ways as the District Six Museum (D6M), the fact that it advocates for and educates about shared identity and social cohesion as a contribution to addressing historical injustices (WHAG 19; Robbins 2015) indicates that even where institutions are not *established* with community participation, memory work and restitution in mind (as was D6M), through careful and engaged curation, they can take on aspects of activism, especially when guided by a firm belief in the power of art for social change. The Director and Chair of WHAG held that art was for everyone and that engagement with an art exhibition such as CS could facilitate a healing process and promote a shared heritage.

Drawing on *Curatopia* and incorporating the ideas of museum as a site for social change and activism, Njabulo Chipangura, Patrick Bond and Steven Sack proposed the Museum of Inequality in their 2020 article. Framed as a ‘social practice’, the Museum of Inequality would be “dialogical” (768). Unlike the ‘outdated’ didactic thinking and practices of the old museology, a “dialogical museological discourse” (768) confronts and questions structural systems of inequality. Drawing on Viv Golding and Wayne Modest (2019), the dialogic praxis is based on the view of the museum as “as an affective multilingual space that allows for diverse conversations by the previously marginalized” (Chipangura, Bond and Sack, 2020:768). In grappling with, and possibly contributing to the resolution of “complicated representational problems”, the Museum of Inequality attempts engagement with inequality becoming “more than an academic exercise or museum exhibition – but one that results in social dialogue around corrective action” (2020:784).

While my research did not intentionally seek to apply or focus on any decolonial theories or methods, the performative and conversational approaches of immersion and activation used in the study of CS may contribute to enable some of the kinds of reflections and goals the decolonial approaches attempt. For instance, collaborating in meaning making and knowledge

generation, facilitating socially inclusive and participatory museum space, and co-creating art and exhibitions.

The key discursive practices of the modern museum were set in 1851 by the London Great Exhibition, also known as the Crystal Palace Exhibition (Rydell, 2011; Witz, 2006). From then until now, public modern museums have operated on the notion that exhibitions create a public citizenry, enabling people to identify a sense of belonging through the displays or enabling the visitors to gaze upon the world via the exhibits on view (Macdonald, 2011; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006). The exhibitions are understood as having the potential to influence the way in which the citizens view and inhabit the world and how they engage in the making of that world (Morris, 2021, 2020; Bennett, 1995, 1988; Elgin, 2000; Goodman, 1978). But the London's Great Exhibition was not alone in exerting this influence on the key discursive practices of the public modern museum. It was part of a long history of exhibitionary traditions and practices whose roots can be divided into the most ancient and the most recent.

The most ancient roots can be traced back to two possible sources. The first are the temples and shrines of Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece (Morris, 2023; Abt 2011) and perhaps even much earlier. For example, the Rosetta Stone¹⁵ currently in the British Museum is believed to have originally been on display within a temple in Egypt (Morris 2023¹⁶; British Museum 2023). In ancient Greek, cult sites or shrines dedicated to muses were referred to as *mouseion* (Abt, 2011:115; Findlen, 1994), the etymological origin of the English word museum. The second source is the early opening to the public of private collections, study rooms, and cabinets of curiosities (Prior 2002; Bennett, 1995). Kings, princes, scholars, collectors, and other elites opened parts of their palaces and study rooms transforming them into spaces accessible to special guests and slowly to the general public from the 1500s to the 1700s (Abt 2011; Karp et al., 2006; Kaufmann, 1978; Waddy, 1990). By signing the decree (the Act of Parliament on 7 June 1753) to found The British Museum (BM), King George II gave his Royal

¹⁵ 'Discovered' in Egypt in July 1799 by French officer Pierre-François Bouchard during the Napoleonic campaign in Egypt. When the British defeated the French, they took the stone to London under the Capitulation of Alexandria in 1801, and it has been on public display at the British Museum almost continuously since 1802. It features three versions of a decree issued in Memphis, Egypt in 196 BC. The three versions are in ancient Greek, hieroglyphics and Demotic scripts, which made the Stone key to deciphering the Egyptian script (Morris, 2023; British Museum, 2023).

¹⁶Morris, D. 2023. Stones from Africa, at the British Museum.

Assent which made it the first of a new kind of a museum. It was national, not belonging to church or Royalty, freely open to the public (British Museum, 2023; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023; Morris, 2023). While some scholars see the BM¹⁷ as the beginning of the public museum, others situate this moment in the opening of the Louvre Palace's Grand Gallery in 1793 to the public viewing prompted by the French Revolution; while others go much earlier to the founding of the Ashmolean¹⁸ Museum in 1683 as the earliest institution to grant public access (Abt, 2011; Cochrane, Gray & Kishlansky, 1987; Ovenell, 1986; Josten, 1966). Usually access was progressive, from one or more rooms attached to a palace or to private residences to separate dedicated buildings. Museums started calling exhibitionary rooms, especially those showing paintings or statuary, galleries after the trend in Italy where the word *galleria* was used, often interchangeably with *museo* (Abt, 2011; Pollitt, 1978). Today most museums have galleries showing specific collections. For instance, the BM has more than 60 galleries including the Egyptian sculpture gallery (Ancient Egypt, in Room 4), the Asahi Shimbun Gallery (India: Amaravati, in Room 33a), The Roxie Walker Galleries (Egyptian death and afterlife: mummies, in Rooms 62–63), The Sir Joseph Hotung Gallery (China and South Asia, Room 33), and The Enlightenment¹⁹ gallery (Room 1) (British Museum, 2023). The McGregor Museum has a number of galleries including an Ancestral Gallery, and the Duggan-Cronin Gallery which was initially a separate 'Lodge', opened in 1937 and named the "Duggan-Cronin Bantu Gallery" (Hart, 2007: 68–69). In some instances, galleries evolved to become independent institutions, mostly viewed as commercial and called art galleries, while generally the gallery has remained part of the museum's exhibitionary space and practice. Art/fine art

¹⁷ Established by an act of Parliament in 1753, the museum was originally based on three collections: those of [Sir Hans Sloane](#); [Robert Harley, 1st earl of Oxford](#); and [Sir Robert Cotton](#). The collections (which also included a significant number of manuscripts and other [library](#) materials) were housed in Montagu House, Great Russell Street, and were opened to the public in 1759 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023).

¹⁸ After Elias Ashmole who donated his collection, including holdings he had inherited while assisting Tradescant 'the younger' [naturalist and gardener to Charles I] (Abt, 2011).

¹⁹ The Enlightenment is the name given to a period of discovery and learning that flourished among Europeans and Americans from about 1680–1820, changing the way they viewed the world. This was also a time when Britain became a global power and grew wealthy. A significant part of that wealth came from Britain's colonial empire and its active involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. Housed in the oldest room in the present Museum – originally designed to house King George III's Library – this diverse permanent exhibition shows how British people understood the world at this time through their collections. The displays convey a sense of how objects were organised and displayed during the 18th century. While Enlightenment thinking and collections provided the foundations for much of our present understanding of the history of human cultural achievement, they also tended to tell that story from a predominantly European perspective. This period, and its legacies, are now increasingly being reassessed from a range of critical perspectives (British Museum, 2023).

galleries are types of museums (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023). For example, the William WHAG is defined as such (SACO, 2019; DASCT, 1996).

In line with this, the Post-Apartheid museums mandate (DASCT, 1996) charges that public art galleries or art museums operate as non-commercial entities. WHAG's director, Pretorius, and her staff worked in line with the public mandate and their commitment to facilitating public access to art (Robbins, 2015). This public orientation, which according to Morris (2007) is enshrined in "the post-apartheid public service slogan of Batho Pele (People first)...made museums...inherently, sites of contestation" (60). Taking after Stephen J. Gould, Morris saw this orientation in the museums as a growing acknowledgement of the role of the public context, the social and cultural influence on knowledge production, and as an assertion that science should serve humanity and not the other way around.

The most recent influence on the key discursive practices of the modern museum would be more accurately credited to the complexes, namely the *exhibitionary complex* and the *experiential complex* (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006; Hall, 2006; Bennett, 1995, 1988). The Exhibitionary Complex, coined by Tony Bennett, is meant to refer to a network of museums and fairs behind the underpinnings of the development of the modern nation-state. Its essence was the persuasion of the public into seeing and identifying with its power. The *exhibitionary complex* was an embodiment of this power, a force controlled by the ruling group(s). According to Bennett, its rhetoric of power is manifest in its capacity to organize an order of things and produce a place for the people in relation to that order (1995;1988). The population self-fashions and self-regulates, in a Foucauldian sense.

Martin Hall (2006) builds on Bennett's model but departs from his exhibitionary model as he sees as lacking explanatory power for the effect of the current socioeconomic context on the museum. Hall proposes *experiential complex* to account for what he sees as an important epochal shift captured in what Pine and Gilmore termed an *economy of experience* (1999). In this new epoch, production is no longer the driving force but consumption. The key product is no longer the object but the experience. It is personalized and rendered memorable and reproducible through entertainment and technology. Paradoxically, this new order of things whose seeds were planted when previous regimes of authority and representation were contested and reimagined, in the years between 1970s–1980s – coinciding with the post-modern turn (McGranahan & Rizvi, 2016; Prior, 2011; Clifford, 1988; Turner & Bruner, 1986; Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Fabian,1983) and profound geo-ontological changes and

related debates on what became to be known as the Anthropocene (Pratt, 2022; Haraway, 2016; 2010; Tsing, 2017; Collard et al., 2015) – saw the return of ethnographic authenticity (Hall 2006). Viewed through Walter Benjamin's thought in his *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1999[1958]) the return of the ethnographic object can be understood as a result of what he called the object's loss of its aura. With increasing capacity to copy and reproduce the object, it loses its 'life history', its 'social life' (Appadurai 1996, 1986), the memories it has accumulated – for instance its usages, ownerships, movements of passing through various hands and spaces. All these leave traces which contribute to the object's history and memory. Amidst a context full of copies, this loss may fuel a search for the rare, the authentic. Another consequence, might be the disappearance or permanent loss of the original.

Looking at it through Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulation (2001,1981) which examines the relationship between reality and its symbolic representations, the return of the ethnographic authenticity can be understood as a sign that the contemporary context has reached an apotheosis, a Benjaminian idea of a state in which the mechanical reproducibility of an object has reached saturation, a point when its aura is gone. At this state, a crisis occurs and can only be countered or stabilised by re-introducing the original, the "return of the aura" (Hall 2006:94). However, since we live in a moment of saturation, the returned object is not necessarily the original. It can be generated through mathematical modelling such as digital simulation (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Baudrillard, 1981).

To make sense of this, it is very useful to be aware of Baudrillard's four stages of simulation. First, a symbol accurately describes reality. Second, a symbol inaccurately describes reality. Third, a symbol claims to describe reality. Fourth, symbols no longer claim to describe reality. According to Pine, Gilmore, and Hall, we live in a world with a logic of simulation that no longer pretends to describe reality. This, in large part, is made possible and enhanced through technologies with advanced immersive capabilities. Hall gives a few examples. In the Disneyland immersive environment, the authentically physical objects in the foyers and in the passages leading inside, and the use of, for example African traditional objects, wild landscapes, animals, and guides speaking as representatives of the authentic African life, are some of the ways the ethnographic authentic is returned, made present, and used to benefit the experience economy. However, it is not just what is inside, the virtual spectacle, that is not real, but also the outside.

Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real, but belong to the hyperreal order and to the order of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle. (1981:13)

In Johannesburg, the complex comprising the Apartheid Museum, Gold Reef City, Gold Reef Casino, and a theme Park, is another example referred to by Hall. The object of Apartheid's social and economic cruelty and its denial of movement of the racialized majority into the city is compounded within the same complex of wild fun and a political economy which deny, but also rely, on a kind of flow of bodies and economies organised around the idea that "the center of Johannesburg has always been a free and easy space for all" (Hall, 2006:98). According to Hall, the Apartheid Museum "across the parking lot, provides the counterpoint of exploitation, segregation, and discrimination" (99). For the simulation to work, it needs an anchor of the real. The deteriorating neighbourhood, the socioeconomic uncertainties, the crumbling Apartheid Museum become not just the authentic objects but simulations, the unreal from which to escape. For this new economy to work, according to Pine and Gilmore, it needs to have elements of entertainment, education, memorability, and escapism. While it does not hide itself as being a simulation, it turns the real into a simulation and the simulation into the real, and this is where lies the 'subterfuge' (Bennett, 1995, 1988). On this point, Hall's *experiential complex* intersects Bennett's *exhibitionary complex*. But in Bennett's model, the subterfuge is about museums claiming to be public, democratic, and inclusive while deploying normative props to induce and regulate particular performances amongst its visitors and the public. They are not just temples of contemplation but also of differentiation. What is exhibited is involved in a politics of distinction. Bennett, taking after Foucault, had indeed suggested to see museums as particular kinds of public spaces not to be equated with the general public sphere. In the new order governed by simulation, it is not just the conventional museum space, but everything is a destination. Every tangible and intangible object, an experience. The disciplinary power in this new context, according to Hall, is the inversion of Bennett's Foucauldian perspective. Benjamin's context of the 1900s, where new forms of art such as film and photography "were fuelling a mass culture that broke out of the frame of the conventional art" (Hall, 2006:98–99) is being displaced by a new context where the mechanical reproduction,

has reached an apogee in simulation, and the search for originality has resulted in premier examples of high art being displayed in a reconstruction of a Venetian palace set in a Nevada desert, and the relics of a brutal system of racial segregation on the grounds of a casino that denies the reality of this same history. (98)

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006) suggests that things are more complex, perhaps more complicated than Hall and Bennet's Complexes are able to account for. While Hall's argument powerfully makes visible the important socioeconomic shift and the divergence from Bennett's Complex; it may also be argued that both have developed at the same time and have always been intertwined. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggests a much more circular and entangled way of understanding and defining the *exhibitionary* and *experiential complexes* instead of seeing them as separate. But she leaves the debate open. The same point can also apply to two methods distinguished by Frantz Boaz "who worked for the American Museum of Natural History at the 1893 World Columbian Exhibition in Chicago" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006:36). The "museum method" – scientific, systematic, educational – and the "exposition method" – commercial exhibits, for instance (ibid.). The 'economy of experience' deploys all these methods together. But it can be said that these methods have always been overlapping. The trend was already there reflected in the way some museums increasingly became spaces of entertainment since the 1980s, and some of the outdoor theme parks and commercial expositions included educational and systematic strategies to attract specific audiences and provide specific experiences. But the earlier origins of these trends can be traced back in the fairs and exhibitions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Macdonald 2011; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006; Karp et al., 2006) even much earlier as Hall (2006) suggests, for instance in the (Victorian Era) Royal Tournaments, Promenade Concerts and so on, attendance of which defined what Britishness meant then. Previous empires and civilisations such as the ancient Greeks and Romans also had more or less such events and ceremonies. What is most defining in this new (economic) experiential turn is not so much the object, the event, the place, or the attendance, as for example a picture shared with family or posted on virtual networks such as social media to show that one has been there, but most importantly that one (and others who see it) wants to relive or reproduce the same experience.

The *Complexes* cannot be fully grasped without taking into account the influential involvement of figures such as G. Brown Goode, and institutions such as The British Museum, The Smithsonian, emerging Anthropology departments and so on, in the nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries. Goode and his contemporaries such as Henry Cole who was among people behind the Crystal Palace Exhibition, and Frederic Le Play, one among the movers of the French Exhibition tradition need to be understood as having collaborated with political and business authorities to co-construct the *exhibitionary complex* that was to span over the globe after 1851 (Rydell, 2011). The classicus loci of the Complexes, the nineteenth-century exhibitions and fairs, not only displayed objects from the colonies, but also people in what became known as “Human zoo” (Rydell, 2011: 148; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006; di Leonardo, 1998) contributing to the success and inspiration for more exhibitions and fairs that followed.

Following the 1851 exhibition in London, other most known exhibitions, expositions, and fairs include, the ‘Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London in 1886’ during which ‘a rock engraving from Wildebeest Kuil’ in Kimberley was sent and ‘afterwards donated to the British Museum’ (Morris, 2023), the Colonial Exposition of 1931 in France and the 1933–4 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition (Rydell, 2011; Karp et al., 2006). These fairs are seen as having contributed to the formation of a modern society shaped by race (ibid.). Among the material evidence and theorists that contributed to the global race science and related discourses came from the colonies, including Kimberley. For instance, Rudolf Pöch, Austrian anthropologist and anatomist most notorious for the racial study of human skeletons from South Africa (Legassick, 2016; Legassick & Rassool, 2000) is said to have been in Kimberley in 1909 (Morris, 2023, 2007). Exhibitions were informed by the pseudo-science of race trending at the time, and they were contested by some activists and exhibited people themselves. Rydell (2011) wrote that Anti-lynching crusader Ida Wells and abolitionist Frederick Douglass knew that fairs and exhibitions such as the World’s Columbian City had “to be contested precisely because of its power to determine American racial politics and economic relations far into their future” (149).

Beside this example of an exhibition being a site of contestation, there have been other examples noted by museums and heritage scholars. For instance, Ota Benga – “African exhibited as part of the Department of the anthropology’s exhibits at the 1904 St Louis fair” (Rydell, 2011:147) – at one point at “a fund-raising dinner at the American Museum” having “had enough...heaved a chair in the direction of...Florence Guggenheim, narrowly missing her head” (148). This act, Rydell writes, was “human agency with revenge” (148), and it reflects other scholarly suggestions that people in these “exhibits at fairs and museums were able to maintain their self-esteem and even resist the oppressive conditions in which they found

themselves” (Rydell, 2011:148). Following the incident and protests from some activists, he was sent to an orphanage and then a school, but apparently Benga committed suicide a few years later in a nearby forest. Spaces of exhibition “have always been sites of contestation – and not just between those with power and those without” (Rydell, 2011:149), but the key argument raised by Rydell is that, while there have been acts of protests or resistance and various other forms of defiant agencies among the colonized and other marginalized groups formed in response to their beings, lives, and cultures being exhibited; and while the colonial administrators, collectors, and institutions and individuals organizing the exhibitions sometimes had their own disagreements, the overall

political function and legacy of the exhibitionary complex...was to weave and extend a cultural safety net across the widening fault-lines of class and racial conflict that perpetually threatened the existence in chronological order, first, of the emerging nation-state and, second, of the emerging multinational hegemons that are plundering the world’s human and natural resources in the present. (Rydell, 2011:149)

Museums and their exhibitions were involved in the creation of this “hegemonic power relation” (Maxwell, 1999:197) characterized by what Anne Maxwell called a ‘one-way imperial gaze’ (ibid.; Rydell, 2011). They have been used as devices for colonial ‘othering’, violence, and exploitation (2016; Wright & Mazel, 1987) and this legacy persists in museum contexts in Africa, Europe, and elsewhere (Macdonald, 2023; Chipangura & Mataga, 2021; Tinius & von Oswald, 2020; Fabian, 1983) despite continued contestations and attempts at decolonisation and reimaginings (Mbembe, 2021; von Oswald, 2022; Bennett, 1995). To demonstrate and to contest this legacy, performing artists Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña put themselves on display in museums (Fusco, 1993). They invited the audience to witness and experience what colonial exhibitions must have been like but also to bring the audience to experience the “oppositional gaze” (Maxwell, 1999:147) or the gazing back from the exhibited, a gaze which confronts and interrogates the viewer (ibid.). The exhibition challenged the museum’s modernist idea which assumed that the visitor (and the exhibited) had only one point of view (or way of seeing) to occupy (Bennett, 2011).

There is a long list of other exhibitions (and projects or ideas directed at exhibitions) and which expressed contestations (or set up as sites of contestation). Some interrogated the colonial past and its legacies in the contemporary museum exhibitions directly, others by incorporating and experimenting with emerging ideas, methods, and theories such as reflexivity and

postmodernity (Barnard, 2021; Denzin, 2018; Fabian, 1983; Geertz, 1973), museums as contact zones (Boast, 2011; Clifford, 1997, 1988); artistic and design approaches of intervention and interpretation in museums (Lanz, 2022; von Oswald, 2022; Gupta, 2022; Shelton, 2011; Hiller & Einzig, 1996; Fusco, 1993); digital curation and immersive experiences (Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2022; Droumpouki & Benardou, 2022); and post-ethnography, post-ethnology, trans-anthropology, post-museum (Macdonald, 2023, 2022; von Oswald, 2022; Tinius & von Oswald, 2020). To name but a few examples of the exhibitions, *Des animaux et des hommes (animals and humans)*, 1987; *Bringing It All Back Home*, 1996; *Exit Congo Museum*, 2000 (Shelton, 2011); *I Am The Quilt* (Davis, 2007), Susan Hiller's and other artists' work of in museums (Shelton, 2011; Hiller & Einzig, 1996); *Hive*, 2015 (Harrison et al., 2020), *The Stateless Museum*, #NotMyAfricaMuseum-Stolen Artefact, *Scattered Colonial Body* (Tinius & von Oswald, 2020); *The Battle of Bannockburn* (Droumpouki & Benardou, 2022; Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2022; Benardou, 2019) and others.

Most contested and contesting exhibitions in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Exhibitions which I found in literature and which have been (arguably) the most contested or set up as/or in response to contestations, are *Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture* (Witz, 2006; Skotnes, 1996; Abrahams, 1996) [henceforth *Miscast*], *Digging Deeper* (D6M, 2000; Delport, 2001), and *The Man who Sang and the Woman who kept Silent* (Krog, 2012), among others. Before giving details about these exhibitions however, I would like to point out that CS is the only exhibition, to my knowledge, that was named CS, and in this way intentionally invoking and being associated with an idea of contestation through its naming. In addition to making it a public space for dialogue and critical conversation (WHAG 2019), its curators also welcomed my study whose interest they knew was contestation.

Miscast was a temporary exhibition which opened in 1996 in the South African National Gallery, "some five hundred yards away from the SAM [South African Museum]" (Witz, 2006:118). SAM's diorama which opened in 1960 had become a centre of contestations for years (Davison, 2018, 2001; Skotnes, 2002, 2001). Up until its closing in April 2001, visitors moving to the museum's gallery could see,

the diorama scene of a hunter-gatherer camp in the nineteenth century...painted plaster figures in an invented cultural world of Khoisan hunter-gatherers based on a nineteenth-

century painting by Samuel Daniell. The figures on display were derived from a body-casting project which casts were made of farm workers and prisoners in the northern cape who were taken to represent a racial type of 'bushmen'. This body-casting project, the way that figures on display came to represent 'generic physical types,' and their setting in a museum devoted largely to natural history had made the diorama a center of controversy for many years. Teachers and tour guides would constantly use the display to emphasize racialized physical features, pointing to skin color, hair type, body shape, and genital forms. (Witz, 2006:116–117).

For Witz, *Mistcast* was “the exhibition that constituted the most serious points of engagement with perceived ideas of culture contained in’ the diorama” (2006:118). However, Witz noted that internal and intra-institutional politics and the changing political context posed a challenge to *Mistcast* and became itself contested mostly for reproducing what it had set out to question and address. Witz’s critical assessment reminds me of von Oswald’s (2020) self-critical input about one of her co-curatorial experiences: “despite our efforts, we risked repeating, reproducing or reinscribing colonial mechanisms and power structures” (105). Trying to address “past injustices does not mean that one is sure to avoid reproducing similar injustices in the present” (ibid.). Witz also gives an idea of the pace of change and responsiveness to critiques. For example, SAM’s African Cultures Gallery, which opened in the 1970s and ‘created an impression of’ how the dark-skinned people lived in traditional ways...situated in an ethnographic present’, experienced “little to no change until a new museum structure was instituted by the Post-Apartheid government” (Davison, 2018, 2001; Witz, 2006:117).

Digging Deeper, is a permanent exhibition that launched as D6M moved into a renovated and restored Methodist Church building on Buitenkant Street, Cape Town, in September 2000. Core to the museum’s first four years of life was *Streets: Retracing District Six* (Soudien, 2019; D6M 2000), henceforth referred to as *Streets*, an exhibition which launched the museum on 10 December 1994 in the old Central Methodist Mission Church at 25A Buitenkant Street, Cape Town. *Streets*’ central feature, or artwork, was a 75 original street signs which hung on three laddered columns as a backdrop to the street map. It is meant to be a tangible reminder of a home D6 used to be. The artwork was an embodiment of memories and treasured experiences of what was destroyed, but not forgotten (Chrischené, 2008; D6M, 2000). Described as an ‘archaeology of memory’, *Streets* was the result of years of planning and imagination on the part of the ex-residents and the D6M Foundation (D6M, 2000:no page

number). Through *Streets*, they expressed the desire to reclaim the right to take back their lives, tell their own multiple and complex stories, and ‘re-possess’ the history of a place where they lived, loved, and struggled (Soudien, 2019; D6M, 2000). Briefly they wanted “to render the hidden voices of a D6 story in a public forum where they could be recovered” (Chrischené, 2008:110). Streets provided a conceptual narrative and material foundation for *Digging Deeper*. But while *Streets* focused on the geography and individual lives of the ex-residents, *Digging Deeper*’s “focus began to include the value of its history for a broader South African society” (Chrischené, 2008:108–109).

Digging Deeper is an organizing framework signalling,

a commitment to ‘dig deeper’ into the Museum’s collections, community, processes, and meanings. It engages with the multiple ways in which the collections, resources and spaces of the Museum are used, and expresses its central intention to enquire beyond the surface, into the pasts of South African society and the workings of memory. (D6M, 2000:n.p.).

On the main surface (floor) of the museum is a large painted map. It is surrounded by street signs, hand-mixed colour, and hand-generated works (‘processes’), with documentary, sound, and digitalised material. Voices of narrators and transcriptions of the life histories of former residents are key to the exhibition and the museum. Its aesthetic form is rooted in the visual, verbal, and material contributions, interventions, and rituals of visitors. It is designed to be a shifting and growing layering of old and new knowledge (Delport, 2001; D6M, 2000). An extension was added in 2004 and named Memory Traces, marking another movement, of becoming or self-definition as “a Site Museum of Conscience” (D6M, 2000: n.p.).

Digging Deeper and other exhibitions were not just part of a work of memory recovery, retelling, and reclamation, but they also played a major role in shaping the museum’s institutional ethos based on debate and conversation. “Synergies and contests”, Rassool argues, were “at the heart of the curatorial methods and reflexive pedagogy” (Rassool, 2006:296). Disputing and debating characterised forum-like meetings predating the founding of the museum. In fact, one of its founding ideas was “to be able to contest the past and use history and memory as means of mobilisation around the traumatic landscape of District six” (Rassool, 2006:293). The institutions of the museum and academia were part of the past to be contested. Both were regarded with suspicion mainly because of their implication in the

Colonial-Apartheid pasts. So, while the D6 residents adopted the name of the museum for strategic reasons, its adoption was not uncritical. They tried to re-imagine its conceptualisation by emphasizing what Amie Soudien, a daughter of Crain Soudien (one of the museum's founders and trustees) called an ethic of curatorial care (2019) reflected in collaboration, participation, and the incorporation of arts, and a history of resistance that existed already in the Cape area for centuries since the time of slavery and before then (Smith, 2017; Viljoen, 2017; Christian, 2015).

The D6M conception emerged during the time of the ongoing process of the 1990s, of re-imagining museums in South Africa. It is noted (Rassool, 2006) that District Sixers, as Soudien (2019) calls them, rejected a suggestion to define themselves and their museum as 'coloured museum'. Should they have agreed, the definition would have made it possible to be included and possibly benefit from public funding and other privileges. The rejection to self-defining along the line of Apartheid racial categories and "the experience of being somewhat snubbed by the stat" (Rassool, 2006:293) were critical in the formation and reaffirmation of the museum as an independent space of knowledge (Rassool) and of historical resistance (Soudien, 2019; Wenzel 2018; Sambumbu, 2010; Soudien & Meltzer, 2001). While the categories of the museum and exhibition were adopted, internal debates revealed ambivalence regarding these categories and, according to Rassool (2006), a strong position was taken not to align or network with official museums, but to "mobilize the masses of ex-residents and their descendants into a movement of land restitution, community development, and political consciousness" (294).

As for academia, its suspicion was fuelled by its "histories of appropriation and hierarchies of knowledge" (ibid.). It was a critique of the institutional ways of privileging scholarly procedures of research and modes of authorship which presumed particular flows of knowledge and forms of 'seepage' or 'trickling down' out of universities and into the public domain (Rassool, 2006). The critique of academia and "skepticism was being articulated more generally of the claims of academic knowledge, a knowledge relation that actively produced marginality and subalternity" (295). More than any other exhibition, *Digging Deeper* does the memory work by showcasing, commenting, and interrogating the past and the present. It embodies a sense of self-definition and reclamation based on storytelling, research, and critical conversation. Contestation drives both its internal process as a community forum, and its external relations with the publics and institutions, mainly the state and the academia. At a

critical moment of transition from Apartheid into the new dispensation, it is through its contextual, participatory, and memory-based curating and exhibiting that the D6M emerged, as described by Rassool as “a combative and contested forum of public scholarship” (295), a site of public contestation.

The Man who Sang and the Woman who kept Silent is discussed in a piece, *Re-dreaming a Future* by Krog (2012) where she reflects on the persistence of historical violence in the present. Krog uses a series of artworks including ‘Judith Mason’s untitled mixed-media work made in response to a traumatic revelation at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)’ (29). Few photographs of Mason’s work, *The Man who Sang and the Woman who kept Silent* were included in Krog’s piece in which she makes a critical observation that there was a “widening crack” (2012:39) in the dream of the ‘Rainbow Nation’. She argues for radical change, emphasizing “to change ourselves radically” (39), in order to re-dream a future where the wound can “truly be healed” (39). Krog discusses what she calls a “rainbow science” (39), developed based on the rainbow metaphor. The rainbow, she reflects, “allows the presence of multiple instabilities” (39). It “cannot be formed with only orange and violet. Interpreted metaphorically, the rainbow can only exist inclusively. If parts are too poor, too ill, too bent on revenge or hoarding privilege, it will not be” (39). But, the real magic, she continues, is,

The scientific essence of the rainbow: all the droplets, tiny as they are, as they fall, one’s eyes picks only one colour from a million droplets, then another, until one sees the rainbow in its iconic shape. But all the droplets have to disperse all the colours all the time for one to fully see the rainbow. Are we even capable of that – reflecting all South Africans all the time, living apart, unequal and mistrusting as we are? (39)

When Krog visited an art gallery looking for Mason’s exhibition she had heard about, the central piece was a ‘blue dress’, created based on Phila Ndwandwe’s story which came out during testimonies given at the Truth and Reconciliation hearings. An amnesty applicant, one of Ndwandwe’s torturers recounted how having been tortured, her clothes taken away, and left naked for ten days, she used “an ordinary blue plastic shopping bag” (29) to create “herself these panties” (ibid.). “Oh yes, she was brave” he added. Despite the torture and humiliation, she kept silent and never allowed her torturers to get what they wanted. As if in admiration for Ndwandwe, Krog writes, “he whistled softly through his teeth” and said, “she simply refused to talk” (29). Visiting the exhibition, Krog describes, she found herself in an empty room,

Except an ordinary wire coat hanger suspended in the middle. From it hangs a dress made of blue plastic – blue shopping-bag plastic. The pretty shoulder straps holding up a blue embroidered bodice- from the soft pleated empire line the skirt flows out light and carefree as if swaying in the soft morning breeze. As if in it a woman is moving, lithe and lovely. It is so exquisite, this soft, twirling, blue, delicately rustling dress, that I simply have to bend over. Kneel. Sit. Choke. (31)

I saw this dress between 2011 – 2014 when I was a student in Johannesburg and often visited the Constitutional Court where it was on display among other artworks. It looked like a picture of the dress used in a mixed-media piece. Though it was not as live as Krog's description, it was still hauntingly moving. Clearly as visible and as powerful as the blue dress, were burning konkas²⁰ of memory. Their light and warmth seemed to keep Ndwandwe's Spirit company and illuminated her journey.

Exhibitions are forms of art (Walley, 2023; von Oswald, 2022) primarily. Furthermore, they are forms of memory that can be shaped by museums and changing historical, political, social, economic, and epistemic contexts (Mammana & von Oswald, 2023; Macdonald, 2023, 2022; Schwarz & Radstone, 2010; Nuttal & Coetzee, 1998). Krog's discussion and Mason's work on Pila Ndwandwe highlight these points. According to key memory theorist Pierre Nora (1989), an exhibition is a *lieu de mémoire*, a site of memory. *Lieux de mémoire* are always involved with contestation (Bodenstein, Otoiu & Troelenberg, 2022; Ba et al., 2021; Rydell, 2011; Schwarz & Radstone, 2010; Hoffman, 2010). What makes the exhibition and artworks about Ndwandwe's story a *lieu de mémoire*, is not just the presence of the konkas of memory inviting visitors to bear witness, mourn, and remember, and it not just the moving poetic critique by Krog, but it is primarily Ndwandwe's silence that was nevertheless heard and remained engraved on the memory of her torturers. It is her dignity that cracked a trashy and nameless grave where she was buried and carried her voice and memory back home to her family, the nation, and the world. She is presented, both in Krog's and Mason's literary and artistic conceptualisations as contested and yet contesting. Though her story begins from scattered pieces of her body, at the end she comes up in art and literature in her fullness of being, remembered in body and spirit. She is the object, the site, and the agency of contestation. In

²⁰ Mbaula or braziers.

the following section I focus on scholarly inputs about memory, itself a site but also a tool of contestation in the museum context.

Memory as a multidirectional tool and site of contestation

For us, there is no way of thinking about memory outside its histories and politics – histories and politics that inform understandings of memory inside the academy as well as outside...in circumstances that are themselves historically, intellectually, and politically charged and, indeed, that are changing as we write.

~ Bill Schwarz and Susannah Radstone (2010:4)

Museums are houses of memory (Bodenstein, Otoiu & Troelenberg, 2022), and memory is one and part of public space. Indeed, Pierre Nora (1989) saw memory as life itself, “borne by living societies founded in its name” (8). Maurice Halbwachs’s *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (On Collective Memory) published in 1924 and considered as one of the founding literatures in Memory Studies, places memory at the core of humanity’s historical development. While memory has historically often been monopolised by certain politics and ideologies as a kind of ‘zero-sum game’ instrument, Michael Rothberg (2009) saw memory not as rigid but fluid and multidirectional. In the academy, politics, media, arts, and museums, memory seems to be present everywhere; and it is often at the center of polemics, passionate debates, protests and even war, and other forms of violence (Ndebele, 2016; Hinton, La Pointe & Irvin-Erickson, 2013, 2009, 2002; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004; Ricoeur, 2004; Farmer, 2004). “There can be no doubt that many manifestations of contemporary violence, including war and genocide, are in part the product of resentful memories and conflicting views of the past” (Rothberg 2009:3). But memory is also at the centre of efforts at social and individual remembering, mourning and healing (Connerton, 2011, 1989; Hoffman, 2010; Das et al., 2001), witnessing (Berman, 2010; Ross, 2003), nation building (Tadjo, 2019; Coombes, 2003; Nuttal & Coetzee, 1998), heritagisation (Lanz, 2022; Sjöholm, 2016), and the politics of representation and recognition (Ngcobo, 2018; Hinton & O’Neill, 2009; Stoller, 1995), truth and reconciliation (Tadjo, 2019; Ross, 2003; Coombes, 2003), and knowledge production (Ingold, 2022; Mbembe, 2021; Nora, 1989; Halbwachs, 1980, 1994 [1925], 1992 [1941]).

The multiplicity of memory’s uses and its omnipresence, how it is “to be understood”, and “what meanings attach themselves” to the concept of memory “remains a matter of dispute”

(Schwarz & Radstone 2010:1–2). The hyper-attention to memory, the contests it is involved with, may be attributed to and explained by a number of academic preoccupations. Bill Schwarz and Susannah Radstone, drawing on essays from *Memory: Histories, Theories and Debates*, propose two main divergent perspectives. First, “various investigations into the phenomenon of postmodernism that began to cohere in the 1980s” (2010:1) and, second, the “unprecedented politicization of memory” (2010:2).

Among many particular arguments under the first perspective, perhaps the most common and characteristic is the one bounded in the idea of “social amnesia” (Schwarz & Radstone, 2010:1). The current heightened attention to memory is associated with the idea of its atrophy, collapse, demise, and absence. Proponents of this idea contend that historical consciousness is subject to an erosion effected by the commodifying and recycling processes of late capitalism. These processes, as noted in the previous section, play a role in the frictions that arise in the context of the museum. To highlight some of these points I would like to borrow Tim Ingold’s (2022) discussion about a basket as it enters the museum after being weaved.

In the museum the basket, once a record in itself – or better, a bundle of records, each a story waiting to be told – is turned into an object in the record. This is the record as it appears in the official accounts of history and archaeology, in which every object is catalogued by its place and date of manufacture. Confined to its point of origin, the object stays put while time and history march on. Many museums, of course, are doing all they can to resist this objectification, and to bring the things in their collections back to life. (279)

Artworks in CS followed more or less the same process. They were bought, borrowed, or donated, then catalogued, stored, turned into recorded objects of WHAG. Some were taken from the storeroom and placed in other exhibitions before being re-selected for CS. In the storeroom, these once memories, or ‘records’ in themselves, of memories and experiences lived or witnessed by their ‘makers’, became muted words, voiceless paper and paints, silent in the cupboards, hidden in between cold walls and lifeless canvases. Placing these works of art in a public exhibition is one of the ways to bring them ‘back to life’, to perform a kind of resistance to the objectification Ingold is referring to. In this line of thought, memory in the museum can be seen emerging in two modes of memorialisation, or memory work: (1) of memory as recording. This is hidden, private, invisible, lifeless, removed from the original context and

(2) of memory as displaying. This is public, visible, living. It is sometimes restored back into its original context, but often it is removed from it because the context is constantly evolving.

Arguments under the second perspective move to more specific concerns with memory, for instance, specific acts of remembering and forgetting. Purposeful, or not, memory as remembering and forgetting, is embedded within the “terrain of politics” (Schwarz & Radstone, 2010:2). The present salience of memory in this case is linked to the perceptions and relations between past and present. The workings of the past-in-the present, for instance as expressed in the daily rituals of home-making or world-making (Ingold, 2022; Schwarz & Radstone, 2010) are all run through by the “apparently simple, reified, and knowable past evoked by the call to remember” (Schwarz & Radstone, 2010:3), or call to forget. But what does it mean to remember? More specifically, what would mean to remember in ways that might help to challenge reified thinking and use of the past, or at least to help deepen understanding? To reflect on this question, I borrow again from “the basket-world” view proposed by Ingold. “Baskets”, he notes, “take time to weave, and cords time to twist. To basket the world is to restore things to the temporal current of their ongoing creation. It is to recognise that there can be no pattern without rhythm. For every pattern records the movement of its formation, and to read it one must be able to enter into this movement and to join it with the arc of one’s attention. Herein lies the work of memory” (279). “To remember” therefore, he continues,

Is to call up lives from the past and draw them into the vivid present so they can bind with your own. Remembering another person is like having them there before you, after a long absence, and resuming your conversation; remembering a material is feeling it again in your hands, and responding with gestures that seem to well up from within. Elderly basket-makers, whose powers of recollection may have already faded, can still handle the materials of their trade with accustomed ease. In a basket-world, memory picks up the vital threads of the past and loops them through the eyes of the present. And it is by bringing these past lives into presence, listening to them, and attending to their needs, that we care for them. In the eyes of Generation Now, however, this loop is broken. Instead of drawing the past into their own ways of seeing, these eyes have turned to look back at it, only to appropriate its products as heirlooms. With this, the basket no longer affords, in its weave, a way of remembering or a path of care, and becomes instead an object of memory, to be conserved and curated rather than followed. It tells of another world that is not ours, one that we have irrevocably left behind. And

it is as such that it enters the museum, an institution tasked with preserving objects of the past for posterity, as cultural heritage. (279)

Within this ‘basket world’, to remember has much to do with ‘ways of seeing’ and what we do or what come of what we see. Two modes of seeing seem distinct here in this discussion: one, seeing as appropriation, or seeing with the aim to appropriate what is seen; and second, seeing as attention, or seeing with the aim to opening a path and to care. In the first instance, Ingold uses the phrase “these eyes have turned to look back at it...instead of drawing the past into their own ways of seeing” (ibid.). ‘Turned back’ seems to express a kind of block, a closed door, a refusal to attend to. The past, or a basket, is looked back at but not seen. This seeing is objectifying, a kind of an extractive gaze. It turns the past and memory, into products, objects, and ‘records’. In the second instance seeing denotes reciprocity, vulnerability, and opening which lead to possibilities of attention, listening and care. This, it appears to me, is one of possible ways the use of the reified form of the past may be challenged and or at least understanding of its political workings deepened.

“These conceptualisations of memory – its decimation or disappearance, on the one hand, and its presentness and politization, on the other – need not necessarily function as contraries”, Schwarz and Radstone argue (2010:2). However, their inclination has been to lean more to the ‘presence’ than to the ‘absence’ of memory’ ” (ibid). The reason for their inclination, they explain, is that it seems to them,

what – subjectively – most drives investment in the study of memory, in the academy and in allied domains, is less the notion of the impossibility of memory than the conviction that memory has become the site of, or the sign for, many intersecting issues: the temporal imaginings of past, present, and future; subjectivity and identification; the passage from inner life to the outer world; even the politics of being in the world and of recognition. (2010:2)

In the context of the museum, memory bridges public and private spaces, scholarly and general uses of the past in the present, and even the present in the past. Like in all other contexts, memory in museums is in perpetual tension (Bodenstein, Otoiu & Troelenberg, 2022; Strydom 2017; Mdanda, 2016). It is not just a site of contestation, it is also a tool, invoked to justify, explain, or challenge familiar histories and narratives (Lloyd & Steele 2022; Rothberg, 2019, 2009). It is involved in contesting the meaning of the past and related struggles in the present

(Mbembe, 2021; Abbott, 2020; Jansen, 2020, 2017; Seepe, 2015). The discourse of memory is a discourse over meaning. It is concerned with the relationship between the past and the present (Rassool, 2020; Bell, 2010; Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003; Schama, 1995). As Nora put it, “memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present” (1989:8). More than being about conflictual accounts and “struggle in the terrain of truth” (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003:1) scholars of memory talk about contestation as, also, being about meaning. To contest the past, Hodgkin and Radstone argue, is to pose questions about the present, and what that past means in the present. We seem to engage in this process because our understanding of the past has strategic, political, and ethical consequences. Contests over the meaning of the past are also contests over the meaning of the present and over ways of taking this past forward. Contestation is an “attempt to resolve meaning in the present” (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003:1), and this often results in conflicts such as “where a memorial should be sited, what artefacts a museum should include, whose views should be sought” (ibid.).

To further illuminate the relationship between memory and contestation, I found Stephen Collis’ (2014) and Howard Caygill’s (2013) scholarship very useful. Collis (2014) sees contestation as more of resistance, connected to social and cultural modes of being that add to the ability to inspire and maintain the capacity to resist. To contest is to engage in resistance, he argues. Following his line of thought invites extending Caygill’s philosophical argument about resistance to contestation. “An understanding of resistance”, he posits “is not only crucial for a self-understanding of the present, but also for an understanding of the past” (2013:7). What Caygill proposes regarding the past can perhaps be termed the workings of the present-in-the past, and this thinking can be extended I suppose to thinking about the workings of the future-in-the-present and to the workings of the future-in-the-past. An understanding of contestation, therefore, is important to any project that seeks, or involves, understanding of the past, the present, and even the future, and of understanding social and cultural modes of being in these temporalities. While memory can challenge dominant accounts of the past, Radstone and Hodgkin (2003) maintain that it may also reinvent,²¹ disguise,²² cover up,²³ reveal.²⁴ Bringing all these arguments together in light of Radstone and Hodgkin’s observations, contestation appears to be a mode of engagement that relies on memory and can be used for the purpose of engaging accounts of the past, the present and imaginings of the future. As noted

²¹ memory as reinvention?

²² memory as disguise?

²³ memory as cover up?

²⁴ memory as revelation?

at the outset of this chapter, president Mandela's (Ngcobo, 2018; Karp et al., 2006) as well as Mbembe's (2015) critiques, and the 2015–2016 student protests mobilized the memory of the past to make certain claims about the present.

As the literature highlights however, what is at stake in all contestations is not just the past or the present, but the future as well, and more importantly contestation is about the politics of recognition and being. The most important insight from the literature on memory in relation to contestation can be summarised by Rothberg's (2009) conceptualisation of memory as multidirectional and fluid. Memory does not necessarily have to be competitive and conflictual. It can also be consensual, and a tool that can help open paths for cross-cultural and transcultural exchange (von Oswald & Tinius, 2020; Smith, 2017; Lehrer, 2011), negotiating meaning (Ricoeur, 2004; Dilthey, 1988; Dilthey, Makkreel & Rodi, 1985), activism (Till, 2008), possibly for healing (Maté & Maté, 2022; Gobodo-Madikizela & Van der Merwe, 2009; Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007), and for imagining the present and the future (Droumpouki & Benardou, 2022; Hinton, La Pointe & Irvin-Erickson, 2013; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). The latest works from Mary Louise Pratt (2022), Donna Haraway (2016, 2010) and others concerned with the Anthropocene, incorporate some ideas of multidirectionality and multidimensionality, to discuss and support a reimagination of life, concepts society, and our being in it as multidirectional. We are imbedded in a multidirectional relationship with other species and the material world. The depth of mutual influence, co-dependency and 'co-reproducing' each other is becoming more and more evident and hotly debated over the past decade across disciplines and in anthropology. Pratt who offered *contact zone* (1992;1991) as a way to think about the dispossessed or disadvantaged contesting colonial encounters where odds seemed impossibly against them, suggested that her durable notion might not be able to account for the agency and actions of the non-humans (2022). Should we speak of a multispecies contact zone (Pratt, 2022; Haraway, 2016, 2010), Pratt asks before inviting readers to move forward, to imagine concepts that would help to open up and enact alternative possibilities. The transcultural turn in memory studies marked by Rothberg's notion of multidirectional memory (2009) among other ideas, embodied a similar politics and poetics of hope and possibility. But *contact zone* has been mobilized sometimes without paying attention to some aspects of Pratt's original conceptualisation, for instance the asymmetries resulting from colonial pasts and modern politics of difference (Boast, 2011; Clifford, 1997). Memory has its other side(s) as well. Because of its very qualities of multidirectionality and

fluidity, it can be mobilised in different contexts by different regimes of power and other forms of relationships for a variety of purposes, one of which is contestation.

Disciplinary power and the emergence of a concept of mental health

PASCAL: ‘Men are so necessarily mad, that not to be mad would amount to another form of madness’. And Dostoyevsky, in his DIARY OF A WRITER: ‘It is not by confining one’s neighbor that one is convinced of one’s own sanity.

~ Michel Foucault (2001:xi)

Mental health is a component of mental life – mental faculties, principles of the mind, its state, and so on. It is fundamental to being human, to our ability to feel, think, relate, interact, and enjoy life (Bruun, 2023; Coleborne, 2020a, 2020b). It is a terrain, one among other sites and markers of difference, constructed and mobilised as one of the justifications for regimes of social, economic, and political control such as racialisation and colonisation (Keller, 2007, 2001; Pols, 2007; Sadowsky, 1999; McCulloch, 1995; Lévy-Bruhl, 1923). Amongst the first major works to think critically about mental health was Michel Foucault’s *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (2001) and *The Birth of the Clinic* (2003). For example, in placing together the asylum and the museum as disciplinary institutions alongside prisons and schools, he helped illuminate a connection between mental health and museums.

Foucault, who was writing in the same period as Frantz Fanon (1986[1952]); Butler-Bowdon, 2022; Fanon & Philcox, 2021, 2004) a key thinker in terms of mental health in the context of colonisation in Africa clarified not just a shared historical genesis, but also a close relationship between the modern institution of the museum and the emergence of a conceptualisation of mental health. The concept of health, or of the healthy and by extension the mentally healthy, emerges within a specific context of European modernity and has evolved within and alongside other modern processes, such as modern rationality and biopower. The 1650s is when a key event – the creation of the Hôpital Général, in 1656²⁵ – in Foucault’s account takes place; this is just a few years (1641) after Rene Descartes’ theory which comes to be mostly known as mind-body dualism, Cartesian dualism, or Cartesian dichotomy (Singer & Erickson, 2011;

²⁵ A decree founded the hospital in Paris.

Baer, Singer & Susser, 1997; Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987). Even though the seeds of this binary thinking existed since the times of Plato (2021), Cartesian theory is seen in modern literature as having refined the idea which becomes foundational in modern scientific thought, not least because it is taking shape as the empires – Spanish, Dutch, French and British – are emerging and expanding, vying over resources, and competing over primacy. The age of reason,²⁶ the Enlightenment, is entangled with voyages of exploration, violent conquests, colonisation at home and abroad, pillaging and looting, and the acquisition of wealth and knowledge which are brought to the empires' centres (West, 2016).

In Foucault's account (2001), the creation of the Hôpital Général and the Great confinement (17th–18th century)²⁷ of the poor, the mad, insane, unemployed, and so on, play a defining role and lead to two key outcomes: (1) the emergence of specialised (disciplinary) institutions and (2) a psychosocial structure of governance and control. In medieval times, foolishness is part of everyday life. Being part of this society implies participating sometimes in what may be considered folly, fun, or frivolous social activities, for instance peasants' group dancing and drinking, carnivals and so on. Some paintings capture such life. Artworks, for instance 'Feast of Fools' (Foucault, 1989:19) by Peter Bruegel (1525–1569), 'Ship of Fools' after Sebastian Brant's poem (1494; Foucault, 1989:22) by an unknown artist (1549), and others are among many examples (Metmuseum.org, 2022; Ramm, 2019). Madness at this stage is not yet separate; it is part of the everyday experience. The Renaissance period brings with it the removal of those who did not fit in. The 'mad' or 'fools' are sent away or encouraged to leave. Foucault uses the 'ship of fools', metaphorically, as a way to describe the psychosocial imaginary and practice of beginning to create a category of the mad as a group or as a kind of behaviour outside a certain emerging order of society.

The seed, or the impulse, to this emerging fear and separation was planted before and during the early days of the Renaissance when the lepers were removed from the general public and sent into confinements which became to be known as 'leper houses', on the margins of society. For example, what is currently known as Robben Island Museum in South Africa was used by colonial powers at certain times in the 1800s as confinement for the "lepers" and the "mad" before it was used for dissenters, exiles, and political prisoners (Robben Island Museum, 2023; SACO, 2019:29). The Great confinement occurred with the emergence of the early modern

²⁶ Seen by some anthropologists such as Paige West (2016) as beginning with Newton's *Principia* which inaugurated mechanical philosophy.

²⁷ Including opening of first correctional houses in Germany and England.

cities. The poor, the mad, the unemployed, and the migrants who are perceived as threats to the emerging social order are confined, often on the former grounds of the leper houses. These evolve into madhouses, workhouses, jails, prisons, and hospitals. Foucault emphasises that this specialisation occurs when the poor are sent to poor houses, the lawbreakers or criminals sent to jail, and the mad or insane sent to asylums.

It is at this point that a new category emerges, the mentally ill, created as the poor, the mad, and the criminal are separated. The modern concept and treatment of the mentally ill originates in the modes of practice and thinking taking place inside and outside confinement. Inside confinement, the body is subjected to various treatments, psychological and bodily tortures, and other experiments, for example, bleeding, bathing, shocking, and working cures. Outside confinement, society takes life in the spaces of confinement as a measure against which to define itself. It is used as a form of control. In light of Hannah Arendt's thinking (2018), it is possible to read these spaces of confinements as the opposite to her notion of the public space. They are locations of asymmetrical positionalities and relationalities, governed by terror and torture. Following Giorgio Agamben's *homo sacer* theorisation, these spaces may be seen as zones of exception, for example in colonial and Apartheid camp-like contexts such as plantations and townships (Mbembe, 2003), where violence strips life bare (Svirsky & Bignall, 2012; Agamben & Heller-Roazen, 2020; Agamben, 1998). However, Sally Grace Swartz's description of the homeless and wandering families and patients in the nineteenth Cape Colony (2015) indicates that these zones were not necessarily physically separate from the rest of society. In line with these thoughts and Foucault's, the spaces of confinement influence conformity, normalisation, exclusion, stigmatisation, and marginalisation. By looking at the precarious life and human conditions in the spaces of confinement, society defines itself and submits to the emerging rationale of modernity in its dehumanising and exploitative forms.

Health, non-contamination, healthy living, is constructed in the Middle Ages through processes of confinement, social imagination, and a ruling structure of that specific period. Othering the leper, placing the perceived unhealthy outside of social sight defines the healthy. This classificatory binary thinking, will characterise the colonial project and treatment of the colonised, and according to Foucault's and other literature (Mbembe & Ginsburg, 2021; Mbembe, 2015; Kleinman, 2020; Lacy, 2017; Fanon, 1986); it will influence ideological and intellectual canons behind the political, sociocultural, and educational institutions such as the museum in the colonies and the metropolis (von Oswald, 2022; Bennett, 2006, 1995, 1998). The image of the colonised, native, savage, poor, uncivilised, exhibited body was required, and

therefore it was imagined and created (Memmi, 2021; Keller, 2007, 2001; Pols, 2007; Sadowsky, 1999; McCulloch, 1995; Mudimbe, 1988; Lévy-Bruhl, 1923). As Nadine Gordimer observed, “the existence of the colonizer requires that an image of the colonized be suggested. That image is where colonization begins; its premise, its icon” (Memmi, 2021:28). Foucault’s critical frameworks bring the logic of the image into the public space, outside glassed boxes and walls of the museum and the asylum. The anti-colonial struggles, for instance, attest to the agency of the colonized as well the agency of some allies among the colonizers.

For Gordimer – who reflexively describes herself as “a colonizer’s offspring” (Memmi, 2021:32) in her preface to Albert Memmi’s book – the category of mental health implodes this logic when ‘in 1928 a psychiatrist from Europe practising in a mental hospital for South African black men “made a startling discovery...[that] the manifestations of insanity...are identical in both natives and Europeans”’. “This discovery”, Gordimer continues, “made me inquisitive to know if the working fundamental principles of the mind in its normal state were not also the same” (2021:30). The information affords her a space and a possibility to contest. She experiences internal turmoil, a self-contestation which translates into contesting the concreteness of the order of time. Mental health is one of the constructs of difference mobilised to justify and sustain the socioeconomic and political order under colonisation and Apartheid and into the postcolony (Bruun, 2023; Keller, 2007, 2001). This continuity is noted by Gordimer as she writes, “slavery was not abolished, it evolved into colonisation” (2021:26). Foucault warned that the ‘17th-century historical rupture in the flow of power over life and death...should be seen as more of an integration of sovereign power (the “right of the sword”) into... ‘biopower’, as opposed to seeing the process as a moment of disjuncture in which biopower came to replace the classical notion of sovereign power (Foucault, 1977). Gordimer remarks, ‘retrospect has not altered, by perspective, the meaning of what was done to subject peoples’, after reminding that Memmi’s thesis was about power and that what he wrote in the 1950s and what Olaudah Equiano wrote about it in 1789, ‘is as true in our Millennium’ (ibid): “When you make men slaves you deprive them of half their virtue, you set them, in your conduct, an example of fraud, rapine and cruelty, and compel them to live with you in a state of war” (Memmi, 2021: 27; Equiano & Edwards, 1996; Equiano, 1789). This “state” does not necessarily, or solely, mean violence as limited to the physical. It has a “psychological impact on both sides” (Memmi, 2021:32) to use Gordimer’s words.

This observation helps to appreciate what Robbins meant when he said that there is ‘inside the psyche of white and black a contest going on’. What he terms ‘the psyche’ is one of the two

main spaces he sees in CS exhibition. ‘The interior’ space. His description, his choice of words, rely on a language of mental health which reminds one of pre-world war ‘sciences of the soul’, of the ‘interior’ (Mead, 1928; Malinowski, 1927; Haddon, 1901). While the use of the term mental health is relatively new, entering popular use after the end of World War II, anthropological research in what we call mental health today can be traced back to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries’ anthropological interest in the so-called ‘primitive mind’ and to the influence from sciences of the mind or psy disciplines, namely psychoanalysis, psychology, and psychiatry (Bruun, 2023; Martin, 2021). The theory of the ‘primitive’ or ‘savage’ mind (Martin, 2021; McCulloch, 1995; Lévy-Bruhl, 1923), informed by Darwinian evolutionism with its roots in Victorian scientific racism, was a widespread understanding that claimed that so-called ‘primitive’ people did not have higher mental functions compared to the ‘civilised’. ‘Primitive’ people were said to be more physical than mental (Martin, 2021), and this seemed to be evidenced by their higher physical performance. Amongst early critiques, which led to challenging this theory, include what is seen by some scholars (Bruun, 2023; Sullivan, 2012; Herle & Rouse, 1998) as an “early version of mental health research” (Bruun, 2023:5) – the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits in 1898 (Haddon 1901). From the early periods of modern anthropological studies of the mind or the psyche by Edmund Leach (1958), Bronisław Malinowski (1927), Boas’ students [Edward Sapir (1932), Ruth Benedict (1934), and Margaret Mead (1928)], to today’s advances in digital mental health research and practices (Yates-Doerr & Maes, 2023[2019]; Santomauro et al., 2021; Bemme, Brenman & Semel, 2020), anthropological research took on many different trajectories in the field of mental health. In what follows, I present my summarised understanding of the available literature into key focal areas of anthropological research on mental health.

The sociocultural and medical focus

On studies of the psyche and the mind which gave rise to psychological anthropology, followed cross-cultural or transcultural psychiatry in the 1970's, aiming to account for culture and render anthropological knowledge applicable to clinical problems. To some, this meant developing cultural competency in psychiatry, particularly in terms of how cultures differ in the perception and experience of illness, and in the classification, diagnosis, and treatment of people (Kleinman, 1980; Littlewood & Lipsedge, 1997). Within anthropology, it is largely medical anthropologists who have been at the forefront of dealing with these issues in the context of psychiatry, a biomedical discipline which has tended to dominate anthropological studies of mental health (Pinto, 2020; Jenkins, 2018; Kleinman, 1997, 1978; Westermeyer, 1976; Sapir, 1932).

Scholars such as physician and medical anthropologist Arthur Kleinman (1980, 1978; Kleinman, Eisenberg & Goods, 1978), and activists' movements, such as the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1970s (Szasz 1974), played a significant role in confronting psychiatry with culture. While culture was taken up as a language in clinical settings and of anthropological critique, its ambiguity remained, and its most important challenge was biological determinism (Sargent & Larchanché 2009; Littlewood, 1996). While ideas such as the cultural construction of clinical reality and increased competency in translating concepts from cultural anthropology into clinical language for practical purposes were important developments, there was a growing distinction between illness and disease (Kleinman, 2020; Eisenberg & Goods, 1978), a move which illuminated the enduring binary thinking in medicine, and science generally. In this thinking, doctors had scientific knowledge and authority, and patients or ordinary people had determined cultural beliefs where disease was a medical reality set against illness as a cultural experience (Bruun, 2023; Engel, 1977). This conceptual binary implies,

a problematic separation of the physical versus the mental whereby the former is seen as underlying (biological) causation and the latter as mere (cultural) representation. This has tended to presuppose that neurobiology—as a seemingly culture-free reality—is the ontological foundation of mental health upon which perceptions and experiences of it are culturally or socially constructed. We can trace many contemporary versions of this type of social and cultural constructionism in anthropologies of mental health and related fields (Bruun, 2023:7).

In her ethnography of psychoeducation (*psicoeducación*) in Oaxaca, Mexico, Whitney Duncan (2017) argued that mental health practice emerges as,

a project of what she terms ‘psychological modernisation’, a movement that is defined against its own perception of local culture (consisting of ‘traditional medicine’, ‘beliefs’, and ‘magical thinking’). It considers local culture to be incommensurable with global notions of mental health and a source of resistance to mental healthcare and its de-stigmatisation. Not only does psychoeducation in Oaxaca provide a means of self-understanding among professionals and patients alike in the context of modernity...it also actively seeks to produce the psychological conditions for modernity. (Duncan, 2017:37)

While exploring how mental health practitioners, psychologists, and patients in and around a psychiatric hospital, come to understand culture as a barrier to mental healthcare, she observed that they strive to further ‘psy-globalisation’ – the transnational flow of ideologies and practices around mental health: ‘Practitioners see themselves as involved in a global and modernising movement to promote mental health but express frustration about how difficult this project is in Oaxaca, where “local culture” prevents their efforts’ (Duncan, 2017:37). Mental health and culture are framed as opposite, and the modern discourse on mental health is employed as a civilising device. Goode would have been pleased to see that his ideas are alive beyond the museum. Interestingly, his motto was that ‘to see is to know’ (Rydell, 2011: 136-141, 149). Ministering to the ‘mental and moral welfare’ of the masses to turn them into ‘good citizens’ was core to his vision (Rydell, 2011, Goode, 1901). Foucault’s critiques and theoretical frameworks such as biopolitics, biopower and *assujettissement* (subjectification) are some of the ideas and lenses through which scholars, such as Bruun (2023) and Duncan (2017), and popular sociocultural organizing, such as the anti-psychiatry movement or the community in Oaxaca, make sense, but also enact contestation over meaning, perception, and other dynamics and politics related to mental health.

The cognitive focus

With the cognitive advances of the 1970s, the ‘psy’ entered another conceptual space as anthropologists began to move from structuralism to laboratories of cognitive science. New evolutionary theories gave anthropologists novel ways of thinking about cognition (Bateson, 1972) leading to cognitive anthropology (Blount, 2011). Some anthropologists challenged what to them appeared to be their discipline’s ignorance of proper scientific inquiry of mental life. Cognitive anthropology sought to put an end to the Durkheimian separation of the social from the psy that had informed so much of anthropology from the outset. However, as Bruun (2023) put it, mental health was still largely taken for granted in cognitive anthropology, which has tended to examine the transmission of cultural representations, Theory of Mind (ToM), innate modularity, and cognate ideas (Irvine 2018; Bloch, 2012; Whitehouse, 2001). With the developments of neuroscience in the twenty-first century, mental health is perceived to be more anchored in the physical reality of the brain (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013), depended solely on its biological functioning. ‘Machines gaze’ at chemicals to produce neuroscientific facts and in turn patients’ subjectivities are shaped by these facts as well as related neurobiological theorisations. The resulting consequence is that some people would see themselves as only the sum of their brain. Their mental health and who they are as what their brain is, and their mind reduced to a single story of either a failing or a working brain chemistry. This biological understanding of mind and mental ill-health leads to a concept of the self as a pharmaceutical self (Jenkins, 2010; Petryna, Lakoff & Kleinman, 2006) with related psychopathologies and pharmaceutical treatments, which have significant ethical, economic, and social effects. Some anthropological studies have looked at some of these effects, for instance, how ‘disorders’ such as bipolar (Martin, 2007), autism (Belek, 2023 [2019]), depression (Kitanaka, 2012), and schizophrenia (Luhrmann & Marrow, 2016) are constructed; pharmaceutical effects (Dumit, 2003; Jenkins, 2010), and the production of neuroscientific facts (Cohn, 2010,2008; Dumit, 2004).

The biopsychosocial focus

Taking after a model invented by psychiatrist George L. Engel (1977), this perspective acknowledges the whole body-mind connection, advancing the biological, psychological, and social constitution of the subject in a particular context. Rather than separating the biological, social, and psychological phenomena, this perspective claims a more scientific rigor and holistic understanding. The resulting consequence for mental health care is a treatment that does not consider just the chemistry of the brain, but also the social and the psychological factors (Kleinman, 2020; Gask, 2018; Álvarez, Pagani & Meucci, 2012).

Over the past decade, research has focused on modalities and professions about healing, care, ethics, and politics in the contexts of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and other evidence-based psychological practices, but the most important development so far, is the digitisation of mental health and the anthropological attention it has been attracting.

The digital focus

During and following the COVID-19 pandemic (Yates-Doerr & Maes, 2023 [2019]; Santomauro et al., 2021), there has been increasing movement online into what may be termed virtual psy spaces. According to Brunn (2023) ‘new therapeutic socialities and relationalities have unfolded’ (14). The ‘digital psy’ presents another field of approaching, diagnosing, and treating mental health (Bemme, Brenman & Semel, 2020). Digital technologies such as AI-assisted interfaces – health apps, online clinics, wearable tracking devices – constitute new fields of understanding, accessing, and conceptualising mental health (Trnka, 2022; Minozzo, 2022; Birk & Samuel, 2020; Brandt & Stark, 2018; Fullagar et al., 2017).

Whether it is in the context of shifting theoretical or scientific advances, or changing economic, political, cultural, and social dynamics, the key insight from all reviewed anthropological

studies is that mental health is part of what it is to be human. It is central to “our ability as humans to think, feel, relate, interact with each other, sustain ourselves, and enjoy life” (Brunn, 2023:1), and much depends on places where interaction and exchange happen (Mammana & von Oswald, 2023). The anthropology of mental health describes people’s experiences and put emphasis on how states and meanings are constituted relationally in different contexts.

In the context of the museum exhibitions, Colin Gale (2014) looked at London’s Natural History Museum’s 2009 exhibition *After Darwin: Contemporary Expressions*. From it, he picked up a text, among many short texts by Mark Haddon illustrating ‘a range of emotional states: fear, disgust, reflection, anger, surprise, and so on’. In the text, ‘meditation’, the author describes an experience of visiting a gallery, emphasising the pleasure of,

wandering through these large white rooms, the quiet, the stillness, the company of other people engaged in the same activity, moving politely around you and talking to one another in hushed voices... You can think clearly here... In truth you think of very little, but this is a pleasure, too, letting your mind empty, all the difficulties that beset you outside this building slipping slowly away, and in their place something you cannot quite put your finger on... It is not the pictures you come here for. It is the space between the pictures. (quoted in Arends, 2009:46)

Gale makes reference to this quote to demonstrate the potential museums have in promoting, or at the very least doing no harm to the mental wellbeing of visitors. The exhibition dealt with mental health, among other themes, but indirectly via related emotional and mental phenomena; and Gale drew on the objects (which are not directly about mental health) to speak about the visitor’s experience and to write about mental health in a piece he entitled *A Museum of the Mind*.

Others have engaged directly with mental health or related themes. For instance, *Exhibiting Madness in Museums: Remembering Psychiatry through Collections and Display* by Catherine Coleborne and Dolly McKinnon (2011) and *Museums of the Mind* by Chris Wood (2008) engage with exhibitions dealing with objects and words (names, titles) referring to mental health directly. Wood’s, Gale’s, Coleborne and McKinnon’s work are part of an emergent scholarship on museums and mental health, fuelled by a growing public and academic interests over the past two to three decades. Topics and areas covered by academic researchers from within and ‘outside’ anthropology, have included the potential of museums to raise awareness

and benefit mental health and well-being (Lanz: forthcoming; Mammana & von Oswald, 2023; Tan & Tan, 2023; Chatterjee, 2020; Dudley, 2017; Chatterjee & Camic, 2015; Camic & Chatterjee, 2013); particular needs of visitors diagnosed with challenging mental health conditions such as schizophrenia (Kiseleva-Afflerbach, 2022; Chen et al., 2014); the representation of mental ‘illness’ experiences in museums (Coleborne & McKinnon, 2011; Coleborne, 2001); museum rooms or museum-like spaces and exhibitions in hospitals as well as memorialisation and heritagisation of mental health hospitals and mental health related sites such as former madhouses and asylums (Lanz: forthcoming; Lanz & Montanari, 2022; Coleborne, 2003); visitor experience and multisensory approaches (Gija & Jelincic, 2022; Kiseleva-Afflerbach, 2022; Dudley, 2017; Smiraglia, 2015); histories, memories, and politics (Lanz, 2023; Coleborne, 2020a, 2020b); and post-COVID-19 museums and futuristic possibilities (Kahambling, 2023; Peng & Chen, 2023; Charlier, 2021).

All the available literature I have encountered so far regarding mental health in the museum context use either direct or indirect approaches to mental health. In the indirect approach, exhibitions are often the usual displays dealing with any theme from everyday life. This is reflected in Gale’s case. In a sense, the theme of mental health is integral, not separate or isolated, from other theme(s) of the exhibition. The public may or may not realize or experience any connection of the exhibition to mental health. In the CS exhibition for instance, there is no mention anywhere of words such as mental health, psyche, madness, mind, or any words or specific image which make direct reference to mental health. This however depends on perceptions and interpretations. In contemporary public domain, certain specific terminologies from the fields of psychiatry, psychology, health sciences, and others, have become popular and generally spread, entangled with modes of knowing, relating, expressing, and sense making of everyday social contexts. This sometimes informs what lived experiences, words, and images the visitors and anthropologists see or use to interpret the exhibition. Rather than assuming and prescribing particular definitions or understandings of mental health, anthropologists tend rather to look at how people they are studying come up with and perform their own meanings and definitions of mental health (Mammana & von Oswald, 2023; Bruun, 2023). They are more interested in how specific groups or individuals take on, use, or reject mental health and mental-health-related conceptualisations and services, and what possible contextual dynamics might explain the responses (Bruun, 2023; Duncan, 2017).

Based on the literature and direct communication with some scholars in the field of museums and mental health, the anthropological study of mental health in the context of the museums is still young, its literature small and/or still scattered, but it has been growing rapidly, especially during and after COVID-19 (Lanz: forthcoming; Mammana & von Oswald, 2023; Lanz, 2023; Yates-Doerr & Maes, 2023 [2019]; Onchev, 2019; Dudley, 2017). In the aftermath of the pandemic, several studies have noted the increased need, but also complexity, as far as the subject of knowledge about mental health in the museums is concerned (Kahambing, 2023; Tan & Tan, 2023; Peng & Chen, 2023; Charlier, 2021; Coleborne, 2020; Dudley, 2017). Anthropology, especially a museum anthropology focused on mental health, has much to offer to the knowledge with its sensibility, attentiveness and reflexivity (Bruun, 2023; McGranahan, 2018, 2016; Macdonald, 2023, 2013; von Oswald & Tinius, 2022; von Oswald & Rodatus, 2017) to contexts of complex and potentially traumatic frictions. After all, as Dilthey (1988, 1985) put it, anthropology's object is the complex 'concrete nexus of mental life'. The following chapter is a presentation of the methods I used to investigate the relationship of meanings and definitions of contestation in the complex context of CS.

Chapter 3. ‘Homo performans’? On methods and ethics as continuous negotiation

Through performance we inhabit the world, and we are inhabited by it. We respond to it, we act on it, and we translate the meaning of our experiences through various embodied expressions. On 30 September 2019, I sat in the company of hundreds of people attending the official opening of a New Mental Hospital here in Kimberley. Formal speeches alternated with playing music and singing by a police band. The audience danced and sang. But they also laughed, shook heads, voiced exclamations, and performed various gestures in response to the speeches. While I enjoyed sitting and taking pictures and notes, I got up from time to time to join the singing and dancing, and I walked around either to find a good angle for a picture, or later when I toured the hospital. Visitors behaved more or less the same way as they did in the CS exhibition. They walked around, bent to look at a detail in an artwork. Some sat down. Some expressed surprise, joy, or shock; others passed through without any word or show of any reaction. Even though visitors did it differently, all responded to the artworks. Artworks are also “performances” (Turner & Bruner, 1986:5), understood according to Dilthey (1988[1923]) and Turner as expressions of lived experience. My methods emphasized conversational art, a combination of conversation and arts-based activities, mainly performing arts – poetry, theatre, dance, and song – informed by performance ethnography (Kondo, 2022, 2018; Denzin, 2018, 2003; Fabian, 2007, 1990; Turner, 1988, 1982; Turner & Bruner, 1986). The core data generated therefore was a mixture of both verbal and artistic material and related insights, some of which were translated on survey-questionnaires and feedback notes and other mediums. This chapter presents and discusses these methods and related activities, and it closes with a reflexive note on ethics as contextual and processual.

Influenced by Dilthey and based on his own observations, Turner called humankind *homo performans* (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013; Turner, 1982). With this definition, he emphasized the centrality of performance to humans as social beings. At the core of performance-based anthropological methods is the idea that the world, people, and life itself are performative and can be ‘read’ through performance. To ‘read’ parts or whole expressions of sociocultural life, various performance-based methods and concepts were developed within anthropology and in conversation with other disciplines such as drama, theatre, movement, and performance (Kondo, 2018; Schechner, 2021; Manning, 2009, 2007; Turner, 1982), for

example, Kenneth Burke's *dramatism* or *dramas of living* (Burke, 1969), Irving Goffman's *dramaturgy* (1959; Denzin, 2018), Victor Turner's *social drama* and *anthropology of performance* (1988, 1982; Turner & Bruner, 1986), Mienczakowski's *ethnodrama* and use of post-performance discussions (Mienczakowski, 2001; Denzin, 2018, 2003), and *performance ethnography* (Kondo, 2022; Denzin, 2018, 2003; Conquergood & Johnson, 2013; Fabian, 1990).

Exhibitions and related practices are "performances" (Myers, 2006:504–505; Turner & Bruner, 1986:5). In this perspective, the CS exhibition is a performance; and according to Dilthey, it may also be called a social expression. To enter and interrogate such a space of performance about a phenomenon such as contestation, required appropriate ways to be able to engage it, experience it, and try to grasp its meaning from a multiplicity of perspectives. To achieve this, I was inspired by Turner's work and insights, bringing together performance and ethnography, and his anthropology of performance which is located in his anthropology of experience. I invoked Wilhelm Dilthey's concept of *Erlebnis* (1976) – experience as lived through, or lived experience – to deepen understanding and meaning, based on the coparticipants' and my own experience of contestation in CS. Also, I drew on Dwight Conquergood's notion of *coperformance* and Homi Bhabha's *performative* and *conversational art* to expand my approach to conversation and participation-observation. Ethnographies involving performance conducted by Fabian, among others, were instrumental in providing comparative material. In the following section, I introduce and discuss the ideas of *Erlebnis* and performance, setting the basis for presenting and discussing how meaning was accessed and translated.

***Erlebnis* and performance**

Victor Turner adhered to the Diltheyan view of experience expressed in his concept of *Erlebnis*, approximately meaning "lived experience" (Turner, 1988:84; Turner & Bruner, 1986:3). For Dilthey, experience is "a multi-faceted yet coherent system dependent on the interaction and interpenetration of cognition, affect, and volition...made up of not only our observations and reactions, but also the cumulative wisdom (not knowledge, which is cognitive in essence) of humankind, expressed not only in custom and tradition but also in great works of art" (cited in Turner, 1988:84). To acquire this wisdom does not happen by "abstract solitary thought, but by participation immediately or vicariously through the performance genres" (ibid.). Viewed

in this perspective, artworks in CS are not just expressions of experiences in the form of art but they are also made of cumulative wisdom of artists, historical and social context, and observations and reactions to them, as well as the participation of members from the communities in Kimberley, visitors, curators, and myself, in efforts to experience, make meaning, acquire and share this ‘wisdom’.

Taking cues from Dilthey’s, Turner’s, and Bruner’s theorising and conceptions, I approached CS as performance. Each artwork in the exhibition can also be understood as a performance because it is an expression of an experience, first from the artist, and then from the curators who brought it in conversation with other experiences in their conception of CS. As noted at the outset of this chapter, “The anthropology of performance is an essential part of the anthropology of experience” (Turner & Bruner, 1986:7; Turner, 1982:13). By experience, Turner and Bruner meant ‘not just sense data, cognition, or, in Dilthey’s phrase “the diluted juice of reason,” but also feelings and expectations’ (1986:4); “some sort of felt life” as Clifford Geertz called it (1986:374). Experience comes to us not just in feelings or words but also in images (Fernandez, 1986).

Moreover, “an experience is more personal, as it refers to an active self, to a human being who not only engages in but shapes an action” (Turner & Bruner, 1986:5). The engaging and shaping take places at various levels, not only ‘living through’ the experience but also looking back and giving meaning to it. The experience is “incomplete”, according to Turner’s translation of Dilthey, unless one of its “moments” is a “performance,” an act of creative retrospection in which “meaning” is ascribed to the events and parts of experience – even if the meaning is that “there is no meaning”. Thus, experience is both “living through” and “thinking back.” It is also “willing or wishing forward,” i.e., establishing goals and models for future experience in which, hopefully, the errors and perils of past experience will be avoided or eliminated (Turner, 1982:18). To “live through” and learn about CS, I emphasised long term immersive thinking. In what follows, I discuss how to “think back”, access and make meaning and translate it, through observational, conversational, and performative methods.

Observational, conversational, and performative methods

Following in the footsteps of Erving Goffman – who, in 1959, proposed to read society dramaturgically (Denzin, 2003) – and drawing on his own extensive research, especially his performance ethnography collaboration with Richard Schechner (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013), Turner contributed to an emerging new paradigm, bringing together ethnography and performance, informed by his immersion in ritual. He borrowed, but also shared, anthropological and ethnographic knowledge and methods with theatre, communication, and performance among other studies. He challenged the ‘antitheatrical prejudice’ from the time of Plato which associated performance with falsehood and fakery and saw it as only about fun and entertainment (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013; Fabian, 2007; Barish, 1971, 1969; Plato, 2021). Turner’s views shifted from mimetic (*mimesis*) to poetic (*poiesis*), setting a stage for a kinetic (*kinesis*) thinking of performance. In Homi Bhabha’s term of the *performative*, a kinetic view associates performance with fluidity, motion, and fluctuation which trouble boundaries and closures (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013; Bhabha, 1994). In this sense, Bhabha’s performative implies “action that incessantly insinuates, interrupts, interrogates, antagonizes, and decentres powerful master discourses” (Bhabha, 1994: 46–49).

Through Haraway’s and Turner’s understanding described earlier, it can be said that my being-and-presence, as well as the being and presence of staff, visitors, and objects in the CS, implied interaction, conversation, and performance, perhaps more accurately a “co-performance” (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013:14; Denzin, 2003:26). And through Bhabha’s notion of the performative, my being and presence, as theirs, also implied an interrogative, decentring, and disruptive movement. It implied a context of a dialogical and dialectical relationship. In such space, I opted for a collaborative approach between ethnography and performance. Conducting a performance ethnography implied being involved in ‘a conversation in its deep and wide sense’ as Clifford Geertz (1973) spoke of ethnography. His view translated into my method through a much deeper sense of performance as a fluid, improvisatory, caring, flexibility to context, method, and ethics.

Echoes of a similar approach reverberate in Fabian’s “Power and Performance” (2007:148; 1990) where, as part of his method he brainstorms about a proverb with members of the Troupe

Théâtrale Mufwankolo that follows their rehearsals and performance. In the ensuing ethnography, Fabian writes about encounters as performances, suggesting that performativity could be a double-edged sword. For example, “performativity was a characteristic of exploration” since colonial times (2007:148). I may add that performativity, also, informed how the colonised responded to colonisation and tried to make sense of it, its violence, and in some cases, it informed how attempts were made at recovery from its enduring traumatic experiences (Ebron, 2002). Artworks about the struggle produced during and after colonisation and Apartheid, some of which on display in CS are examples. “Performance flourishes within a zone of contest and struggle” as Dwight Conquergood rightly observed (2013: 26–27).

Contestations and attempts at self and collective reclamation are performative processes. Looking at rock engravings or cave art²⁸ (Morris, 2022, 2014, 2009; Burkitt, 1928) depicting life and every day experiences going back thousands of years in the NCP and elsewhere, performance comes out as having always been central as a way of being, knowing, and expressing. What is depicted in these expressions on rocks and in caves show humans and non-humans, embodied and embodying various ways of looking at the environment and social life, recording it, and exploring it. Performance is involved with how humans perceive and know (Ingold, 2018, 2011; Gibson, 1950), dwell (Ingold, 2000), make (Ingold, 2022, 2013; Turner, 1982), and perform their world (Denzin, 2018, 2003; Geertz, 1993[1973]; Turner, 1988, 1982).

I used performance as key method alongside observation and conversation. Some of the research activities such as routine observations and interviews were planned and conventional, while others such as community exhibitions, walking, dancing (in) space, were emergent, creative, and responsive to the context, to unpredictable events, and to new insights as the research progressed. The observational method consisted of observing without having any direct contact or communication with coparticipants or the space. It emphasised the informative aspect, concerned mainly with ‘collecting’, ‘gathering’, and recording of information from a distanced point of view. The conversational method, which I will be referring to as the ‘conversational art’ method, had two aspects. The first involved interaction, talking to coparticipants via structured and non-structured interviews and other forms of conversation. It emphasized the communicative aspect in ‘gathering’ and analysing conversations to make sense of any information that came up and the conversation itself. Bhabha’s concept of

²⁸ I directly visited at various locations in the Northern Cape, some were displayed at WHAG. Others were incorporated in some art pieces, for example Pippa Skotnes’ *White Wagons* in CS.

‘conversational art’ was very useful according to Rassool who used D6 as an example of a museum space where “conversation, and debate were part of its creative and curatorial process and memory politics” (2006:291). As noted in the previous chapter, at the D6M, the conversational method was reflected in the way the museum, the curatorial processes, and the art exhibition practices became interactive as opposed to the ‘conventional “connoisseurial” silence’ (ibid.) of the museum experience.

The second aspect was creative and performative, what I referred to as the performative method. Taking some cues from the ‘conversational art’ and Fabian’s performative ethnography I took the communicative aspect further. Without forgetting the verbal, I pay more attention to the non-verbal, trying to get deep “below the surface” (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013:10). While Fabian never got involved as actor in the rehearsals or performance with the Troupe Théâtrale Mufwankolo, I was sometimes part of the performances alone or with groups engaged with CS. Like some of the coparticipants, I sometimes presented performances to other coparticipants and to the public as part of the conversation. The performative method consisted of using performance – looking at the performance of the everyday activities, and using fine and performing arts such as drawing, painting, dancing, music, and poetry – as part of the ethnographic research exploration, conversation, presentation of the research progress, analysis, and conceptualisation of the insights. As an example, the adoption of this performative immersive approach, informed by the performance ethnographic paradigm, led me to questioning and re-imagining participant-observation, leading to the adoption of the term coparticipant instead of participant. Most importantly, it is through the ideas of performance, particularly movement (Ingold, 2011, 2000; Gibson, 1950), that I identified and defined the three modes – flow, resistance, and entrapment – and the four forms – strategic, reactive, ritualistic, and decorative – of contestation as it manifests itself in the context of CS.

From participants to coparticipants

Having experienced participant-observation in this research process and other contexts before it, what I experienced and learned in and about CS and that I discuss in this dissertation cannot be experienced, contained, or explained through the usual participant-observation alone. As the research progressed and as I became familiar with the context, my interpretation and conduct of participant-observation shifted and evolved into what may be accurately called *coparticipant-observation*. Partly, this was informed by Turner's 'anthropology of performance' (Denzin, 2003:28; Turner, 1988; Turner & Bruner, 1986), Geertz's view of ethnography as conversation in its deep and wide sense (1993[1973]), Dwight Conquergood's "coperformance" (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013:14; Denzin, 2003:26), and Fabian's insistence that ethnography was 'essentially, not incidentally, communicative or dialogical' and that "conversation, not observation, should be the key to conceptualizing ethnographic knowledge production" (Fabian, 1990:4).

I relied on performance to experience and embody these ideas in most of my conversations and other research methods and activities. I relate to Dorinne Kondo's idea of *full participation* (2018) which she describes as a step further from the usual ethnographic observer position – hanging out, waiting for something to happen, (Geertz, 1993[1973]) – into a full participatory position where she is as involved as other participants, creating and performing, using playwriting and theatre performance to immerse herself and generate ethnographic knowledge with regards to race and performance (2022). The only difference is that while Kondo is situated in a theatre-making context, my study was in an exhibition where I combined classical anthropological observing and waiting as well as fully participating (through dance, poetry, theatre, and other creative methods) making meaning and experiencing with coparticipants. Furthermore, my approach was deeply informed by a specific historical context and inputs from coparticipants.

Therefore, the shift was also informed by coparticipants in Kimberley who gradually opened up about their view of (classic) research. Most of them tended to see it as suspicious and harmful, benefiting only the researcher and their academic institutions. The experience of

research in a general sense had been about researchers who ‘parachute’ into the area, spend few days or a couple of months ‘extracting’ what they want, and then disappear. Some coparticipants made analogies with historical dispossessive and extractive practices which have left big empty holes and ever-widening potholes in Kimberley’s landscape. These critical insights contributed to methodological and ethical shifts.

I moved to a deeply contextual approach, intentionally more collaborative, responsive, iterative, and long term immersive. After all, I was involved with museums and anthropology, all of which have been doing some soul-searching for a while and striving to be more ethical in their approaches than it has in the past (McGranahan, 2018; West, 2016; Allen & Jobson, 2016; Scheper-Hughes, 2001, 1996; Fabian, 1983; Lévi-Strauss, 1966). As Bernadette Lynch (2021) puts it, “museums are essentially an exercise in ethics”(7). The quality of a museum’s work and its space depend on trust in the relationships and requires a focus on process more than result (Mammana & von Oswald, 2023; Lynch, 2021). Anthropology which has also for decades questioned its past implication in colonial violence, oppression, and extraction (Macdonald, 2023; Clarke, 2022; AAA, 2020; AAPA, 2020, Kondo, 2018; Melber, 2018; Boswell & Nyamnjoh, 2017; Harrison, 1997), and adopted and continuously thinks about generating and incorporating more ethically sensitive and responsive approaches (Clarke, 2022; Tsing et al., 2017), encouraged my flexibility and initiative to adapt and re-adapt accordingly, always in conversation with the coparticipants and the local context I lived in. “Knowing and living are deeply entangled” (Van Dooren, Kirksey & Münster, 2016:17). The result was a kind of an in-depth “art of attentiveness”, a mode of both paying attention to others and crafting meaningful response’ (Van Dooren, Kirksey & Münster, 2016:1), attending to “the world in its immediacy and more ready to be addressed by it” (Ingold, 2022:277).

However, in my attempts to make sure I did not reproduce or cause harm, I might have become too critical, at times too sceptical, towards academic research in general because, for instance, of the historical complicity of my own discipline of anthropology and hearing concerns raised by some coparticipants against academia in general for the ‘colonial-like’ extractive behaviours from some of the academics they had encountered before. I regularly and critically assessed what I was doing, the feedback I was receiving (from some local academics and supervisors, for example), and what it all meant for the coparticipants, the context, and the study. For example, I paid more attention to the possible impact on the mental health and wellbeing of coparticipants and myself. The term coparticipant attempts therefore to signal not just a methodological expansion or innovation on an already existing method/terminology

(‘participant’/participant observation), but mostly as a live ethical relationality that acknowledges coparticipants’ knowledge and experiences (historic and present), their voices and contributions to the study, and the fact that they were more than just providers of information, and that by just our mere presence in the same social and physical space our worlds and lives were intertwined, making us co-producers, co-performers, and co-participants. The shift in my approach came progressively, made possible by the following research activities in which I encountered the coparticipants and the physical world (in which I understand the artworks as kinds of coparticipants), and at the same time, these activities were expanded and enriched by the shift.

Seminars

Between 3 October – 7 December 2018, I convened seven public seminars at WHAG, the data from which forms the core of this thesis. Artists whose artworks were on display in CS, scholars, and the public were invited to engage in conversations in and about the exhibition. Artists and scholars were free to choose how they wanted to approach the conversation, either formally or informally. They were often guided by interests and questions from the audience and by academic debates and the news circulating in public media. They also chose topics drawn from the broad keywords of the research – memory, museum, mental health, violence, public institutions, art, heritage, exhibitions, interpretation, and contestation. All seminars were recorded. After each seminar, I interviewed the speakers, and the audience shared their feedback verbally, and in writing. Thereafter, I kept in touch with most of the coparticipants – visitors, WHAG staff, the director and the chairman of WHAG’s council, the speakers, everyone involved in the seminars – who were available and willing to remain involved in the research. Some of the follow up conversations also took the form of seminars, but included workshops, mini-conferences, exhibitions, one-on-one and/or small group conversations, study tours, walking, running, and performances, too.

For instance, in October 2022 a conversation took place in Cape Town where some students and members of the Kimberly community joined students and members of the communities in Cape Town in a discussion about my research, its progress, and emerging insights. Earlier in July 2022, I had convened a mini-conference on CS that took place at the Provincial Premier’s office where a similar conversation had taken place. In January 2020, I had facilitated a seminar in the township of Galeshewe, for a week. Photographs of artworks from CS were displayed at

Mayibuye Multipurpose Center and members of the community in Galeshewe engaged them through performance and conversation. Earlier, a similar exhibition was set up at SPU, 24–28 October 2019. Contrary to the Galeshewe seminar, which was for a closed group, the SPU seminar was open to the public, students and staff. People came and went as they pleased. A series of artistic performances (poetry, dance, music, and theatre presentations) were organized at particular times of the day, but from morning until late at night people could come in and engage in improvised artmaking, drawing, dance, song, poetry, and conversation. In addition to pictures of artworks, I added pictures taken from previous seminars and workshops. I also added speakers' presentations, including recorded performances and responses. These, together with all the pictures, were made into a slide show projected on a wall. The projection was visible across the main square of the campus because the venue I had chosen had large glass doors and windows allowing such visibility. In an interview following the first CSS (CS#1), Phokela observed,

giving additional function of the work instead of waiting picking up dust on wall being there, you are encouraging the public to come over here ... I think it's a very good idea. I fully give this idea my full support. It's interesting that you will have shows happening in conjunction with seminars every week. It's unheard of, it's a new idea, there's novelty in that. (Phokela, 2018)



Image 5:CS#7, WHAG, 7 December 2018.



Image 6: CS#6. WHAG, 21–23 November 2018.

Workshops

I hosted several workshops prior to and during fieldwork. This dissertation focused on workshops organized as part of or alongside the seven seminars as well as workshops whose audience became regular coparticipants and made it possible to follow up their input. Most of the workshops were open to the public. Few were closed, for example in *CS #6*, I included workshops for a group of coparticipants who were willing to stay and engage over three consecutive days, 21–23 November 2018. Similarly, seminar #7 included a series of workshops that ran from morning until late afternoon involving one closed group of over 50 mental health professionals, researchers, and practitioners from the NCP. Generally, a workshop lasted 1 hour and 30 minutes to 2 hours and comprised 5 main parts: (1) An introduction and or warm up session: generally using name games (if it was the first time or if new participants were attending), and breathing exercises. (2) A creative arts session: improvisation and/or choosing an artwork and creating responses using any creative medium of choice. (3) Presentations: Showcasing and talking about the creative responses. (4) Reflections, and (5) a closing session: Generally coparticipants shared what came up in the whole workshop/seminar, sometimes

including brief new performances, keywords, and metaphors, and or speaking back to some of the previous responses.

Exhibition

In addition to being the primary site of research, I took pictures of the exhibition and used them outside of WHAG, for example at SPU and in Galeshewe, to showcase the exhibition, the research, and to access more conversations in relation to what was emerging in previous conversations in the CS at WHAG. This gave a wider audience the chance to experience the exhibition and participate in the conversations. It also allowed me access to more stories, voices, and experiences, especially from those who are not traditional museumgoers.

Observation

I conducted casual, non-systematic observations, both in CS inside WHAG and outside. This activity took place mostly before the official start of the field research.

Audio-visuals

Image performance: Embodied observation, documentation, and interpretation

As part of this activity, I asked coparticipants to use their imaginations to come up with an image that would represent a memory, an experience, or an idea they wanted to express as a response or an interpretation of the exhibition, contestation, or of a particular artwork. Image performances ranged from simple, static postures, to more dynamic and multimodal ones blending together bodily images, dance, song, and poetry.

Photography

Photography was initially planned for documentation only, but it slowly became an integral part of the research activities. For example, photographs taken during the seminars were then exhibited, provoking additional conversations and feedback. In some cases, photographs helped generate new inputs, taking the initial conversation further. For example, the image (2A & 2B) of Jason Marenda, dancing in response to the exhibition I displayed at SPU. He had volunteered to perform songs in some of the previous events, and he regularly engaged in other conversations during the seminars at WHAG. Seeing him dancing at SPU allowed me the

opportunity to observe him again in a different setting and to ask follow up questions about what he had done and said in previous engagement with the exhibition.

Performances and other creative activities

In addition to what was already said earlier in this chapter, performance was also a tool for documentation. It was also a response, another language I encouraged coparticipants to consider using at any stage of the conversation if and whenever they wanted to. I did the same at all stages of the research process.

Secondary sites

Secondary sites (siteing) capture the way I tried following up coparticipants' stories and experiences outside WHAG, some of which are presented in the following paragraphs. I went into the city and beyond, in various spaces named by coparticipants or referenced by some artworks. I took notes and photos, but sometimes I just went to look and experience the site, keeping in mind what a coparticipant had said. The experience helped, in some small but important way, to garner a sense of where coparticipants came from. The sites helped further expand and localise my approach.

The civic centre: Park and Malay camp

This is the geographical context where WHAG is located. The park is one of many in the city which attracts hundreds of people especially on weekends. Sometimes starting as early as Thursday, people sit, chat, and drink from early afternoon until late at night, and sometimes until the early hours of the next morning. The park is surrounded on one side by WHAG, the TVET, the Northern Cape Theatre, the Magistrate Court, the Sol Plaatje Municipality's office, the Tourism Center, the Administrative Offices of SPU ('Luka Jankie'), the De Beers Office, and Telkom office. In the centre of these buildings is the Oppenheimer Gardens at the centre of which a Malay camp memorial was placed in 2006 in memory of the 'people of the Malay Camp who were forcibly removed from this site between 1939 and 1959' (McGregor Museum, 2006: n.p.).



Image 7: Malay Memorial: An obelisk erected in the centre of Old Malay Camp
(McGregor Museum, 2006)

Sol Plaatje University (SPU)

The majority of students coparticipants came from this institution, sometimes out of interest, or advised by their lecturers, psychologists, therapists, or friends, and sometimes as part of workshops and lectures I was invited to deliver from time to time. I preferred WHAG as a venue instead of using the university's buildings as they were more conducive to my interactive way of facilitating conversations and inviting students to bring more visitors to the gallery and get them to see CS exhibition and others. I delivered lectures and workshops at SPU as well as attended other various events. There, I often met coparticipants in their own study, lecture, and workspaces, giving me more opportunities to observe and interact with them in one of their familiar environments.

The Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art and Tourism Centre and other heritage sites

The Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art and Tourism Centre is near the grounds of the Platfontein community, considered to be one of the most marginalized and forgotten. I visited it a couple of times, had conversations with some residents, and visited the Rock Art Centre. I would make several visits there, alone and with company. Most of my first visits were out of curiosity. Further visits were prompted by coparticipants' inputs and the literature.



Image 8: The Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art and Tourism Center. Platfontein, Kimberley.

‘Kasi’: ‘Locations’ and Mayibuye Multipurpose Centre

The words ‘kasi’ and ‘location’ are still in use here for settlements such as Galeshewe and others on the outskirts of the city. This naming and the spatial arrangement were inherited from the Colonial-Apartheid era. The Mayibuye Centre is one of the public entities under the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, and it is situated in Galeshewe, a township named after ‘Kgosi²⁹ Galeshewe’, one of the local historic figures in the struggle against colonization and Apartheid. Besides visiting coparticipants, walking in some areas of the township, I facilitated seminars and workshops, set up exhibitions, and attended performances at the centre and its surroundings.

The New Mental Hospital



Image 9: New Mental Health Hospital: Official opening by the Premier.

Kimberley, 30 September 2019

On 30 September 2019, a new mental health hospital was officially opened. I visited the site while it was still under construction, during the opening, and afterwards. I had also visited the West End where an older mental health facility was situated. I am familiar with a couple of other hospitals and clinics I visited either out of curiosity or as follow ups on interviews and conversations with coparticipants. For example, following seminar #7 with mental health professionals and practitioners, I visited some of these facilities multiple times to get a sense of what people had described in our conversations. During the opening of the new mental

²⁹ ‘Chief’ in Setswana.

hospital, the Premier acknowledged that it had taken too long to complete, and he denounced corruption that had partly delayed completion. In an audience of perhaps over 500 people, most nodded, and some looked at each in disbelief, as if confirming what he was saying. Most also stood up, smiled, and danced hearing that the facility had a state-of-the-art equipment and that more staff would be employed to offer needed quality services. Hearing and observing what was said and done fed directly into conversation I had had, for instance from the seminar with mental health professionals. Being in such sites and present for such events spoke to me more than any stories or words from coparticipants could convey. In bringing both experiences and related insights together, the research and my understanding deepened.

Reports

As a requirement to live in the flat at WHAG, I had to provide brief reports about activities I had completed every couple of months. The information, including photographic evidence, was used by staff members to write their quarterly reports made available to council members, the board, and the management. In addition, I submitted academic reports to my supervisors. All of these created an important source of ‘data’.

Journals and Memos

I kept journals, both digital and hard copies. Memos were reflections generally based on journal or notebook entries. Normally I would journal on some aspects of the notes taken during observations or during other activities. The memos were meant to go in depth on these same aspects. Memos were also explorations of new ideas, questions, emerging themes, and directions. I used journal entries and memos sometimes to think and sometimes to initiate or extend the writing of the thesis. For instance, some poems in this thesis were inspired by a keyword, phrase, or whole conversations I had initially written down in notes, journaled about, then written a memo about.

Fieldnotes: Research notebook

As a classic ethnographic research activity, I used to take notes in notebooks. Wherever I did not have a notebook or a diary with me I used any paper accessible and sometimes I used my phone and laptop as temporary notebooks. For instance, on one of my flights between Kimberley and Cape town, I encountered one of the coparticipants. Following our 15–20 minute conversation, I spent the rest of the flight journaling on pieces of paper [image]. In the CS room, I requested a notebook be placed there in October 2018 when the CSS series

started. I checked it regularly during my observation routines until COVID-19 broke out. I retrieved it in November 2020. It was accompanied by a descriptive note about the exhibition, written by Pretorius and edited by Robbins. Visitors were invited to share their thoughts and comments about the exhibition. WHAG, like other heritage institutions in the area, had a general guestbook which it had been using for a while before I arrived. Placed at a reception desk at the main entrance, visitors usually signed in, and they could also share comments on their way out. I read and took notes from this guestbook as well.

Online research and communications: Digital engagements

From the outset, virtual constituted an important component of my research activities. But it became more essential when the pandemic and lockdowns started. From communicating with my supervisors and coparticipants to online research and reading as well as attending webinars, conferences, and other events relevant to the research, the virtual and all digital accessories such as my laptop and phone were essential to the research process.

Study tours

As soon as I arrived at the WHAG at the end of 2016 and finally settled in 2017, I went on several study tours and out site seeing in Kimberley, other parts of the NCP, and beyond. Initially, these visits were a way to get to know different sites for the first time and to hear ‘the official story’ of the city and its surroundings. Later, they became a way to expand perspectives and re-discover places that had connection with the research, often those mentioned by coparticipants or referred to in some of the artworks. To name just a few in South Africa, I visited Sol Plaatje Museum, Credo Mutwa Museum, McGregor Museum, D6M, Pop Up Place, Slave Lodge, The National Gallery, Zeitz MOCAA, The War Museum, Olivenhuis Museum, the Constitutional Court, the Apartheid Museum, and the Holocaust and Genocide Centre in Johannesburg and Cape Town, among others. Other visits were done while attending international conferences, such as visiting museums, slave forts, hospitals, memorial sites, universities and so on, in Benin, Ghana, Ireland, the UK, and Denmark, some of which is discussed in the previous chapters.

Walking & running around the city

Walking and running are among ways I get to explore and know new places. But walking and running in Kimberley slowly became a way of living the spaces, embodying this city, posing for and amidst its visible and intangible memories and heritage.

Performing (in) space: Creative explorations at the research site

I am an artist and a performer. As part of my research and after obtaining permission from WHAG – the former director was in support, but not all members on her staff team were open and supportive of the idea – I wrote and danced on the floors of the gallery, a space which was usually known for its silence and orderliness. I made it a routine to create and dance, often improvising, a few times a week for a couple of hours, first as a way of getting to know the space, to see (and be seen), to become familiar with staff and visitors who moved through the area, and second, as another way of immersing myself in the space. From dancing and creatively exploring the space alone in the first months of 2017, the activity grew by the end of the year to include a small group of interested members from the public who joined for weekly sessions. In response to this interest, I organized larger sessions in May–June 2017, October 2017, and afterwards that were attended by students, lecturers, and other members of the public, as well as local and international guests.



Image 10: Visitors and passers-by stop and sit to watch a workshop.

Drive-throughs

Drive-throughs are about the space as they are about people driving me and the conversations going on with them in the car. The drivers were from the city and the communities they knew well. Sometimes we were passing through or going where they were born and lived. I gained great insight from them. For example, one driver volunteered to help set up one of the community exhibitions and participated in some of the conversations and interviews.

Public events

Events I was invited to and or attended ranged from exhibition openings at WHAG, to cultural and social gatherings such as festivals, dialogues, funerals, family gatherings, weddings and so on, in the city and in the townships. In most cases I was invited by coparticipants.

Guest hosting

I invited several guests, local and international, to participate in the myriad programs I organized. Their contributions drew from their areas of expertise to speak at seminars, to deliver lectures or facilitate workshops, perform, visit WHAG and other museums and heritage sites. They also became coparticipants. Their critiques served as a third party or what drama and theatre practitioners call 'third eyes'. In performance, these eyes come and look at a rehearsal or pre-performances and give feedback, which usually help a performer or a director to notice gaps, strengths, and weaknesses to work on before performing for the public. The third-eye approach, was more than just having guests passing through CS and Kimberley. Their insights and experiences became another way to help me experience and get to know the site and to continually look reflexively at my own experiences and activities. Names of guests were included in the acknowledgements. They came from across Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Water fetching

Some of my daily chores at WHAG became important activities that contributed to my research. This is not a surprise since I lived on the premises. Just being there was itself of primary importance. Because I lived at the research space, everything I did felt like a constant engagement with it. It was like a non-stop conversation with the people, the space, and the building. For example, because of the very bad quality of water –in Kimberley generally but particularly at WHAG due to a broken and rusty water system – sometimes I had to fetch clean water from one of the staff kitchens. As I drew water, I noticed that some of the staff came to chat. There were local newspapers *Diamond Fields Advertiser* (DFA) and others) usually on a kitchen table. Sometimes I read while waiting for the water to fill up my five-litter bottle. Sometimes staff who had already read the paper would start commenting on some of the news items and the conversation would start there about different social, economic, and cultural life. I had the impression that it felt more relaxed and comfortable sharing stories casually like that more than when I set up formal meetings and interviews. These kitchen conversations were never planned. They were spontaneous and covered anything and everything from personal and family topics to professional stuff and various trends within and beyond WHAG.

If we met a day or two after I had organized an event, it was usually the time someone asked me how it went. After noticing the interest in what I was doing, I took more opportunities during these kitchen encounters to let them know what other activities were coming up. I shared what my research was about and how it was going, and I would invite everyone to attend upcoming activities. This kitchen was ‘downstairs’ mostly used by the gallery’s attendants, security guards, teacher, driver, cleaners, and briefly the ‘non-management’ staff. There was another kitchen ‘upstairs’ (first floor) for the office staff. I encountered them in similar casual conversations when I went there either to use a computer for printing, to access the internet, or to meet the project leaders and the Director. The former Director, Pretorius preferred an organic style of leadership. This rung well with my methods as it emphasized mostly, but not solely, unstructured, voluntary, spontaneous conversations, and an organic approach to research and relationships in the space. In the former director’s view, these encounters; my presence; my movements in and out of different offices; my meetings and freely chatting with staff; and the energy brought in by seminars and workshops created a new atmosphere into the space, something she referred to as transformative.

Lecturing and facilitating

Facilitation and lectures delivered locally and internationally provided opportunities to share and discuss aspects of the research and its progress. From events and places such as SPU; the Northern Cape Provincial Policy, Planning and Research Forum; or the SSRC's Next Gen workshop in Ghana, some of the audience members became research coparticipants.

Survey-questionnaires

Using surveys or questionnaires was not envisaged before the fieldwork started, but the need to use them emerged towards the end of 2018. With change in management at WHAG, new staff joined, including a new CFO and a new Director/CEO, it seemed a good idea to add another activity for keeping written records. I used the first survey-questionnaires during SSRC's Next Gen Workshop in Accra, Ghana, and then I developed it further on my return to Kimberley. From then on, I incorporated it into my follow-up conversations. For example, I asked the group in Ghana to write down what contestation meant for them. All of them had never seen or heard of the CS except seeing it in the title of my research. In this dissertation, their responses are discussed in comparison with other written responses I received from coparticipants in Kimberley who had seen the exhibition. A sample of the survey-questionnaire I designed is included in this dissertation. See appendix 6.

Supervision

Like other experiences and activities of the research, supervision has been an important part. Some of the supervision comments were incorporated in this writing but most of the contributions are invisible, hidden behind my choices and the challenges supervisors invited me to think about or to address. I must also make note of what might be qualified as non-academic supervision by which I refer to various networks of support, conversations, and sometimes serendipitous encounters with people within and outside academia who helped remain open, grounded, caring, and generative vis-à-vis the coparticipants, the space, the research process, and to me.

The Flat

The flat where I lived – containing a bedroom, a kitchen, a bathroom, a storeroom, and an art studio³⁰ – was a space of continuous learning, exploration, and support for my research. It was private, with a closed boundary but still permeable, especially certain sounds, smells, and screams such as security alarms, the telephone ringing, staff talking or knocking on the door, or the cars playing loud music in the park close to the gallery late night. The flat was a place where the observations, stories, and memories encountered in the gallery and outside in the communities continued to be with me, relived through my thoughts, journals, and images I archived and/or re-performed. As annex to the exhibition rooms, my room was one with the whole site, separated only by a wall. On one side of the wall I slept, on the other side of the wall paintings were kept. Sometimes I heard Lazarus³¹ taking down some works and driving nails or screws into the wall to hang up new ones. Staying on the premise offered me the opportunity to experience the space fully, making the whole research and learning journey deeply experiential. It is perhaps for this reason I felt a sense of ease when I travelled abroad. Consciously or not, every minute at the gallery, day, or night, was research time. My body could tell when I was in or out of town.

Storytelling

An artwork is a story turned into material form. All conversations in CS involved stories. Artists Nhlengethwa and Crouse thought of themselves as storytellers, just like those who tell stories in a theatre, in movies, or through music. Talking about her portrait of Rian Malan, Resheda said that she ‘was just telling a story about my friend, that I admire because he is talented and clever and interesting and complex’. Chimamanda Adichie was quoted during conversations that ‘stories matter. Many stories matter’ (Adichie, 2009). Besides the exhibition at WHAG, a fireplace was set up in the garden on the front side of the gallery. Built on my request, the fireplace was further evidence of the organic and responsive leadership of the former director Pretorius and her attempts to find and support the study, particularly aspects

³⁰ A burglar door was installed on my request between the studio and my room. This allowed the staff and artists who needed to use the studio to have access whether I was present or not. The door also served an ethical purpose. No one, but me, had the key through the burglar door. For the whole duration of my stay, no staff or person from the outside has ever had access the room where the research material was kept without my presence.

³¹ A staff member in charge of putting up and down paintings.

she thought benefited the community and the gallery. Coparticipants passing by the fireplace still to this day talk about their memories, the stories that they heard or shared by that fireplace. Like the fireplace, CS was an embodiment of stories, many of which I was able to access and learn from through storytelling.

Coparticipant observation

I have included coparticipant observation here, last, for two reasons. First, after having just finished presenting all my other methods and activities, I mean to recognize and credit the standard participant observation method which is core to anthropological studies. I end on coparticipant observation as a way of acknowledging it as something slightly more expansive, deeply generative, ethically responsive, and much more appropriate in light of what has been experienced and achieved. It is a method that emerged as the study progressed, as a result of other methods, particularly as a reflexive response to the particular context described in all the activities above. Second, understanding and relating to participants as coparticipants had several benefits not least of which was a deepening of my ethical understanding and commitment. I conclude this chapter by sharing insights based on this outcome.

Ethics as care and continuous negotiation

Doing a long-term immersive ethnographic research presented benefits and challenges. One of the benefits is that it gave me ample time to meet coparticipants several times within and outside the research context. Spending a long time researching a single space teaches a very important and equally challenging lesson that, “opening and interpreting lives is very different from opening and closing books” (Conquergood & Johnson, 2013:14). The time also allowed me to avail myself in case a coparticipant wanted to meet me about the research, for example if s/he wanted to add, remove or clarify something. We also met when we just wanted to chat, and this opportunity was also at the end, often used to inquire and catch up about the research. For those not in Kimberley or unable to meet face to face, a more-or-less similar check in processes took place via emails, WhatsApp calls and messages. Except where a coparticipant wished otherwise, everyone who participated in public events – seminars, workshops, mini-conferences, and exhibitions – are named in this thesis. I had many opportunities, planned and unplanned, to share emerging insights, and discussing and negotiating ethical implications. It was an open-ended process of negotiation facilitated by the fact that I remained immersed in the context, open to be addressed and listen to the space and the people, available socially, physically, mentally, intellectually, and performatively (through creative means), from the start to the finish of the study. This kind of presence, for me, embodied ethics as care, grounded in the ethics of attachment and anthropology of connection (Clarke, 2022).

I obtained research and ethics clearance from the Anthropology department at UCT in June 2018, following an open defense seminar. In this seminar I expressed my commitment to always provide detailed information and obtain consent from people who would be willing to participate. For all material, written and audio-visual, I received consent often in multiple formats, verbal and/or written. Coparticipants interviewed individually or who filled in survey-questionnaires and feedback forms indicated whether they wanted their names to remain anonymous. In some cases, some coparticipants did not want to be anonymous. I have respected their wishes where I was able to meet and discuss the drafts of the thesis with them. Where I was not able to reach the coparticipant to show and discuss the final draft, I kept their names anonymous or removed their written contribution.

But spending a long time in Kimberley also came with some challenges. For instance, having to face many unpredictable events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Ugutaha kwa mama (the

passing of my mother), the xenophobic-and-afrophobic violence, the changes in WHAG's management, and increasing loadshedding/electricity and water outages. Some of the challenges were generalised across South Africa. Having already built relationships of trust in Kimberley meant that I had an extensive support system, and I felt safer, perhaps more than being in Cape Town. For instance, because of this network of support, loadshedding and water outages did not affect my research and writing. Even though sometimes I worried about my physical and mental wellbeing like anyone else, it did feel bearable compared to other students' experiences I heard during interviews or during the numerous seminars and workshops I attended or facilitated face-to-face and online.

Chapter 4. Naming: Ways of calling into presence

To call something by a name is to bring it into presence (Heidegger, (2011[1978])). I had heard of the CS exhibition, long before seeing it. When I visited it, the name was among the first things I saw, before stepping inside the room. I was in the company of Pretorius who guided my first tour. We had just passed the auditorium. About eight or six meters away, I saw the name up on a wall, surrounded by artworks. I smiled when she noted that we had arrived. I could not connect the dots then to why I smiled, but now as I reflect back, it must have been because as soon as I saw the name from far, I knew that was the place, and I had anticipated that she might say something like, this is it when we arrive! She didn't say it out loud, but she pointed at it! The name had already made the place visible. It had already marked it for me. I did not know yet how the exhibition looked, and I did not know yet how big it was or where it ended, but because of the name, even from far I knew where it began. The name had brought the exhibition into a kind of presence. It became a live experience the moment I saw its name. In other words, to use Turner's expression, the name put the exhibition "into circulation" (Turner & Bruner, 1986:12; Geertz, 1986:375).

In this chapter, I discuss the significance of naming in CS. My main contention is that naming is one way through which CS is called into presence. Naming is central to the process of knowledge and meaning making. Previous chapters, the literature review for instance, are full of names and naming. The names of certain concepts or methods such as the Complexes or the Boasian methods of exhibition, the names of museum buildings, and so on. Naming of places and people in the colonial context (Mamdani, 2021, 2012; Fabian, 2007,1983; Stoller, 1995) was, often times, a way of constructing and marking difference, defining categories, or fixing boundaries. It was part of a regime of violence. But naming can also mark a beginning, a journey of becoming, and healing. For example, the naming following the birth of a child, a violent conflict, an initiation, or a funerary or healing ritual (Vom Bruck & Bodenhorn, 2006; Ramphele, 2000; Ebron, 2002).

According to studies of animal names in the Koyukon of Alaska (Ingold, 2022; 2011), names are organic, experiential, fluid. They enfold and make sense as they become alive in the moment of encounter and experience. The personal, place and praise names from Langalanga

(Stewart & Strathern, 2003) are living memories of ancestral experiences, practices, and knowledge transmitted from generation to generation. According to Heidegger, a name “is not just wrapped over the thing...the name is coordinated with the thing as an object” (2011[1978]:276). What the name CS brought into presence for me was not just the artworks, but contestation, a phenomenon I was interested in. Like the artworks, contestation also seemed wrapped over by the name. Not directly mentioned in the wording of the name, it was almost invisible. To get to it seemed to require a certain kind of un-layering, a mode of travelling in and out of the object(s) which carried the name. ‘The relation between what is named, and its name can always be conceived as a coordination’ as Heidegger contends (ibid.). The main relationship between the name and artworks in CS is one of presence. By presence, I mean for example the physical presence, and other forms of presence such as the empty spaces on the ceiling, and between the artworks on the floor and on the walls, the social and mental spaces, intangible heritage such as memories and experiences, and the historical processes and dynamics that are not named and not visible directly, and yet set forth by the name.

To name is “to set in motion, to get something under way” (Heidegger & Krell 2011[1978]:274). In a sense, to name something is not just to make it happen, it is also giving it a voice, an expression. It is what Turner called putting experience into circulation’. For instance, what is painted (art), said (words, names), or danced, is “put into circulation”(Geertz, 1986:375). By putting artworks together into an exhibition and inviting the public to visit, engage, and have conversations, the curators were “putting into circulation” (Turner & Bruner, 1986:12) an artistic expression, their interpretations, imagined outcomes, and something much more. According to Dilthey and Turner (Dilthey, Makkreel & Rodi, 1985; 1988; Turner, 1988;1982; Turner & Bruner, 1986), expressions are performances, and performances are constitutive (Derrida, 1974). Putting into circulation therefore involves making, producing. It is a generative process, in the sense that performing a text, for instance, involves making meaning, not re-producing a pre-existing meaning. In this sense, I argue that by setting up, naming, and opening CS to the public, the curators set into circulation something much more than just the exhibition and their interpretations of it.

To explore and demonstrate this point, I will start by sharing the names created by the coparticipants during some of the CSS. These names, in my view, help to get a sense of what was put into circulation and its significance. Some names were short, for instance, ‘Transition zone’; ‘Life’; ‘Reaithuta’ – meaning ‘we are learning’; ‘Paradigm shift’; ‘Humanity | Inhumanity’; ‘My space’; ‘Boswajwa rona’ – meaning ‘our heritage’; and ‘our inheritance’.

Other names were longer, sometimes in poem or in prose form. I elaborate my argument through the following subheadings: ‘Boswajwa rona’:³² Coparticipant naming, ‘Reaithuta’:³³ Colonial naming, and ‘Transition zone’: Naming as travelling.

‘Boswajwa rona’: Coparticipant naming

During follow up conversations, Morris often reflected that what made CS interesting was how it was explicitly set up as a conversation. Public conversation was the key objective of the curators. The conversation was the apex of the curatorial process. I take public conversations to be the sign that ‘putting into circulation’ the experience of CS was taking place. The naming is not complete until this ‘circulation’. In such a context, naming is more than ascribing a word to the exhibition. For instance, *Digging Deeper*, *Streets*, and other exhibitions, are names with expressive meanings. They are carefully created or selected. The names of exhibitions are often the first points of entry or the first ‘objects’ the public encounters. Naming in this context “is more that giving a linguistic sign” (Stewart & Strathern, 2003:196). It is to have it – the name and by extension the exhibition – living, inhabited, embodied. In this sense naming CS was a process that can be divided into three stages.

The first, selecting artworks and bringing them together into one space, was done by Pretorius and her team of staff by going through WHAG’s collections identifying works they perceived to depict contested histories and memories, and then moving them into the exhibition room. The second was labelling them. Staff wrote down the names of the artists, the title of the work, and when and what material it was made from. The third and final step was inviting and having public conversation. I see all these stages as part of the naming, a process of ‘setting into motion’. The name becomes alive and present once the public and the curators’ interpretations, intentions, assumptions, expectations, experiences, and meanings meet, converse, and inhabit each other and the exhibition. Together with the coparticipants, we turned the exhibition into a space of contestation (see chapter two). As we grappled with finding out what the name CS implied, what contestation meant, what these spaces were and meant and so on, coparticipants in the seminar conversations remarked that the exhibition had itself become a site of contestation. Thus, the name CS became a defining point of entry, not just for Robbins and

³² ‘Our heritage’ (Google translate, Southern Sotho to English, 12/02/2021). Or ‘Our inheritance’ as several coparticipants put it.

³³ ‘We study’ (Google translate, Southern Sotho to English, 12/02/2021). Or ‘We learning’, ‘we are learning’ according to coparticipants.

Pretorius but for the visitors as well, and even for myself as a researcher. When I asked what contestation meant, often the name CS was the first thing they looked up to and referenced in trying to share their own understanding.

Moving around, observing the exhibition space, and looking at the artworks, some with notebooks, others with pieces of paper on which to write, the coparticipants started naming the exhibition. I indicated that they could use any language of their choice. The following are names proposed by coparticipants. In this case, coparticipants had no prior experience with the exhibition, and the majority were not usual gallerygoers. Most of them were busy mental health professionals, and some of them were serving in hospitals remote from the city. They came on that day just for seminar #7 on 7 December 2018. For them, the exhibition could be named:

Pandora's Box , Cave of humanity, Roots-Reflector, Paradigm shift, Transition zone, Trouble-some area, Life, Expressions of our lives, The heart of the nation, The longing for freedom, Expressions of humanity, Expressions of history, Ntshalitshali,³⁴ The cry of the nation, Confused Rainbow Nation, My space, Safety & Security, War Room, [...] Band, Revolution | War Room, History + Culture, The past–Apartheid, Reflecting the past| Memories room, Idiosyncrasies unmasked, Mastermind, Antique, Desire, Frances Baard, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Steve Biko, Violence never stops, Humanity | Inhumanity, Struggle Room, Apartheid Era, Woman nature, Beauty of a woman, Dimakatso,³⁵ Keakabetse,³⁶ I wondered why most women's photographs were taken nude. (I'm still amazed), War Room, Black consciousness, Apartheid aerlemenis / Acrlemenis/, Kamer, Oppression expressed, Visualizing the hurt inside, Contaminated minds, Depressed woman | Loneliness, War, Political trauma, Bogologolo,³⁷ Reaithuta, Boswajwa rona.

The first impression I get just by looking at these fifty or so names, is how generative this naming exercise was. Names, and with them so many interpretations and worlds of experiences, stories, and ideas were made present. I will look again at some of them closely in comparison with some other names that came from two prior naming exercises.

³⁴ Investor (Google translate, Southern Sotho to English, 12/02/2021).

³⁵ 'Surprises' (Google translate, Southern Sotho to English, 12/02/2021). Coparticipants gave the same meaning.

³⁶ 'I am confused' or 'not sure' a coparticipant explained. I could not find an English translation via Google translate (12/02/2021).

³⁷ 'Ancient' (Google translate, Southern Sotho to English, 12/02/2021). According to coparticipants, 'Long time', 'long time ago'.

A year before (16 September 2017) and again just a month before (23 November 2018), students had completed similar naming exercises. Reading their names, I notice that they sounded like definitions. Naming is in a sense defining. What these names bring out the most is this connection between naming and defining. *CS* was,

‘Fighting the powerless’, ‘Find your inner self’, ‘An explosion’ (Meaning when you get set free/break free, or it could mean destruction. Something which breaks you down), ‘Fallen heroes exhibition’, ‘Exploring South African history through Art’, ‘Historic locations where people held their uprising against unfair treatment’, ‘Areas where only a certain race of people are allowed to enter freely’, ‘Paintings that have different meanings and crafts (statues)’, ‘Spaces that are occupied by force’, ‘Fought for spaces’, ‘Where you find art’, ‘Space set aside for a specific purpose’, ‘A place where art is displaced,’³⁸ different types of art showing / or telling stories about people from the past’, ‘Art exhibition/memory exhibition’.

The students and the mental health professionals, though coming from different backgrounds, offered some common names, ideas, definitions, experiences, memories, brief, and interpretations. In a general sense these names can be grouped as follows. Those related to or evoking violence; those related to the past; the ones related to the mental, psychological, emotional, and medical; and those about humanity.

Names about the past, Apartheid, violence, mental, and humanity kept coming up in all different groups and in all different conversational formats, seminars, workshops, group or individual. Meaning as João de Pina-Cabral put it ‘is dependent on practical experience’ (2010:305). When coparticipants were asked to name, they shared how they perceived and experienced what they were naming. The meaning of the names was mediated experience. In this perspective, naming *CS* was an experiential process involved with generating and sharing meaning. Some coparticipants named a specific object, others, the whole exhibition. For instance, some coparticipants named the whole exhibition after one painting such as ‘Nelson Mandela’, ‘A Confused Rainbow Nation’, and so on. In this sense naming is subjective. It depends on particular contexts, experiences, and subjectivities of those doing the naming.

This process implies a certain recognition and awareness of specific and shared social worlds from which the named, the namers, and the naming process are located. In other words, looking

³⁸ The coparticipant explained that she meant to write ‘displayed’.

at the names give a glimpse into the social world from which the namers were coming from, and the memories and experiences they carried. For example, names such as ‘Expressions of our lives’, ‘Boswajwa rona’ (‘our inheritance’, ‘our heritage’) bring out a strong relationship with the exhibition and with inheriting and passing on the past. This name reminds me of the Langalanga names studied by Stewart and Strathern (2003) whose conceptualisation of naming is tied to heritage and its transmission. It is through the process of inheriting and passing on the heritage that memories of the past, such as memories of places or of ancestors, become alive. Names such as ‘Reaithuta’ (‘we are learning’) alert us to another aspect that some names were informed by what was unfolding in the moment. Like in the Koyukon context noted earlier, naming here becomes an enfolding process of learning which takes place as coparticipants encounter the artworks and each other; in a sense moving within a layered ‘field of relationships’ (Ingold, 2011:172).

‘Reaithuta’: Colonial naming

A number of people within and beyond the healthcare profession have made use of Eight Questions developed by physician and medical anthropologist Arthur Kleinman (1978). The questions are meant to help close the gap of knowledge and communication between doctors, patients and their families. I discovered them first online through a few articles. But, what one that struck me the most was Donna Thomson’s blog post titled “Eight Questions That Can Heal” (2012). The most fascinating and powerful one for Thomson and others is the first one. It asks for a name. What do you call the problem? Once the name is identified, it serves as a bridge that facilitates communication between the doctor, medical anthropologist and her/his world, and the patient, family, and their world. The name also becomes a canvas on which everything associated with the problem or illness are painted and learned. Perceived causes, social interpretations and meaning, hopes, fears, beliefs, etc. most of which would probably go unnoticed by conventional biomedical models, are rendered visible, tangible in a certain sense, because they are named and communicated. It is also right to say that naming can set a direction. Calling something A not B may create a disposition towards A and not B.

However, names do more than communicating knowledge or setting directions. They are also mnemonics (Connerton, 2009; Stewart & Strathern, 2003): ‘Place-names can be more than markers and delimiters of place, more than tokens used to mark out and negotiate positions in social interaction’ (Connerton, 2009:10). When Lord Kimberley – whom this city was named

after – said ‘places should receive “decent and intelligible” names’ (Roberts, 1976:115; van Nierkek, 1990:18), he was doing more than looking down and making fun of local languages and people. He was following an old power-game tradition with well-known aims and consequences the naming implied: ‘Place-names are semantically opaque: they cover the past of a place, half-hide a history. Often the history they hide will be about the capacity to exercise power over land and over others; the testimony remains when the power has gone...At the moment when names are assigned to places, those who do the naming are often particularly aware of the memories they wish to impose’ (Connerton, 2009:10–11).

The Berlin conference, famed as the Scramble for Africa was an exercise in this colonial naming. Elisabeth Baer writes, ‘the treaty of Berlin divided up the African continent; chunks of land were assigned to European countries with little regard for boundaries of ethnic groups or geography’ (Baer, 2018:9). Naming parts of the continent meant shaping geographical boundaries, making, and ascribing them to a certain place in the colonial order. To be colonised meant the ‘colonizer’ could define, classify, and confine ‘them in a name’ (Mbembe, 2015:186). Galleries, as other colonial institutions, became spaces where the naming was done or justified and perpetuated. This naming implies that colonial power was a creative power (Fabian, 2007, 1990; Stoller, 1995). For instance, where borders in Africa did not exist, colonial powers, as in the example of the Berlin conference, invented them. In *Define and Rule*, Mahmood Mamdani argued that defining was a prerequisite, a major tool for colonial rule. Terms such as natives, names of tribes and races which did not exist were invented (Mamdani, 2012). Naming in this context was an ordering, a direct intervention in the life, being, and death of the named, ascribing a status, a hierarchy, a certain narrative, and value and use, without consultation or participation of those being named. To be ‘known’, ‘present’, ‘visible’ in this colonial framework of naming is only possible when the named embraces the name given, lest s/he remains outside history (Mbembe & Ginsburg, 2021), as ‘dark’ as spots on the map without ‘decent and intelligible’ names (Roberts, 1976; van Nierkek, 1990).

In 1488, Bartolomeu Dias named Southern Africa, ‘the rocky second cape Cabo das Tormentas (Cape of Storms)’, and on his return home to Portugal, ‘King João II ordered that henceforth, maps would show the new name for Cabo das Tormentas: Cabo da Boa Esperança, or Cape of Good Hope’ (Dias, 2020). According to Witz (2006), Goodrich and Bombardella (2016) ‘Dias literally fired the first killing shot in the history of colonial violence that would follow in his ship’s wake’ (Goodrich & Bombardella, 2016; Witz, 2006) as colonisation spread, so did killing, displacing, dispossessing, and re/naming people and places. Naming therefore, was part

of the colonial project and like its other oppressive, racist and dehumanising apparatuses, naming carried ‘colonial violence’ and inflicted ‘the colonial wound’ (ibid; Mignolo, 2005).

This top-down violent way of naming seeps into the physical, social and mental landscape and leaves marks even long after it has officially ended. CS shows some of these marks, from old, recent, and ongoing violence. For instance, while opening CSS in August 2018, Morris remarked that ‘first up as you enter, to the left, is a map of Southern Africa, with its myriad named places, not one of them African’ (2018). In anthropology, as in African cultures generally, we know that names are more than just mere words. CS as a name, embodies, marks, and delimits its space, its context, its intent, and its content. It denotes a kind of power, a framing which, despite intentions to initiate conversations and possibly facilitate a healing process, does so by performing a top-down or a vertical approach to naming which, in such a context of historical violent naming, may be perceived as performing a kind of (unintentional) violence. Unlike the participatory and collaborative nature of the space of contestation open up by community-based curation and exhibition at the D6M, CS was different at its beginning, it was not participatory. The planning and set up did not involve the public. However, Pretorius and Robbins encouraged public conversations once it was set up. The fact that they wanted the exhibition to be a space of dialogue, means that the naming did not end with the ascribing of a label (name) and the setting up of the exhibition. Public dialogue was part of the naming process. The vertical naming was thus balanced or combined with a lateral or more participatory approach to naming afforded by public conversation.

Reflecting back, my inviting coparticipants in the naming exercises served two main purposes. Besides being a creative way to initiate conversations, it served to generate and share knowledge from people in and outside of the gallery. By knowledge, I mean ideas, information, stories, and a sense of contextual dynamics, social realities, histories, and imaginations that informed the names. These, in addition to what Robbins and Pretorius had already proposed constituted an important knowledge archive. The second, closely linked to the first, is that naming was a way of finding out what, if there was any, name (s) coparticipants would give to CS, and I was interested in finding out how these names would speak to contestation in CS.

At first the naming activity felt like I was trying to find alternatives ways to produce multiple interpretations. But it was more than this. During the exercise I realized I was trying to generate as many different views and angles as possible to layer and complexify the name. This idea was provoked by Heidegger’s proposition that a name wraps over an object and makes it

present. By giving as many names as possible to CS, the idea was that these names would amplify its presence by generating a multiplicity of presences. This in turn would possibly make visible what else this name meant, what it contained. My assumption was that this kind of layering would then lead to a deeper uncovering of any other ideas, words, phenomena, meanings, and dynamics not directly articulated or worded in the name CS. The opponent was also true in a sense that generating multiple different views and angles would also contribute towards unlayering and uncomplexifying the name and the phenomenon in question. This is a kind of unwrapping to produce as many names (meanings) as possible so that nothing much is left hidden/ unnamed. This, what I refer to as unlayering or uncomplexifying, would lead to more understanding. What these two complementary approaches point to is that in this particular exercise of naming CS, I tried to approach contestation indirectly. I looked through the experiences, gestures, movements, words, and stories of the coparticipants to see if they saw what I saw or not, if they experienced what I experienced or not. Was contestation there, or was it my imagination, or something else? Were the key 'strands' and 'spaces' Robbins and Pretorius talked about also visible in the interpretations of the coparticipants, or not, or was there anything more? To address these questions, I had to allow the naming process to unfold, as a Koyukon would probably do. I entered 'a field of relationships', made of arts, people from a diversity of backgrounds, at different points in space and time, and so on. From there I observed whether anything about my initial observations and ideas about CS and contestation would appear, and if so, which ones and how. The key point here was trying not to assume whether the name or the phenomenon of contestation existed or not, was visible or not, was layered or not, until it was named, communicated, and examined through as many points of views and experiences as possible. What was already in the exhibition space, what coparticipants brought in, and what emerged in between, was important to the naming's enfolding.

By naming, coparticipants brought into the space their own individual and collective knowledge, experiences, and interpretations into public visibility. Naming in a sense brings light. But naming can also cast darkness, conceal, or misinform (Marstine, 2006; Howard, 2003). Galleries and museums as interpreters, if they decide 'the appropriate story to tell...other possibilities become immediately obscured' (Howard, 2003:247) whether this is intended or not. As in the example of colonisation, naming implies power and authority over what is being named. Giving a name makes visible by creating and disseminating a certain type of knowledge and frame. Naming also makes invisible, for instance 'pre-colonial' histories,

worldviews, names, and cultures that were obscured or erased by the colonial naming and its 'single story' paradigm (Morris, 2018; Adichie, 2009): 'Only telling one story can stultify future knowledge' (Howard, 2003:247). Many names given to CS unlock multiple ways and venues of learning, knowing, and framing. Each name is a form of knowledge in itself. Together they challenge the 'single story' approach.

The naming may also be viewed as a way coparticipants played a part in co-authoring the name, the exhibition, and its interpretations, and meaning. Peter Howard asserted that 'many heritage organisations...carry immense authority, and hence not only an enormous potential to inform, but also a considerable power to deceive, if only unintentionally' (ibid.). Colonial and Apartheid authorities were compromised by the 'single story' frame of naming. Many stories, experiences, and memories on display or provoked by naming CS were obscured, erased, banned, or distorted during colonial and Apartheid times. It would have been difficult then to have something such as CS, the coparticipants from all imaginable backgrounds, and the critical conversations it made possible. In this regard, naming, the lateral and the vertical approaches together, performed as an alternative over the 'single story' interpretive frame. The result was many fold. I will share three. First, it was a learning enabled through naming, a process which brought into light multiple layers of spaces, meaning and knowledge. Second, it was a realisation that by suggesting pasts were contested, CS was a counter to the single-story frame of naming. Third, in the initial phase of naming CS, the vertical approach used might have unintentionally reproduced the violence of colonial naming.

'Transition zone': Naming as travelling

Rarely a painting remains unnamed unless the author had not been able to finish it or had passed on: 'Goya's *Disasters of War* was posthumously attributed' (Caygill, 2013:15). The name *Disasters of War*, according to Howard Caygill's reading, 'well describes the new predicament of violence in which European and later, global populations now found themselves' (ibid.). In his medium, the Goya gave a testimony of 'the advent of a new warfare of unprecedented violence and mass, ruthless killing' (Caygill, 2013:15). Through the names, visitors try to find clues to the meaning and origins behind the artworks. During seminar #3, a coparticipant asked Zylla about *Games*: 'What is your message? On my own trying to decipher some kind of message around this, from your painting, but also from how you name the painting'. In response, Zylla explained,

Violence is always in connections with money.
 Innocence, the kids,
 they don't know what's happening,
 enjoying, having fun.
 Innocent picture,
 they don't really know but the dat³⁹ is flying to them,
 they are already targeted.
 Parliament make decision
 Corruption and money.
 I painted part of Khayelitsha
 Pinkish almost like a bloody sky
 It's like history is repeating itself.
 Why I used different soldiers
 If you look at history,
 always wars.

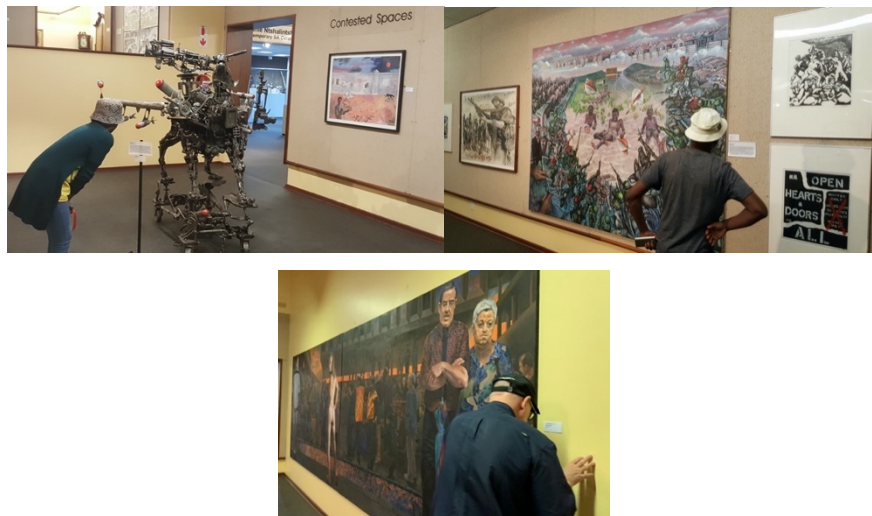


Image 11: Visitors reading labels, CS

Visitors also go to labels to find names, information about the author, the year the artwork was produced, the technique, and clues about the meaning of the work. In addition, the label sometimes contains a message from the curator providing an official description or interpretation. In the case of *Games*, the label reads as follows,

³⁹ dart

Manfred Zylla (1939 –)
Games (1985)
Acrylic and hessian

Manfred Zylla was born in Nazi Germany and lived through the ravages of World War II and its aftermath. He arrived in South Africa in 1970 and became prominent as an artist highly critical of apartheid, firstly with a series of woodcuts about the 1976 Soweto uprising, and then with a continuous flow of large -scale drawings, prints and paintings in the turbulent 1980s that left little doubt as to his political convictions. Zylla continues to produce politically challenging works on subjects like the environment, globalisation and African heritage.

Games was made at the height of the mass mobilisation campaigns of the 1980s, and shows a group of black youths as the targets of military subjugation in a game called 'killer'. Those who benefited most from apartheid, the white establishment, are represented by a group of money-grabbing parliamentarians, which includes two former apartheid Ministers of finance, their vision obscured by bank notes painted across their faces. The message is unambiguous: apartheid was a system constructed on white greed for money and power and based on violence and the domination of the black majority.

Image 12: A label next to *Games*, CS



Image 13: *Games*, Manfred Zylla

Zylla's explanation as well as the text on the label are what I refer to as longer versions of the name *Games*. On two separate occasions, two students proposed the name 'purge' for *Games*. They explained that their naming was after the movie *Purge* which they believed was inspired by Zylla's painting. In 2020, two years after the 2018 seminars, while I was following up on

interviews, receiving additional comments and feedback, one coparticipant shared the following interpretation for *Games*. He begins by providing the name of the artist, the name of the artwork, the same way he had seen on the labels.

ZYLLA, Manfred.

(1939).

Games Acrylic on Hessian

This artwork depicts what life was like when there was no democracy. It shows how the rich kept getting richer and how the poor people were used to make the rich people richer. It also shows how Apartheid was like. The title 'games' suggests that the white and powerful saw the struggles of the black people as funny and a game which they amused themselves with. The artwork displays how cruel and unequal society was and inspires the viewer to change the world for the better.

Games 'suggests' something. The coparticipant shares his interpretations in this short, prose-like name. Other forms of names have included poetry. Another coparticipant proposed a poem entitled 'The men in suits' for *Games*,

The men in suits

The men in suits watched us die

They watched as bullets and spears

flew towards us.

We were nothing but innocent souls.

Just playing around.

The men in suits paid for us to die

They watched as we died with smiles on our faces

Just innocent souls going about.

Nobody ever knew the misery behind these smiles

Let's not forget about the spectators

Who just sat there by the side of the road,

watching us die.

It was none of their business, so

they sat there and minded their own businesses.

The men in suits watched us die.

The men in suits with lots of money

Money to buy and pay for anything at any given time.

Money that was made through our hard labour

But then again to them we were just nothing,

The men with lots of power

The men in suits watched us die.

This poem, for me, reads like I would read Goya's *Disasters of War*. It is as if the poet was there, experiencing, witnessing, and then sharing her testimony through poetry. The artwork *Games* is like a scene being witnessed in the same sense how Goya observed the scenes of war unfolding, and then he used his medium to 'make visible' (Caygill, 2003:22) what he saw. In fact, 'he added to two of his engravings "I saw this"' (ibid.). His work was based on 'direct experience'. The experience of the *The men in suits*, though mediated, is shared as if it were direct. The poet travels and transports the reader into her own experiencing. Some of the key questions she raises are about power, money, and being 'spectators' to violence. Through the lens of Michael Rothberg's notion of implication (2019), I understand her use of 'spectators' as pointing to at least three distinct categories: perpetrators, bystanders, and implicated subjects. Bystanders are generally understood as those who watch from the sidelines and 'do nothing'. The implicated subjects, according to Rothberg, are involved in the structures and operations that make them beneficiaries of the violence. In the painting, while the implicated subjects may not be throwing killer darts, and therefore conventionally not named as perpetrators, they are still part of and have responsibilities in the violence. The poet's naming is not as mere repetition of the past but a way of making visible specific modes of being and thinking in the presence of violence. She steps inside the painting, taking the viewers with her. Her naming cuts across the binary model of perpetrator – victim put forward by commissions in post conflict zones such as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Tadjo, 2019; Coombes, 2003; Ross, 2003), which leaves out or obscure forms of harm and levels of implication (Rothberg, 2019) invisible within the frame of this model.

The names, poems, prose, and labels are themselves frames. They are also records, produced by looking at and interpreting another record, an artwork. This naming allows a glimpse into an intersubjective relationship operating between the artist, the namer-interpreter, and the

curators. While commonalities emerge, for example ‘money’, ‘innocent’, ‘power’, and the context of ‘greed’ and ‘violence’ is very present in all of them, there are some distinctive features and assumptions. For example, the label by WHAG assumes a clear, unambiguous interpretation about *Games*. Basing on the ideas of multivocality and polysemy of art (Fetterman, 2010; Gadamer, 2004), *Games* cannot portray one single interpretation devoid of any ambiguity.

The poem has another distinctive feature. The poet embodies and personalises her interpretation much more than other names. This is noted in the use of ‘us’ and ‘our’ in ways that collapse temporal, spatial, and bodily boundaries. The poetic name sets in motion, and is set by, a creative imagination which moves the poet and places her into the past and inside the skin of the ‘kids’ in the painting where she experiences and speaks as a collective ‘us’. In this example, naming happens as, and because of, a mode of travelling. The artwork *Games* becomes a transition zone, allowing movements of travel in and out of the artwork, the exhibition, and what she is experiencing. Travelling is also apparent in other names, but the prose takes it a step further. It draws the past into the present and imagines the future.

This futuristic movement is referenced where the namer writes, ‘artwork...inspires the viewer to change the world for the better’. The naming by Zylla stemmed from his memories travelling and taking pictures, on his witnessing and experiencing violence, and his direct work on the painting. The prose and the poetic namers relied on their imagination, creativity, inherited memories, and subjective experiences, travelling to the gallery and in the exhibition, and interpretations mediated by the painting. Naming in these instances, contributes to generating knowledge through both real and imaginary movements of travelling. Tim Ingold, as Paul Klee (2022; 2011) before him, supports that movement is the basis of knowledge and creation. A name sets off movement. However, a name can also arrest movement and freeze it into a monument, ‘a fossil’ (Mbembe, 2015:186).

As evidenced in the previous paragraphs and sections, by engaging an artwork, a multiplicity of movements is unleashed, calling into presence more experiences, memories, meanings, and modes of being and thinking. In this sense the artwork becomes alive, a kind of ‘a living monument’ to use Albie Sachs and Edwin Cameron’s phrasing (2015). How we read what is put into presence, how we name it, what knowledge and understanding can be generated, is mediated by our own pasts, presents, imagined futures, and the movements that we and the environments we live in enable.

The following two examples recap and clarify some of the points made so far. Coparticipants saw statues of icons in CS as reminders and as mediums of memories to future generation. One coparticipant chose a sculpture of Francis Baard and wrote,

The sculpture that I chose is the one of Francis Baard that was designed by Momberg, Anton. Francis Baard was one of the female activists in Kimberley/Northern Cape who was against the white supremacy/the pass laws. One of the Regions/District is named after her. There is also one of her statues at New Park here in Kimberley. I believe she was a true icon. I think that she did great things for the people that's why there are sculptures of her in the art gallery. I believe that the naming of the District and the statue was just to remind people of her good deeds and also to pass that knowledge to the future generation.

The coparticipant seems to speak as if she knew Francis Baard. Having seen her statue in 'New Park here in Kimberley', and being aware that one of the regional/district offices carries her name, the coparticipant put this knowledge into her naming. The tone reflected in words such as 'I believe' seems to imply that she knew her just because she had seen her name and her statues in important public spaces. The public presence is perceived and interpreted as an acknowledgement of 'good deeds', of 'knowledge' worth passing on, a sign of her being a 'true icon'. Even though the coparticipant never met Francis Baard physically, personally, she 'knows her'.

In an article entitled 'We knew their names' published on UCT's website (Swingler, 2020) Stephan Schiffels, Group Leader for Population Genetics, Department for Archaeogenetics, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, noted how knowing the names of individuals he was studying made a huge difference comparing to other research projects and approaches he usually used: 'We knew their names, we had seen the disturbed graves in pictures, we met the descendants of the deceased and their families, and we knew that any results we'd find would have a different kind of impact on these families than our usual scientific findings have' (ibid.). Though it is not always the case, knowing the name of someone or of a place usually implies knowing the story, having met them, having the knowledge of that person or place. In the name of 'scientific objectivity' some sciences discourage getting involved with personal stories. While Schiffels and colleagues usually distanced themselves from such stories, as he clarified below, he disclosed how knowing the names not only brought

‘the human stories’ in his scientific practice, but it also made a difference in this specific project (Swingler, 2020; Mlamla, 2019).

I usually distance myself sufficiently from the human stories behind the individuals I’m studying. In this project that was neither an option nor would it have been appropriate: The human story behind the individuals was the very reason we were studying them. This human story certainly made this work meaningful on a completely different level compared to other projects I have worked on. (Swingler, 2020).

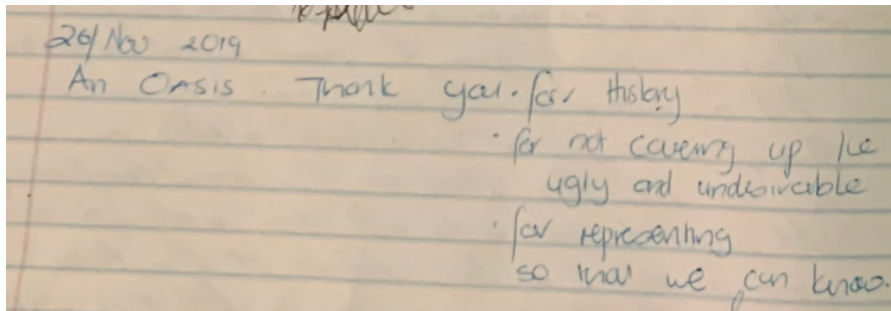
In medical and social anthropology, it is the possibility of accessing, carrying, and working with such human stories and meanings that ethnographic knowledge can be generated and shared. Ethnographic stories shared in this chapter were uncovered due to the naming exercises and the resulting different types of names – prose, poetic, labels. Naming is a generative, creative, and imaginative travelling embedded in human experiences, specifically those involved in attempts to understand and generate meaning and knowledge about violent contested pasts and their interpretations in the present.

In closing, the CS name called into presence several problems and phenomena, from the advent of colonialism and its dehumanising violence to the Post-Apartheid context and its ills, the impacts of historical violence, continued systemic racism, physical and psychic spaces, resistance, protestation, contestation, shared heritage, shared humanity, non-racialism, healing, critical dialogue, nation building, social cohesion, and so on. While all these problems and phenomena were named in the conversations and interviews with Robbins, Pretorius, and other coparticipants, the words ‘contest’, ‘contested’, and ‘space’ could also be deduced by looking at or hearing the name CS. Contestation was called into presence by the name CS, and it was achieved mostly through the action of setting up the CS exhibition and through public conversation. Names and naming were one of the ways this conversation was facilitated.

Paul Ricoeur reminds that, ‘that which is given to be seen is that which speaks’ (2004:342). What is made visible is granted speech, voice. This is not always the case. For example, former McGregor Museum anthropologist Fiona Barbour shared how for years she had been visiting WHAG, passed by and looked at *Assimilation is inevitable* many times, and yet, had not really seen it until she attended a CSS, got closer, and engaged with it. It takes more than a name and more than physical presence to see what is present in a painting. However, paying attention only to what is present, visible, as well as paying attention only on the conventionally obvious, leave other aspects and related knowledge and understanding in the dark. Institutions such as

galleries and their exhibitions, by making some things visible, make others invisible, intentionally and unintentionally. Various dynamics, power related, economic, politics, epistemic, historical and others, make it so that public spaces selectively render certain images, experiences, narratives, concepts, and interpretations visible while concealing or obscuring others. Scientific history has documented voluntary and involuntary complicities with colonial violence as well as other forms of violence such as Nazism. Heidegger himself, as well as a number of anthropologists and scholars from other disciplines, worked for the Nazis and therefore were complicit in their violence. The current climate of violence related to ongoing wars, health pandemics, and economic and social unrests, powerfully brings into presence the significance of naming, but also raises questions, particularly those in relation to inherited violent pasts and their interpretations and contestations in current public spaces, and institutional and individual complicities and implication in violence, even if unintended. How we read what is put into presence; how we name it; what knowledge, meaning and understanding can be generated is mediated by our own pasts, presents, and imagined futures, and the movements ourselves and the environments we live in make possible.

Chapter 5. Violation : Conversation on a ‘heritage that hurts’



An oasis. Thank you · for history

- for not covering up the ugly and undesirable
- for representing so that we can know.

(A visitor's comment, CS comments book)

At the heart of violence lay a violation, a hurt. Violation plays a part in the production of knowledge and the subjective experience that influences the multiple interpretations of CS. Crouse's *Rian Malan* for instance can be described as 'heritage that hurts' (Uzzel, 2007, 1989). Such a heritage, according to Uzzel can provoke difficult and divergent emotional responses, particularly when heritage of violence is involved. In this chapter, I reflect on the divergent interpretations of Crouse's *Rian Malan* and the implication of the emotional response. My argument is twofold and overlapping. First, I argue that at the core of all forms of violence lays a violation, a hurt, which has some influence on the expression and formation of particular subjectivities, perceptions, and dispositions behind certain interpretations. Violation also informs how other people's interpretations are perceived and related to, included, and fully engaged or not. Secondly, I argue that divergent interpretations, understood here as different and competitive, of an artwork about violence, can cause anxieties, bitterness, anger, guilt, and other responses considered emotionally difficult or sensitive. However, the divergency can also enable a questioning of one's perspectives and an opening up of possibilities for awareness and shift in subjectivity, leading into some changes in interpreting and relating.

During a seminar that centred on Crouse's *Rian Malan*, I witnessed that a conversation centred on an artwork about violence can cause difficult and divergent responses. As Kelly Askew argues, meaning never enters people like an injection. Making meaning of an artwork such as Crouse's *Rian Malan* is a complex weaving of life experience and aesthetic sensibilities. These not only determine its meaning, but they also determine the very experience of it (Askew & Wilk, 2002). During the conversation, coparticipants expressed divergent interpretations because of their different lived experiences. The conversation saw one of the most heated debates, at times bordering on discomfort. Yet, at the end, the coparticipants perceived it as the most meaningful and fascinating discussion. For instance, towards the end, Crouse reflected, 'I can say with confidence that my experience participating in the seminar dealing with CS and mental health with a view to healing through art was one of the most meaningful and fascinating interactive processes I have ever been involved with in any museum through many decades of exhibiting and interacting with the public'.

I find a hot interpretive approach most appropriate to present this discussion. Informed by Uzzel's 'Hot interpretation' (2007), the approach consists of acknowledging the emotional aspect of heritage and incorporating it in interpretation. Aspects of the conversation were emotionally charged. For instance, some responses and questions brought up what some coparticipants referred to as bitterness and guilt, a range of interpretations and ideas which may perhaps be better understood through Veena Das's 'poisonous knowledge' (Das, 2000). To look deep into various forms and memories of violence, I introduce violation and discuss it through performativity – a performative ability set forth by artworks and aspects of the CS conversation. Violent performativity emerges as the result of this reflection on violation through the lens of performativity (Schechner, 2021; Turner & Bruner, 1986; Turner, 1982; Austin, 1962) in connection with violence in CS. The chapter's discussion starts off with a section on violation, posited as a thread connecting various forms and memories of violence. It is followed by a story I titled *Memories of Tea and Tears* in which a coparticipant, Hanlie Wells, shares a personal story about a wounding experience. The physical wound and the memory of it interact with lived experience in a complex physical, social, mental, and emotional way from which subjectivity is constituted. Through this lens, her personal and collective healing is interpreted, assessed, and shared. This story and its insights will facilitate entry into the heated debate about Crouse's *Rian Malan* from which I highlight two approaches, the divergent and the convergent interpretive contestations. In concluding, I share thoughts on the shift observed in the context of the CSS conversation.

A common thread

Past and present experiences of violence encountered in CS and other public spaces are interpreted and expressed in many, and often contested, ways. A variety of expressions and names, equally contested, are applied to these violence and related memories (Hinton, La Pointe & Irvin-Erickson, 2013; Hinton & O'Neill, 2009; Jansen & Löfving, 2009; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). In Kimberley particularly, and in South Africa broadly, expressions coparticipants pointed out are:

colonial violence, wars of conquests, anticolonial violence, genocides, racial violence, Apartheid violence, slavery, Anti-Apartheid struggle, resistance, counter-resistance, insurgency, riots, black on black violence, crime against humanity, heritage that hurts, heritage of conflict, gender-based violence (GBV) sometimes referred to by some activists as 'femicide', 'xenophobic attacks' sometimes referred to as 'Afrophobia' or 'anti-African' violence, 'farm violence' which some voices have termed 'genocide' against 'white people on farms'; 'farm violence' against 'black people'.

All of these violent events, their naming, and interpretations are advanced and at the same time contested on various platforms (eNCA, 2020b [#DStv403]; Bernardo, 2019; eNCA, 2020a [#DStv403]; Cineas, 2020; Davids, 2020; Graham, 2020; Timeslive, 2020; Students Representative Council 2019). The intention in mentioning them here is not to verify or determine the truth of any of these violence and interpretations. I seek to find a point of entry, a common thread, into this multiplicity of violence. Immediate places I thought to look for this thread were the word violence itself and unpacking its etymology. The second place was the exhibition, with a focus on interpretive stories and creative performances brought into the conversation by the coparticipants. My working assumption was that insights that can be gleaned from engaging CS in conversation with stories and experiences brought into the conversation by coparticipants may contribute towards a deepened understanding of contestation over the interpretation of violence exhibited by the artworks in the exhibition. In what follows I discuss my findings about the etymology of violence.

My first Google search (2021) for violence resulted with,

Etymology. Borrowed from Middle French ‘violation’, from Latin *violātiō* (‘injury, profanation’), from *violō*, ‘I treat with violence; I maltreat; I violate, defile, profane’.

While the second search’s result was,

c.1400, from Old French *violacion* and directly from Latin *violationem* (nominative *violatio*) ‘an injury, irreverence, profanation’, from past participle stem of *violare* ‘to treat with violence, outrage, dishonor’, perhaps an irregular derivative of *vis* ‘strength, force, power, energy,’ from PIE root *weie- ‘to go after, pursue with vigor or desire’.

And a search of the word ‘violation’,

An act of disregarding an agreement or a right; – entry to another’s property without right or permission. synonyms: trespass/encroachment/intrusion/usurpation; – a disrespectful act; synonym: irreverence; – the crime of forcing a person to submit to sexual intercourse against his or her will.

On the basis of the above, I detect four key aspects of *violatio*, namely action, quality, result, and intention. The action, for instance as referenced in the phrase ‘treating with violence’. The quality could also mean a way or an approach through which the action is conducted, for instance, treating with brutality, cruelty, inhumanity. Third, the result, which is the ‘Injury, profanation, defilement, wound’ caused by such action. Finally, the intention implies a sense of repetition, movement, and continuity, as for example reflected in ‘go after, pursue’. It may be a one-off or repetitive action. In all cases there is a sense of movement, doing something and making happen – the action, *violenter* (French), and the result, *violātiō* (Latin).

Violatio (‘wound, injury, hurt’) is a bedrock on which rest all the violence mentioned in the previous paragraph, and in light of various conversations and discussions I summarise below, it is a constant thread across all interpretations of violence encountered in this study. Violence is identified either as just another violence, an act of criminality, war, genocide, or given another name or none depending, as Alexander Hinton and other anthropologists studying violence have argued, on the sociopolitical, epistemic, economic, and power dynamic, relations and interests at play in a given context (Hinton, La Pointe & Irvin-Erickson, 2013, 2009; Jansen and Löfving, 2009; Whitehead, 2004).

I approach violence not just as an action, but also as a state, an effect, a result, a certain quality that causes wounds, and characterised by a sense of movement, more precisely a certain kind of performativity. The use of this notion of performativity draws on a couple of ideas first developed by Jay Austin (1962) and taken up and enriched by contributions from Jacques Derrida (1974; Hendricks, 2016), Victor Turner (Turner & Bruner, 1986; Turner, 1982), and Richard Schechner (2021), among others. To summarise an earlier discussion on this concept from the view of language as performative, as able to make things happen proposed by Austin, the concept evolved to include stage theatricality and further into understanding of the performance of the everyday social life, to the way certain material objects may evoke or provoke responses. In this sense these objects, artworks, and exhibitions for instance, may be said to be performative. I propose violation, inspired by the definitions and the aspects discussed in the previous paragraphs about *violatio*, to describe not just a wound, injury, physical, mental or otherwise, caused by violence, but to include the way certain depictions, artworks, social spaces, encounters, experienced or witnessed events, images and stories seemed to make things happen in the space, in the bodies, emotions, thoughts and other responses from the coparticipants. I will refer to this ability as violent performativity. The CS exhibition set into motion not only material objects but also their performative abilities. It is my view however, that violent performativities are dialectical and intersubjective. They emerged in this specific encounter because the artworks and aspects of the conversation taped into already existing individual and collective subjectivities formed by past and ongoing wounding. Here, I understand subjectivity as Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman would, as ‘lived and imaginary experience’ (Das et al, 2000:10).

Memories of tea and tears

In the first week of December 2022, I met Hanlie Wells in one of the malls in Kimberley. As soon as we sat down across each other in a restaurant, I said ‘Finally’, and this caused us to laugh! She repeated, ‘Finally’! And I continued, ‘Yeah, we are meeting finally!’ ‘How long has it been?’ she asked. ‘A bit over three years!’ She is almost 60 years old now. During the conversation she would ask me to consider her as my grandma! We first met in 2019 when she participated in one of my presentations about this research, its progress, what I had been doing, and what I was learning so far. Like in most of my presentations, I took the opportunity to ask willing participants to complete some questionnaires and share their feedback. At the end of her responses, she wrote, ‘Dearest Toto,⁴⁰ we needed & appreciated your time! Toto, I would love to tell you my story’. Three years passed before we could meet, mainly because of COVID-19. She got it and was in ICU for some time. After drinking tea, she coughed for a while, and explained that she can still feel areas on the skin in her throat where the ICU tubes were touching. The memory had stayed there. The skin still remembered. It might take a while for the wound to heal. Perhaps the memory of the wound might never heal. For a moment I found myself thinking how sometimes what is supposed to help, heal us for example, ends up hindering us or worse, wounding us. She said she was surrounded by many machines, with tubes coming going into her body to help with breathing, others feeding, others for medicine. Without these tubes she probably would not have survived. In the pictures she showed me, her body had changed. I didn’t recognise her. The face as the rest of the body were swollen. Her eyes were mostly closed, weak and red where they were open. She exuded immense joy as she told me this story, a story of pain and tears, but also of survival, recovered health, and renewed life. After surviving that, she wanted to live, she said. She wanted to meet and tell me the story. She had ideas of projects she wanted to start working on, and she discussed them with me. I advised where I could, and she wanted to join some of my sessions about movement, art, and health. At the hospital, she recounted how the doctors sometimes made her do some breathing exercises and movement which reminded her of the dances and exercises she had seen me doing in the gallery (in the pictures and videos I used during my presentation in 2019). She wanted to learn to do it for herself and to be able to do it for others, especially for children. Children, she thought, were most affected by legacies of a past they don’t know about and still

⁴⁰ Tutto is how I was mostly known and called then.

have to deal with challenges of the present. Her eyes, now back to being as clear as the first time I saw her, got teary here and there as she spoke.

I am a proponent of telling stories as one of the ways to heal wounds from the past. But later after this meeting, I wondered what comes first, the healing of the wounds or the telling of the stories about the wounds. In Wells' case, surviving and healing from COVID-19 influenced her telling the stories. Also, it inspired her renewed will to live even though her body still remembered and sometimes the wound re-opened causing slight pains in her throat. It was a process; telling stories and taking care of the wound went hand in hand. I was anticipating that her healing from COVID-19 might influence, perhaps change for the better, the ratings she had offered in 2019. She had rated the progress of healing a -2.5 out of 10. For her, the healing progress since the end of Apartheid up to now was more challenging amongst the poorest and marginalised. I asked her to rate again. It was worse in 2022, she said. This time it was closer to a -3 out of 10. I was surprised because I thought her recent experience of recovery would influence her rating in a positive way. Discrimination, and related legacies from the past, is still a problem. Economic and socio-political problems make things worse. They make healing the wounds of the past more difficult. But transformation was better. For her, transformation is how everyone, irrespective of background treated her and each other at the hospital, for instance. 'Black, Indian, White medical and professional staff' were kind to her. 'A Black doctor' daily visited her and encouraged her, and she will never forget that he helped her get better: 'We felt like family'. Transformation had improved; in her assessment it was now perhaps 3 out of 10 compared to 1.5 out of 10 three years ago.

These numbers are subjective. They are based on the coparticipant's own assessment of the progress of healing the wounds of the past, since the end of Apartheid, in the context of the present. Subjectivity as I understand, is formed and shaped by perceptions of events in the social and physical world and according to personal experiences, imagination, and the mental and emotional responses to those events. With regards to her views on healing, I detect at least two different subjective processes. Healing wounds from the past is a different process from the one involved in healing bodily wounds caused by COVID-19. Yet, it seems that the meaningful experience with the doctor(s), which she explained to me through racial categories of whiteness and blackness inherited from the past, played some part in what she called surviving COVID-19. It is within the frame informed by the past that she shares the story with me, using the same frame on the personal level when she tells her story and on the social level when she shares her assessment about healing.

When Wells talked about her memories of 2019, she emphasized trust and speaking from the heart: ‘Your invitation to speak, to share....We wrote from our heart, not our mind.... My trust, the trust was already there for you’. Three years later as she spoke to me in that public space in the restaurant, I sensed the same trust. She is the gentlest and kindest person I have ever met in Kimberley, perhaps in the world. Seeing her in pain in the pictures was difficult. I couldn’t imagine how she could bear that suffering. At one time, as she was about to speak, my hands shook, as if for seconds my body had run out of breath in anticipation of the pain. It must have been so unbearable to spend months on that bed unable to move, unable to breath. She spoke from her heart, and my body listened from its heart, too. It was a story containing multiple stories, from talking about her own wound, to surviving and healing, and how she perceived healing the wounds in society at large.

Artworks, and exhibitions such as *CS*, are ‘hot’ as Uzzell (2007,1998, 1989) would put it. This means that they are not exclusively spaces of rationality, but they are also emotional, provoking emotional memories and responses. As in the one-on-one conversation in the restaurant, most coparticipants I know who attended *CSS* conversations spoke from their heart as well as from their minds. There is no intention, on my side, of separating or encouraging a view separating ‘mind’ and ‘heart’, ‘emotion’ and ‘reason’, ‘thought and feeling’. There was no such intention either during the facilitation of the conversation. Those of us who like to think, feel, and relate deeply not just with our ‘heads’, know that during *CS* conversations, our bodies were there, too, listening and speaking. To understand violation in such a context, I would like to join Martha Nussbaum’s observation, the ‘intellect’ alone ‘is not sufficient for having real human knowledge of it’ (1986:45).

Talking to a person directly, however, is different from talking to images of people inside a work of art. Those people will not talk back; they would not respond to questions verbally, and their expressive and emotional features, frozen at a particular moment, remain fixed irrespective of the coparticipants’ change in thought and feeling. Coparticipants can only inhabit the artworks with our subjectivities. However, this stability of the artworks’ ‘expression’ is useful. It helps to notice the diversity of interpretations and how the change and difference in coparticipants’ interpretations are grasped because there is a singular, unchanging canvas against which to compare them. In the same vein, it is possible to match them with the artist’s initial intention, and against the artist’s reinterpretations, and how new and old meanings associated with it evolve or remain the same.

In the previous chapters, I discussed examples of coparticipants getting inside the paintings and speaking – through proses and poems – as if they had become the people inside the paintings. Below, a coparticipant in *CS#4* used the same approach, but this time through dance, and then talked about it. I remarked how she uses the expression ‘actual knowledge’ which reminds me of Nussbaum’s use of ‘real human knowledge’. The coparticipant is formed by attending the previous conversation, *CS#2*, which is the primary source of this chapter’s discussion.

My dance was based on the picture of Rian Malan. The dude there with a cigarette ... At first when I looked at the painting before my actual knowledge of what the painting meant. I thought that Rian was just another particular white man who wasn’t worried about the situation that was happening behind him ... like chaotic ... the more knowledge you get to learn about him, Rian was fighting against Apartheid, he was against that slavery.

An unfenced debate



Image 14: Rian Malan, Oil on canvas, by Reshada Crouse

This painting was the object of heated intellectual debates and emotional responses among coparticipants during CS#2 on 10 October 2018. As the main guest speaker, Crouse provided the background and discussed various interpretations of her work by coparticipants. Some interpretations were opposite to her original intention and her own interpretation. Before reading the next paragraph, I would like to invite you as the reader, if you are willing, to pause and look again at the *Rian Malan* portrait and come up with your own interpretation(s).

Contrary to the young people who were mostly students who had never experienced Apartheid, Crouse had experienced it. In *Rian Malan* she painted someone she knew and used Rian's real-life experiences in her painting. When she asked Rian what she should use in the background, Rian immediately said 'death and destruction'. According to her, his response

suggesting such a background of extreme violence and death was the result of the context of the time, the violence taking place around the country and the emotional response of Malan himself to this violent and very volatile context. He was agitated by the unstable situation of the days leading to the elections in 1994. As Crouse put it,

Rian was nervous around the time. I started the painting just before our first democratic election. It was a tense time, and as a journalist Rian knew the details of the diverse threats of civil unrest, even war, from opposing political factions, which were looming. Rian was terrified of the worst-case scenarios playing out, trapped, like all of us, in a potentially volatile, unpredictable context.

But she also situated the discussion and interpretation of her work in view of the dynamics and contestations in the public spaces in the country by the time she spoke at the seminar in 2018. She noted for instance that, race, economy, and land had been very evocative that year, associated with the challenge to address injustices from the colonial past. There were many problems, ‘a grand conglomeration of contestations’. In her view, Malan’s emotional state had not changed much since the painting was made in 1994: ‘In 2018 he is still anxious’ and ‘His emotional disposition in many ways had not shifted with time’. In a follow up comment shared by Crouse in 2023, she emphasized that,

His emotional equilibrium has not shifted radically since 1994 when the painting was created. The details creating tension in the country have changed, but to his mind, despite the deep emotional connections most South Africans feel toward their country, South Africa remains difficult to exist in, mostly because it could feasibly have been, and could now be, such an exceptional interracial success story, with plenty for all. But against all hope and possibility, malevolent human forces persist.

The painting is a record of memory. It served as a kind of a bridge (Radstone & Schwarz, 2010) to access and compare the present and the past. It also facilitated encounters and bridged various subjectivities expressed in the space, allowing for multiple and simultaneous travels. Though Crouse’s artwork was received differently by some coparticipants, this interaction made visible two important points. The first is summarized by what I have termed divergent interpretive contestation where the viewers’ interpretation is diametrically different from the artist’s original intention. This implies another, convergent interpretive contestation where the interpretations intersect and converge. The second point is captured by Uzzel’s concept of ‘hot

interpretation' (2007) which acknowledges the emotional aspect of engaging art and heritage. These two points together summarise my view that coparticipants were exposed to a multiple-points perspective, affecting their social, mental, and emotional responses in a way that contributed to the shift in some of their initial interpretations and subjectivities, points I will clarify below.

Divergent interpretive contestations

This first point advances that interpretations from viewers of an art can be at the other extreme opposite of the intention of the artist who created it. Similarly, while curators, heritage managers, or scholars may have their own set narratives, intentions, and assumptions, it is possible that the visitors have opposing interpretations. Crouse noted that she was frightened by the interpretation that her painting was showing 'a boer' who was 'smoking away not caring about what's going on behind him'. 'This is not' the case, she responded. The coparticipant, 'a young black man' had read the image 'ignoring the shabbiness of Rian, unshaven, dirty hair and fingernails, sucking smelly unhealthy cigarette smoke into his lungs to calm himself because he is anxious, anxiety which can clearly be seen in his face, and does not know how to deal with the horrors created by his own kind'. Another coparticipant also had interpreted the painting in the following manner,

I didn't really have much of a take on the picture when I was looking at it. Listening to your comments what you thought about the picture I started like generating some ideas of how I could interpret the picture relating to your stories as well. To me it feels like the guy who was dead who was laying there...the people in the background also the women they don't focus on the guy because he is dead, they have their own lives that continue, they have their own struggles which they must face.... Then you have this guy at the front of the picture. He is clean, yea he is clean, he is smoking, it could be that he is relaxed, maybe he is just relaxed having fun just smoking, then the other people there at the background their lives have the struggles to face.

Images of violence can be seen and interpreted very differently. Not only do visitors bring their own stories, experiences, and memories in the space and in their interpretation (Procter, 2020, Uzzel, 2007), they, also, listen and draw on each other's stories, experiences, emotions, and interpretations. In the case of a painting such as *Rian Malan* which carries visible wounds on

the body, the death and destruction which reminds one of sensitive pasts and presents, and evokes contestations, Crouse's response to an interpretation different than hers perhaps indicates the difficulty of engaging arts and 'heritage that hurts' (Uzzel, 1989). Referring to them as 'hot', means different kinds of responses they may provoke, for instance fear and anger. While Pretorius and Robbins were pioneering in collecting, displaying, and allowing critical engagement with such works that carry and evoke some of the most sensitive memories and histories in the country, some of her staff members wanted the exhibition taken down, and others did not want to visit it. They felt that works showing violence should not be displayed. One staff explained her reasons as because she 'hated politics': 'Everything is politicized'. Compared to the past, 'racism...I think it's bad than before. It is ironic because it was supposed to be better after 1994. I think it is worse'. However, other coparticipants felt that it was important to have such works showing violence on display for various reasons. Some thought showing such works would help that violence not be repeated. Others appreciated that those works would help to know what happened. For instance, a participant observed that 'South Africa has its history grounded in Apartheid which also helps us refrain from repeating the mistakes made by people in power during Apartheid'. Some visitors noted the beauty. 'I felt...as if I was out of this world'; one felt 'somehow bad when I see how blacks were treated, but when it comes to the art of it, I could stand there for days'.

Despite the challenging nature of artworks depicting violence, their presence in a public domain such as CS affords visitors what Alice Procter calls 'the whole picture' (2020), an idea almost similar to Pretorius' 'a fuller story' I heard her often talk about since our very first conversations in 2016 until after 2018 when she retired. The building up of a 'whole picture' of the 'colonial story of the art in our museums' involves, if my reading of Alice Procter is correct, becoming an 'engaged' (18) and 'critical museum visitor' (12), becoming aware and engaged in 'stories that have been left out of the canon', becoming aware that 'all collecting [and displaying, and managing: my emphasis] is subjective' and that the museums 'coerce our emotional and intellectual responses to the things they display – that's not necessarily sinister, but it's something to be conscious of, as these selective narratives can very easily start to look like definitive histories, or binaries of right and wrong' (18).

The public tend to take everything presented in these heritage institutions as 'truth' (Uzzel, 1998). Procter's idea advances a kind of resistance against viewing 'images with single-point perspective' (18). Similarly with Pretorius, 'a fuller story' would involve bringing together and engaging the past and the present, the disgraced and the glorified, all the contested heritage

juxtaposed into a space where they could be looked at and serve for dialogue and for educational purpose to the public, young and old from all backgrounds. In the catalogue and during our conversations, Pretorius maintained that if one brought together ‘some of the disgraced public sculptures of figures such as Verwoerd, Vorster, Botha and de Klerk alongside struggle heroes [like Nelson Mandela, Kgosi Galeshewe, Sol Paatje and so on: my addition] a fuller story would emerge’ (WHAG, 2019). She also advanced that such an exhibition would also serve as a warning not to repeat the mistakes of the past, a view shared by a number of other coparticipants. While I have no doubt that Pretorius understands that ‘a whole picture’ or ‘a fuller story’ of anything, let alone of a sensitive heritage, can never be fully grasped, it seems to me that putting up such an exhibition, including and juxtaposing sensitive CS and allowing for critical public engagements such as the seminar conversations, are a component of the ‘fuller story’. This, in my view, is more of a process of building up awareness and shared knowledge than a compact finite package. This process is associated with knowing, the prevention of further violence and, as the curators hoped, the possibility of change and healing. A believer in the power of art for change, Robbins clarified this saying that,

The idea that CS is a record of colonialism is superficially accurate. It is much deeper than that simply because it is art and art has the ability to change the view of human beings...Our motives, certainly my understanding of WHAG’s motive of putting on an exhibition like that would be very clear. It would deal with that precise thing that art can open up possibilities. So, you look at CS to understand your so-called opponents and to understand your response to the space and to them. And so, it is in the end a healing process that is facilitated by the wonderful idea that art can actually open the mind.

Different way of seeing and interpreting an artwork pushed Crouse to respond and to reinterpret her artwork. She re-read her piece, clarifying, providing more context, including experiences from the past and the present. In addition to personally knowing Malan, she read from current publications. In a way, she travelled back and forth between past and present. Sometimes she stepped into Malan’s own words and body to express certain meanings. For instance, she used Malan’s own words to make the point that his ‘emotional disposition’ or his ‘emotional equilibrium’ had ‘not shifted radically since 1994’. She mobilized her own direct memory and experiences together with the interpretive contestations from other coparticipants and from the media, in her reflexive engagement. This intense intersubjective experience, provoked by diverging and converging interpretations, created a heightened awareness of collective and

personal, social, and emotional states and the relationship to the state of violence in the present context. For Malan, the period of the 1990s towards the elections as well as the recent students protests – #RFM, #FMF and other events referenced by Crouse in her talk – all had violence as a common thread which triggered physical and mental horrors that have, and could, happen in such a context of historical injury and ongoing tensions. Reflecting back on this experience, a local clinical psychologist, noted that ‘artists play an important role...in a society like South Africa depicted by violence, corruption, poverty and injustice which lead to many adversities in the lives of our people’.

Crouse’s evocatively powerful life painting technique, the expressive images she put into conversation in her work, drew the viewers in, inside the fences, and the images zoomed not just into the violent contestations she caught at that moment in time, but also into contestations from the past that had led to that moment and birthed these images. Owing to interpretations of coparticipants, the painting is also used to hone in on contemporary society about which the images of violence are performed and discussed, and the role of artists to raise awareness about social and mental health is highlighted. Coparticipants in CS conversations expressed this context through various creative mediums as they interpreted the artworks and interacted with each one. The following are some images of their responses. This way the art, the audience, the space all moved coparticipants into producing responses informed by violence, the ability to make another body perform violence, I call it violent performativity.



Image 15: Some of the coparticipants responses

Convergent interpretive contestations

There was convergence in the approach, but also in referring to some similar events, images, and experiences. Like other coparticipants, Crouse while she spoke back to her art piece and at the same time addressed the audience's questions and responses, she read her work and interpreted it drawing on memories and experiences of her own, of her own sense of meaning and perception, time, and context. But she was grounded in the present and made references to some publicly known histories and news. Like other coparticipants, she was looking back, recalling and sharing past memories through her re-reading and re-interpreting of her artwork in the now, connecting and speaking directly to what was emerging in the space at that particular moment of conversation in the *CS#2*. Provoked by a tyre burning in the painting, some coparticipants talked about the knowledge and memories of events from the past such as 'necklacing'. This led to converging interpretive contestations. Crouse, like other coparticipants, also spoke about the present, as her quotes earlier in the chapter indicate. Her interpretation, which is of the artwork's specific time in the past, but also of the present, converges with other coparticipants' interpretations. Below are some pictures recently taken by me, others sent to me by coparticipants.



Image 16: Some protest scenes in Kimberley, 2016 - 2023

Shifting subjectivities

Before the beginning of the seminar's conversations, usually coparticipants mingled, walked around the exhibition, and some engaged each other and the speakers. Before Crouse spoke, some coparticipants had already started sharing and discussing interpretations of her painting among themselves. Later during the seminar, a coparticipant disclosed that she had been told that her interpretation, which was that 'the artwork portrays a white person who does not care...', was caused by her 'own guilt as a white person'. She inquired whether a young man next to her who had just said that 'the artwork though nice' made him 'feel bitter' was also triggered by his 'own bitterness' as a black person: 'I would like to hear your comment about the idea of individual projecting your own, like the poet that sat here that said he feels bitter, so is it something in himself, like I feel, am from a white background, so I have the guilt from years upon my shoulders, is that relevant?' The psychologist cofacilitating this part of the conversation provided a detailed response, which I have reproduced here for clarity on this question and for the ensuing reflection,

In a context like this...in this particular exercise it's not about the individual alone but it is about what the individual contributes to the collective association, and in the end what we collectively carry. You know, all these interpretations plus many more, plus what the artist's intent was with the painting. And I think we're all enlightened very much so by the background that was given about Rian Malan, and what was intended by that particular painting. But I think the collectiveness is the message here saying that as a nation we are carrying all of this, and all of this needs to be put into consciousness, into awareness, on to the table, where it can be seen and where it can be worked with, and that is very important. So, it might be that you as an individual, you go back wherever you will sleep tonight and you will seat with that inside yourself and something was triggered, something was evoked, and that is what you will work with because you start to become aware but in that you also contribute to the collectiveness that we all share as a nation, and as the world; because these things are not only happening in South Africa. As Totto [Umana] has very rightfully said, it is all over the world. If you look at America, if you look at Britain, you look at Europe, everywhere it's happening. And there is a new, social, and collective consciousness starting to develop through work like this, which is very encouraging; painful but encouraging.

Later, the same participant who asked the question remarked, as part of the closing reflections,

I think, art can bring to the surface so many feelings like we just saw today. How do we see the future? I think there's so many people that just want to work together, to build together, to make this country what it can be if we work together. Unfortunately, it's mostly the extremists if that's the right way to say it in English that make the biggest noise, so you hear about the extremists first. But I think there are so many people that just want to build and be good to one another. So, I think there is hope.

Though it is established that artworks have agency (Gell, 1998) like other things and objects (Yeneva, 2022; Latour, 2016,2014; Haraway, 1991), and that works such as Crouse's *Rian Malan* may have an impact on our emotions, the above contributions highlight an expanded or collaborative agency between the art and the coparticipants. Coparticipants made their choice and were willing to bring into the conversation not just their intellectual and rational understanding, questioning and sensitivities, but also their emotional responses and subjective interpretations vis-a-vis what they saw, were told, heard, or experienced.

While the coparticipant had many options including keeping silent or posing the question differently, for instance she could have asked the question without directly involving the personal experiences and emotions of another coparticipant, she did. Having facilitated and witnessed how difficult such conversations can be, even more so when sensitive heritage and perceptions are involved, the coparticipant's choice and the collective engagement on that day may be said not to be very common. In comparison to the travelling of the poet I discussed in the previous chapter, while the poet used an object, the images inside the artwork to voice thoughts and emotions, this coparticipant is dealing with real people who are present with her in the same room during the conversation. She is stepping into coparticipants' bodies, identities, thoughts, and emotions. Walking in their shoes? She credits art for the engagement and the shifts felt in the room, 'art can bring to the surface so many feelings like we just saw today'. But I would like to extend credit to the hot interpretive approach and the collaborative contributions of all coparticipants present that time in the room. Rather than interpreting about, engaging about, or talking about, coparticipants chose interpreting with, engaging with, talking with. While 'work like this...is very encouraging; painful but encouraging' as the co-facilitator noted, it cannot happen without such agency, courageous choices, presence, and willingness to participate, share, and receive one's and others' potentially diverging interpretations. Such

work, agency, courage and vulnerability were also embodied in a performance response by the coparticipant whose dance I mentioned early in the chapter.

After having heard and engaged the full story of Reshada's *Rian Malan* in CS#2, the coparticipant attended and spoke at another seminar (#4) where she created and presented the dance inspired by the painting. Her words below, indicate not only the shift that followed her participation and increasing exposure to divergent contestations in that space, but also what she credits, such as having a community, gaining more knowledge, feeling safe, engaging in a creative expression, listening, and telling stories, all conditions she perceived to be behind her experience, knowledge, and shift.

My dance piece in a way, was a visual imitation of the picture...If more people were involved in such conversations...these conversations are actually scarce...you can learn about the politics of arts also...Tell your own story...It's important to have such dialogues...open dialogues...and I am actually happy that I was involved...Me coming in here I honestly came for dance classes, and then, yeah, neh! I got more interested...We had different artists coming and telling their own stories and I got interested...I got to learn more...One history lesson I love...Anne⁴¹...she and her family managed to hide from Nazis for sometime...While hiding she had a diary writing down what she was going through...From her I actually learned that it doesn't matter what it is that you are going through, as long as you have a community, or you have a surrounding in which you feel like ok am safe here, I can express myself in whatever way it is but in a positive manner that can influence me in a good way even though my surroundings are not as good. I believe that art is a good way to start off and just grow.

Another coparticipant who had also initially made an interpretation opposed to Crouse's, stated the following.

I think the best lesson is never take anything on face value. Because we come with our own background. We've got our own perceptions, and we do that all the time. We judge people according to what they are wearing, how they are talking. But if we took a minute to get to know them better, now we know Rian much better. Now we feel sorry for him instead of feeling sorry for people in the background. He needs a hug. So, if we

⁴¹ Anne Frank

took time to know people, to understand where they are coming from, where they are going, then I think we would make collectively a world a better place.

Both reflections confirm a certain shift in perceptions, knowledge, assumptions, and feelings, a shift which had an impact on their initial interpretations. The shift was facilitated by, or based on, being exposed to others' opinions, memories, experiences, and knowledge, the collaborative and yet challenging environment mediated by an artwork, acquiring critical information and being able to engage with a full range of intellectual and emotional responses.

Perceptions, assumptions, feelings, memories, interpretations, and questions were shared and reflected upon from a range of perspectives – from experts such as the master artists, speaking from personal knowledge and experience, psychologists, academics and practitioners. As a result, individual interpretations and questions were enriched by others'. The artist's 'intent', her own experiences, assumptions, perceptions, feelings, memories, interpretations and particularly her presence, played a key role. This experience produced a specific context of interaction I see as contributing to the process of building up the 'fuller story'. The shift is generated by, and contributes to, the forming of new subjective ways of thinking and imagining enabled by the work of art and the conversation at that moment in time. Coparticipants generated, acknowledged, and expressed some change in terms of empathy⁴² (Gerber et al., 2018), compassion (Sachs & Cameron, 2015), and understanding compared to their initial interpretations and expressions of 'anger', 'bitterness', 'guilt', 'shame', and other race- and identity-based subjectivities.

These shifts were possible because 'so many feelings' were brought 'to the surface', and coparticipants were able to 'engage' them during the conversation. In her feedback saying, 'art can bring to the surface so many feelings like we just saw today', the coparticipant suggests that there is an under-the-surface where feelings were. For her, art helped to bring them up. If we take the surface to be the calm, unemotional, unaffected rationality of intellectual or 'civilized' debate then the passionate expressions observed in the conversation may be considered as disruptive or collapsing the boundaries. There is a sense of breaking through, a violent act, piercing the ground or bridging the gap between the surface and the under-surface, rationality and emotionality, or what Martha Nussbaum refers to as complex interaction

⁴²Empathy and attunement allow one to enter the emotional experience of another in order to co-construct a new, re-imagined, and often transformative life narrative (Gerber et al., 2018; Stern, 2005). 'Artworks transcend the decorative or commemorative. They create moments of empathy that translate abstract concepts like Apartheid into intimate experiences of individual pain and resilience (Sachs & Cameron, 2015).

between thoughts and passional response (Nussbaum, 1986). 'We see thought and feeling working together' (47) during this conversation and 'it is difficult to distinguish the one from the other' (ibid.).

Based on the understanding and shifts observed in coparticipants' closing responses, I may say that I was witnessing what Nussbaum understood as 'the rationality of passions' together with the thoughts leading 'towards human understanding' and help 'to constitute this understanding' (47). This understanding, or knowledge, in the context of this conversation informed by images of violence and a range of feelings that ranged from shock and fright to bitterness and guilt is a kind of 'poisonous knowledge' (Das et al., 2000:10, 221-222). Veena Das, building on Nussbaum, proposed this notion to express a kind of knowledge that comes to be constituted through 'violence that is folded into intimate, interpersonal relationships'. Drawing on the experiences of a woman named Asha who was engaged in the 'patient repair of relationships' Das argues that even the most injurious signs of violation could be taken up as part of one's own being to radically redefine the self and one's place in the world. The events of the Partition became points of origin of a new configuration of the self and the social world...' (10). Her engagement in repair was, according to Das 'the patient work of living with this new knowledge – really *knowing* not just by intellect but through the passions' (2000: 222). Das emphasizes Asha's agency within this context of 'knowing by suffering' (Das, 2000: 221), 'a kind of knowing that works by suffering' (Nussbaum, 1986:45). Through Asha who 'constructs her subjectivity' within such space, Das postulates that 'one may occupy the very signs of injury and give them a meaning not only through acts of narration but through the work of repairing relationships and giving recognition to those whom the official norms had condemned' (Das, 2000:223).

Though there are many points of convergence in Das' case and mine, there are also divergences. As in Das' case, the coparticipants' interaction revealed an existing injured relationship and an atmosphere of mistrust, suspicion, anger, guilt, and bitterness that stems from historical violence. Interpretations of the artwork are informed by experiences from the past and the present, and they are framed by past violent names and categories which carry wounding memories into the present. The past's entry into the present is not just as 'traumatic memory', it is also, together in a 'complex interaction', as "poisonous knowledge" (Das et al., 2000:221). One of the major differences in these cases, is that while the major source of shock and source of the violation is the Partition, a separation, in South Africa the end of Apartheid, the 'rainbow nation' is supposed to have ended the historical separation and related violence.

Another point of divergence is that while Das's case is more concerned with gender, the coparticipants in this particular conversation use race-based identifications and experiences. In this sense the conversation may better fall into race theories, particularly the performativity of race proposed by Nadine Ehlers (2012; Pfeifle, 2014), Frantz Fanon (1986[1952]), and others.

According to Ehlers, subjects classified according to racial categories tend to behave within designated norms through acts such as how they dress and speak. She sees race as an ongoing disciplinary process produced by various technologies including law through a power discourse. One of the critiques of Ehler's idea, according to Jason Pfeifle, is that she closely modelled Judith Butler's gender performativity (2011,1990) without drawing out specificities that may help understand race and gender as various categories of difference. Similarly, since her concept is based on the context of race in the United States, her theory might not provide an adequate enough explanatory frame for cases such as the CS conversation in Kimberley, for example.

However, I find it useful to talk about some of the reasons for the divergence in interpreting the artwork. Coparticipants expected certain racial bodies and categories to perform in certain ways. For instance, a coparticipant shared the experiences he is familiar with where he lives – young black people smoking and abusing drugs because of poverty and lack of employment. He explained that when he saw the white man in the artwork, doing the same thing (smoking), because he was white meant he was privileged and had nothing to worry about, and he said he felt 'bitter'. It seems he felt as if the white man was pretending, appropriating his pain, the pain that is expected to be only known and embodied by young black people he sees daily in his context. The stress on his face, the depression and so on, he did not see that until it came up in the conversation.

In a similar sense, images of black people in the artwork are performing familiar images and stereotypes. It is the black body that is dead, and black bodies (women) are faced with houses and lives being destroyed and left to pick up the pieces. The gap between the women and the man, shown back-to-back – 'his back to the detail' as Robbins put it (2015:11) – seems unbridgeable, riddled with fire, smoke, poverty, death, and destruction. When coparticipants shares these comments, they are also performing expected interpretations, repeating familiar narratives and experiences. The closeness to home and speaking about an experience that is close to one's being and social context – proximity, physicality of the experience – is close because it is still going on (in the views of certain coparticipants, and in the views of some who

said they witness similar images and experiences today on daily basis) and creates a different kind of felt and ‘lived experience and imagination’ (Das et al, 2000:10), a subjectivity that is specific to this context and to individual coparticipants. The shift in coparticipants’ interpretations which express empathy towards the ‘other in the artwork’ (black or white images inside the artwork depending on who the coparticipants identified with or against in their interpretations), and new understanding, give a glimpse into the formation of a new subjectivity. By new I do not mean to say that previous subjectivities formed under the conditions of violence were gone at the end of the conversation. But like Nussbaum’s insight on the interaction between thoughts and feelings, I understand new subjectivities as interrelated with old ones in a complex and mutually influencing interaction. Emerging subjectivities remain entangled with violation in contexts where stories and everyday living has taken the form of poisonous knowledge.

As the conversation concluded, coparticipants touched on challenges, and tried to propose possible solutions. One talked about ‘extremists’ who ‘make the biggest noise, so you hear’ them ‘first’. They monopolise the space and the narrative. The following contribution mentions ‘external factors that have vast influence’ in ‘our country’. These inputs introduce interesting aspects of voice and power in public space and how these affects experiencing and interpreting in the local context. Even though some of these remarks are outside the scope of this dissertation, it seems worth noting how the seminars and the engagement with a single painting evoked interpretations, ideas, and reflections which were not just confined only to the immediate social context. Coparticipants were making interpretive connections from their own experiences and from the takeaways from the CS conversation to wider spaces: ‘The most important influence should be ourselves.... We should pay more attention to our agency.... I do think it is necessary to engage with the external world but also we should engage with ourselves even deeper’. The outcomes of such a ‘deeper’ engagement proposed by this coparticipant would involve, among other things, acquiring critical perceptions, awareness, knowledge, and the ability to hold and productively engage the arts and heritage that hurt much more than what was witnessed and experienced during the CS conversation about Crouse’s *Rian Malan*. Perhaps following in Asha’s footsteps and Wells in *Memories of Tea and Tears*, it is possible for the individuals and society at large to use their agency to engage the wounded bodies and relationships and turn art that hurts into canvases, on which, with which, and from which, people can imagine and create subjectivities of repair, and venues out of, or healing from, spaces of ‘poisonous knowledge’. While it is not directly mentioned or framed as such,

this study has much to offer to the thinking and work of repair. The concepts of repair as well as care (Cousins, 2023; Kleinman, 2020, 2013; Das, 2000) are very useful to clarify, and perhaps expand, some of the ideas presented in this dissertation. For instance, my approach can be said to have followed what Tim Ingold called “a path of care” (Ingold, 2022:279). Spending a long time immersed in research in a single space, engaging such coparticipants, requires a deep sense of care, an attentive and patient caring about relationships and stories in that space. This meant caring for the pasts in the present by listening, paying attention, caring for the inputs of coparticipants, seeing coparticipants truly as partners in meaning and knowledge generation, consciously choosing not to look at them to objectify them or to appropriate their lives or contributions. While I did not want to see nor approach them as “broken” or “wounded”, it was important to listen, attend to and acknowledge some of their experiences in careful ways, such as those I have described when engaging with Wells. I saw these coparticipants as engaged in a long-term work of repair.

In an increasingly ever smaller, more complex world, and yet a world in whose landscape still lacks the potential for single-point perspective and old and new forms of violation, anthropological research about contestation in specific contexts will be interested in contributing towards understanding and promoting multiple-point perspective, unfenced debate, and encouraging the incorporation of more inviting and generously attentive ways of engaging ‘heritage that hurts’ and hot spaces they may generate. As Crouse’s quote shared earlier in the first paragraph seems to suggest, in emotionally and intellectually difficult contexts such as CS conversations dealing with mental health and an art about historical violence, it may be helpful to clarify from the outset that the conversation has a view to contribute towards understanding healing through art. Having shared such a view with interested coparticipants might have contributed to ‘the trust’ and the ‘speaking from the heart’, feeling ‘safe’ and ‘free’, in ways that a ‘politicised’ or a highly intellectualised space might not have afforded.

Chapter 6. Biometaphorisation: (Mental) Health as a language

Mental health related words and expressions were used by coparticipants to share meanings and contestations. (Bio)psychiatric terminologies, for instance, were often used to express experiences, perceptions, and commentaries on certain artworks and their social context. Overwhelmed by an enduring situation of deterioration, economic starvation, and the ‘incompetence’ and ‘corrupt’ behaviour of some of the leaders, Hope Mwiri, a teacher I interviewed in Galeshewe in 2019 posed for about 10–15 seconds after showing me the ‘sad’ state of the streets through the windows and then asked, ‘Isn’t this a mental illness?’

This rhetorical expression hit me. It is a powerful expression I have had the privilege to hear and think about most during this study. It gave me much to grapple with intellectually, and it caused a certain emotional uneasiness. I kept thinking that anyone who would be brought to use it must really be in a difficult space, a desperate or overwhelming situation. This phrase in particular seems to draw its expressive and descriptive power from its beautifully imaginative and yet complexly unsettlingly narratable, with an ability to evoke and set into narrative, to ask and tell stories. Words and expressions such as ‘depressing’, ‘madness’, ‘insanity’, ‘psyche’, ‘mental illness’, ‘schizophrenic’, ‘bipolar’, ‘trauma’, and other such expressive (bio)psychiatric terminologies, were used by coparticipants to describe and share their understanding of particular experiences from CS and from their social contexts. In this chapter, I take these terminologies to be part of a language I will be referring to as a language of mental health, a discourse where (bio)psychiatric knowledge is entangled in a multidirectional and mutually influencing relationship with local knowledge, values, traditions, and expectations. I argue that coparticipants mobilize such terms about mental health to express and contest the social and physical deterioration in their community. The language of mental health is an embodied response over a socially and mentally tasking context.

Drawn from psychology and psychiatry, these expressions help coparticipants give body and meaning to specific situations which, in their view, could be talked about using a language associated with mental health. If ‘sickness is not an isolated event, nor an unfortunate brush with nature’ but ‘a form of communication – the language of the organs – through which nature, society, and culture speak simultaneously’ as have Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock

(1987:31) strongly argued, so are the biomedical expressions used by coparticipants. They are a form of communication, part of a language through which they engage in a process of constructing meaning and narrating what is spoken by ‘nature, society, and culture’ in their context. This communicative process I refer to as biometaphorisation and is involved in at least three overlapping actions, to which I dedicate separate sections as follow, (1) generating social diagnoses, (2) expressing contestation, and (3) performing knowledge. Following in the coparticipants’ footsteps, I use the same approach – invoking the language of mental health to describe, express, question, and comment – to make sense of contestation over the interpretation of violence in specific situations that were described using the language of mental health. Biometaphorisation draws on, and is illuminated by, insights from biopolitics, biosociality, performativity, illness narratives, biocommunicability, and a theory of metaphor.

Generating social diagnoses

Academic and professional discourses in scientific and public news media are replete with diagnoses from psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, psychotherapists, and other specialists of the ‘mind’ about the state of mental health under colonial, Apartheid, and current regimes. In this section, I focus on social diagnoses by coparticipants. I pay attention to coparticipants’ use of mental health related language, particularly (bio)psychiatric terminologies to name and share their diagnoses. To describe an experience of misery and poverty he witnessed during one of his travels, Zylla used the expression ‘depressing’: ‘I have never seen something like that, like a concentration camp, full of these funny little toilets. We were visiting artists...We found an artist there, working on sculptures in the middle of that place. What a “depressing picture”’.

Nhlengethwa used the same expression, about his artwork *Humiliation*, in 2018, the first time I had a conversation with him about this work. ‘When we are humiliated’ Hélène Opperman Lewis wrote, ‘our sense of self and of being a worthwhile human being is challenged’ (2016:16–17). She views one of the causes of Apartheid, especially ‘the post-1948 Afrikaner Apartheid’ (2016:460) as rooted in ‘humiliation’ (2016:16,17), an ‘unprocessed trauma’ (2016:439) experienced by Afrikaners under British colonisation, which in turn played a part in the subjugation of black people under a ‘legalised racism’ which furthered humiliation. This, according to Lewis, had started much earlier during the British colonial period. I would push the genesis a little further back in time into the Portuguese colonial project, and perhaps even

further back still into the no-so-explored knowledges and memories from prior to ‘the advent of colonisation’. Zylla’s ‘depressing picture’, Lewis’s argument, and the humiliating treatments in Nhlengethwa’s artwork seem to evoke an emotional, psychic, and embodied kind of memory. Perhaps a ‘knowledge in the blood’ (Jansen, 2009: 171–172; Woods, 2007). Not in a focused sense used by Jonathan Jansen to discuss the knowledge brought into the new South Africa and transmitted to the second generation in an Afrikaner context, but deep-rooted knowledge inherited, shared, interpreted, felt, and experienced to varying degrees across centuries. It is ‘embodied in the emotional, psyche, spiritual, social, economic, political, and psychological lives of a community’ (Jansen, 2009:171).

In 2019, Mwiri, who lives in the ‘location’, called the behaviour of some leaders in contemporary South Africa who drive expensive cars in areas where people were starving, living in poverty, roads broken ‘insanity’. For Mwiri, the leaders did nothing to address the situation. They seemed blind and insensitive to the inhuman conditions they saw on a daily basis. The ‘depressing picture’ described by Zylla was the result of ‘greed’ and ‘racial discrimination’, he said, of Apartheid leaders who had forcefully removed people from their homes. Apartheid’s violence, undignified treatments, racist laws, regulated educational and economic inequalities, and what Jansen termed the ‘madness of Apartheid’ (Jansen 2009:289n49), some of which found expression in Nhlengethwa’s *Humiliation*, was ‘depressing’. Depressing has a performative ability (Austin, 1962). It is an expressive terminology that implies an ability to make something happen. It can set depression into motion. What is referred to as ‘depressing’ can pull down into the ground or dig up what is deep down from the depths of bodies and minds and ‘the lives of a community’. Generally, coparticipants called Apartheid ‘a mental illness’, ‘insanity, and a ‘sickness’. It was not unusual, yet it felt unsettling to hear and witness bits of similarities and continuities across time, between past and present conditions, especially when it came to violence and related causes and consequences such as some of the leaders’ behaviours.

On 4 March 2020, when I told Alex Tech, a former academic, Anti-Apartheid activist and fighter⁴³, about a coparticipant who used the word ‘insanity’ about some of the leaders’ behaviours, he responded with a gesture showing a finger. He said, ‘that is like doing this to people’. It was surprising seeing him doing the gesture! He kindly agreed to repeat it for my camera, and we broke into a laugh. Not laughing about the conditions described, but the

⁴³ As one of Mkonto we Sizwe (MK) soldiers.

re-enactment of it. The second performance seemed to balance the shock and a brief sad atmosphere provoked by my descriptions of what was happening in the location according to Mwiri. For a moment I guess I had forgotten Tech's sense of humour. Someone stood at the door briefly reminding him of other meetings he had to attend. We planned to meet next time at the gallery and have further conversations while visiting the CS exhibition. Tech's expressing 'insanity' into a bodily physical form captures some important aspects between performance and performativity. As Denzin (2018, 2008) and Conquergood (1988) would put it, there was no dividing line between performance and performativity, between the 'done' and the 'doing'.

The performative ability of 'insanity' can be grasped on at least three levels. First, the physical expression: the word is translated and communicated into a bodily expression. Second, the verbal expression: he simultaneously adds words to the physical performance. The word insanity is further verbalised to compliment, but also to clarify both the gesture and the word. The verbal expression is always embodied, since it involves the body in all its visible and invisible parts, namely physical muscles, facial expressions, internal organs such as vocal cords and so on. At a deeper level, there are also imaginative, affective, and cognitive functions, and mental and emotional processes involved in not just the gestural and vocal utterance, but also in the processing and forming, associating, making, recalling, and sharing meaning and memory. For example, and this is the third level, it looked as if he had stepped into the shoes of the leaders to embody their behaviour, and at the same time he had stepped into the difficult social conditions of that place, embodying the witnessing of the coparticipant. In this sense, the term 'insanity' is simultaneously a social performance (leaders' behaviour), an individual performance (of him interpreting the social performance), and a witnessing performance (or performative response). If it is true that 'the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another', permitting 'an understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:5,235), then the physical performance as well as the terminology 'insanity' are metaphors.

Insanity was among other states, such as wellness, sanity, dysfunction, and trauma, associated with mental health by Tech. He took a piece of paper and started drawing, writing, and generating other responses as we spoke. We were at Luka Junkie building, in an office overlooking the park in the former Malay camp. Down in the park, many people often gathered to drink and smoke. But they also gathered to play; exercise; sing; have conversations with

peers, friends, and families; take photographs and film themselves and the historical monuments in and around the park. Some coparticipants commented that some of these young people used their study funding to abuse alcohol, drugs, and engage in other self-destructive behaviours. I had heard security guards from institutions nearby and some members of the public saying that students came here to waste themselves and the little they had. Before COVID-19, I remember WHAG's staff recalling how they used to get up to clean the streets around the gallery on Mondays, and they would be full of dozens, sometimes hundreds of beer bottles, food leftovers, plastic bags and other rubbish. Some of this trash had been thrown over the fences into the gallery's garden either by the people or by the wind. They trashed the place but never entered the gallery. Some staff complained. At times, the staff told me, they used to bring the police to prevent people from using and trashing the area. But it never helped, and the gallery gave up. Institutions around the park probably did the same as sometimes, for instance at the end of the year during the holiday celebrations of 2022, the police closed off the streets in and out of the park. It was the first time I saw this since COVID-19 lockdowns ended. The psychologist remarked, and I concur, that perhaps WHAG and the surrounding institutions, leaders, and police could try other means, creative and participatory, to get to the root causes of these young peoples' behaviours rather than forcefully chasing them and closing off such public spaces.

For the artist and lecturer, Keiza Kele, whom I interviewed while standing in this park, the reasons these young people gathered there cannot be approached from a single perspective that people gathered just to trash the space and waste themselves. She believed this place carried memories. Some were the difficult memories of people who lived here but were forcefully removed. Kele suggested that some youth may come here without knowing why and find out later that they may have ancestors who lived in the area. Others, she believed, may be driven to behave in ways they do not understand because the place itself may drive them to behave in certain ways. She spoke as if the park was living. As if it could be healthy or sick or able to speak. It performed through people and other bodies who inhabited it. It sounded like the soil itself, not just the human soul needed attention and healing. Coparticipants could see insanity at the individual and at the societal level. Indeed, in most cases, coparticipants used mental health expressions to refer to society as a whole without differentiating the social, individual self and body politic and the natural, spiritual, economic, and cultural environments.

Charles Maema, a scholar and leader, while speaking during a dialogue held at the Mayibuye Multipurpose Center in October 2022, used the word 'sick' to describe the state of the nation.

It was as if the sickness he talked about pervaded space and life itself, as if it circulated in the air and contaminated or at least linked all people as it filled the whole atmosphere: 'South Africa is sick'; 'It is a country of sick people'. The audience, mostly artists, public servants, community leaders, and activists seemed to agree with him. Some nodded, while others sighed. Weeks later, when I encountered him again as he came in and I was getting out of the Diamond Pavilion, the mall just across the road from the Greenpoint 'location' (see chapter eight), I asked him for details and evidence about what he meant by 'sick'. Patiently, he explained:

When I say the country is sick. Remember what happened in the past in the country. It traumatised people, and now after the new dispensation there was really nothing done to deal with those traumas of the past. So, we just opened a new chapter and we moved on. So, basically, you're moving on with people that still carry those traumas and those illnesses...because of the violence of oppression. Hence, I am saying now, as much as you can say things are happening, but South Africa is a country of sick people.

Maema's talking about 'illnesses' caused by the violence of 'oppression' brought to mind 'a condition' Merrill Singer and Elizabeth Toledo have called 'oppression illness' (Baer, Singer & Susser, 1997:146). They used the term,

to refer to the chronic traumatic effects of experiencing racism, classism... and related oppression over long periods of time (especially during critical developmental periods of identity formation), combined with the negative emotional effects of intense self-disparagement associated with being the enduring target of social bigotry. (146)

In their study of Puerto Rican youth, Singer and Toledo speak about a pattern of feeling. The youth said that 'they do not deserve to be respected while, nonetheless, intensely desiring respect (*respeto*) and dignity (*dignidad*)' (146–147). Oppression illness, in this case, operates as 'impact of suffering from social mistreatment' and 'at some level, believing one does not deserve any better treatment' (146). In explaining why they became involved in drug abuse, the youth 'talked about "depression, their anger at others, and almost certainly themselves for having been found so worthless, as their principal reason for addiction' (Glick, 1990:88 cited by Baer, Singer & Susser, 1994:147).

For Maema, the sickness was as much about trauma. Terms such as sick, illness, and trauma, were not superficial descriptions. For evidence, he explained, one only has to look at the level of crime and the kinds of crimes being committed. He talked about the abuse and 'people raping

kids'. These crimes, he said, are committed by 'people who are sick', who are 'not normal'. There is something 'psychologically wrong with them'. Another example he gave is someone who is hungry. If he decides to steal, and he comes and asks you for your wallet and you give to him, then he takes the money and instead of letting you go he kills you, 'and the killing is brutal': 'They do not even think before committing these heinous crimes'. This, for Maema, is another example that these crimes are not ordinary. They are related to the historical and ongoing 'trauma and illnesses' in the society. But the key evidence could be found in academic and political terminologies such as 'post'. He questioned: What does 'post-colonisation' mean if 'decolonisation' did not take place? What does 'Post-Apartheid' mean without 'a healing process'? Terms such as 'post' seek to paint an image different from the order of things on the ground. 'Maybe', he tried to explain, 'we rushed into the space of our political freedom, we ignored even the economic freedom, but we also ignored counselling the country, you know, to prepare the country for this new dispensation. People are still carrying these old wounds into the future'.

In addition to 'sick', 'sickness' and 'trauma', Maema introduced other terminologies such as 'counselling', 'not normal', 'psychologically wrong'. After arguing how the sickness in the country was psychological, he saw the solution in psychological terms, suggesting for instance 'counselling'. 'The architect of Apartheid⁴⁴ was a psychologist', he continued, emphasising his point that even though political freedom was achieved, economic freedom was still far from being achieved and psychological freedom was 'ignored'. What comes out strongly in his explanation is that mental wellbeing is as important as economic and political wellbeing. The sick 'criminals' were part of a sick society that was equally or perhaps more responsible for the sickness.

In some respects, Maema's observation joins some of the voices of student activists and scholars involved in the decolonisation movement and debates since 2015/2016, particularly those thinking about, and framing, the protest action - burning colonial images and toppling statues - as informed by and reacting to the enduring trauma and the way modes of public representations and interpretations continue to re-activate the colonial trauma. His inputs, reflecting and questioning the meaning of "post" – post-apartheid, post-colonisation – are located in the decolonial scholarship. But when I asked whether he was talking as a local leader, an activist or scholar, he responded that he was sharing his personal observations and

⁴⁴ Hendrik Verwoerd (Lewis, 216:461; Pretorius 2014:336–347; Jansen 2009:38).

experiences as a concerned citizen. He claimed that what he was sharing were things anyone could see and come to the same conclusions. In a sense he did not need to take a particular position to be able to see, make sense and say what he said which was heavily expressed through decolonial, medical and psychological languaging.

Maema's interpretive diagnosis aimed at society as a whole was shared by a couple of other coparticipants, most of whom were just ordinary citizens relying on their personal experiences and observations, not experts in any medical, psychological or related field. For example, Zylla saying, 'the sickness of Apartheid...still there!'; and Crouse saying, 'in South Africa it's bipolar. You're so happy then you're so sad, then you're frightened. It's up and down, up and down'. Crouse is an artist with no medical or psychological training. She drew on her own and popular knowledge of bipolar known to be characterized by mood swings, and she used this knowledge to describe the state of the country, and how this state affects, somehow regulates, the emotional and mental states of the people. To a certain extent, her description meets the artist-lecturer's performative view of the park that can somehow drive or regulate the behavioural and emotional states of people in the park. Speaking about Malan as an individual confronted and affected by the state of the country, Crouse described him using (bio)psychiatric terminologies as well.

Bipolar, depressing, anxiety, trauma, schizophrenic, neurotic, and other (bio)psychiatric terminologies were used by coparticipants from all backgrounds, artists and not artists, from academics to non-academic, people who had no training in any medical or health sciences. These terminologies served to express socially- and individually-generated analyses. They are diagnoses by non 'expert' public members trying to convey their interpretations and understandings of the social context and behaviours observed in it. The language of mental health names and performs coparticipants' analyses. These are based on their histories, memories, and ongoing experiences and observations. By paying attention to the (bio)psychiatric terminologies as part of this language I sought to demonstrate the way coparticipants combined non-medical and bio-medical knowledge and expressions about mental health to speak about and make sense of particular situations. The next section focuses on the use of the language of mental health to express contestation.

Expressing contestation: ‘Isn’t this a mental illness?’

Fonki Nqakala, a young teacher, dancer, inhabitant from Kimberley was among coparticipants who accompanied me in Cape Town in October 2022 to participate in conversations about my research, and to join activities planned for Mental Health Month at the University of Cape Town. With the audience, mostly students and academics from universities in Kimberley and Cape Town, we read and discussed eight chapters of this dissertation. While working on this chapter, which was still a draft entitled *Metaphorization of a medico-psychiatric terminology*, Nqakala shared his understanding with an example. In Kimberley he said, there is a centre called ‘Yonder’. It cares for people living with ‘mental health disabilities’. When you hear a person telling another that ‘uyonda’ or ‘wayonda’, you know they are saying that ‘you are mad’, ‘you are crazy’, or ‘you are not making sense’. I made three observations prompted by his example. We were made aware of the use of ‘Yonder’ (and mental health) in everyday conversation in his community. It was part of a known language. Also, his narrative offers a glimpse into how that context perceives and interprets abilities related to mental health – madness, being crazy, not making sense. Lastly, the most important observation is the communication – the language of how the person is identified with the ‘disability’. ‘Uyonda’ or ‘wayonda’ addresses the person directly. The person is made to become an embodiment of the expressed terminology that blurs and removes the dividing line between the person, the ‘disability’, and its expression. It engulfs the whole person. This may reflect some of the reasons why Susan Sontag (1977) argued against the use of ‘illness as metaphor’. Focusing mainly on tuberculosis and cancer, as ‘two diseases’ that ‘have been spectacularly, and similarly, encumbered by the trappings of metaphor’ (5), she warned against ‘unreal and often punitive uses of illness’ and related fantasies or figures. For her, ‘the most truthful way of regarding illness’, and ‘the healthiest way of being ill, was to resist such metaphoric thinking’ (no page number). But this thinking is regulated by ‘advances’ in ‘medicine’ (11) and ‘psychiatry’ (6) and have an impact on the experience of an illness (8, 69) in a specific context.

Nora Jacobson and Dianne Greenley (2001) talking about recovery in the context of ‘mental illness’ maintain that ‘recovery is in part the process of “recovering” the self by reconceptualizing illness as only a part of the self, not as a definition of the whole’ (483). As the patients (whom they refer to as ‘consumers’) start reconnecting ‘with their selves, they begin to experience a sense of self-esteem and self-respect that allows them to confront and

overcome the stigma against persons with mental illness that they have internalized, thus allowing further connection with the self' (ibid). To rectify 'the conception of the disease' or to "de-mythicize it" (Sontag, 1977:7) requires the use of another metaphor. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) have argued, "new metaphors are capable of creating new understandings, and therefore, new realities" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:235). They insist that, 'the way we have been brought up to perceive our world is not the only way...it is possible to see beyond the "truths" of our culture.' 'But' they warn, 'metaphors are not merely things to be seen beyond. In fact, one can see beyond them only by using other metaphors' (ibid.). These metaphors would be useful if only they are able to contribute to "expanding the patient's 'realm of the possible'" (Jacobson & Greenley, 2001:483).

On this expanded realm of possibilities "hope lays the groundwork for healing to begin" (ibid.) In my view, Sontag's warning makes sense in instances where the illness used as a metaphor can easily blur the distinction between the illness and a person and may even influence how they see and conceive of the illness and of themselves. This may apply whether the person is being made fun of or in a casual conversation as in Nqakala's example or in a case of real patients. In any case, illness terminologies, with the harshest taboos, fantasies, and derogatory connotations they may carry, may be projected into the person, and may crystallise or be frozen into forms of knowledge and emotions that the person carries. The resulting implications are numerous, and some may be damaging as Sontag observed. Such terminologies may reinforce negative stereotypes and discriminations against people living with different mental abilities. Also, they may contribute to the circulation of hurtful and 'unreal' or false beliefs and myths. In Lakoff and Johnson's theory, a metaphor may force a particular tunnel view, obscuring certain aspects of what they are directed to. Metaphors "can have the power to define reality' but they can 'highlight features of reality and hide others" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:157). Illness terminologies can do the same. But they may, also, be used in a critical way, constructively. For example, in certain contexts, such as particular traditional healing practices, using metaphors and talking about 'disorders' may be part of the "curing process" (Kleinman & Good 1985:221-222). Another example is that some terminologies may open up spaces for contestation, serve to critically engaging myths and beliefs, as well as questioning knowledge, both the so-called 'expert' and 'non expert'. 'Truths' and 'untruths', dominant and non-dominant forms of knowledge are all, or should be, subject to contestation. The following conversation illustrates a case presented by a coparticipant who framed a case of an epistemic contestation.

During a CSS conversation, London Nkgabo a student and young business entrepreneur responded to a statement by a mental health professional cautioning that ‘we need to be careful.... When we speak of lack of knowledge’ because, ‘I think if we refer to mental health only from sort of one paradigm or framework of knowledge or thinking, it falls into the dangers of saying that there is no an entire body of African knowledge that has been passed down’. Like Kleinman (2020), Byron Good (Kleinman & Good, 1985), Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) and others, his point was about other existing ‘systems’ or ‘epistemologies’ (1987:11). He saw ‘the body of African knowledge’ as speaking ‘to the spiritual question of how we look and view issues or ailments relating to mental health’. In his view, ‘the spiritual question’ for instance, posed a challenge to mainstream psychiatry and psychology at schools and universities where he said he knew ‘young people who went to good schools, good universities but they simply can’t finish a degree...You just find they have a spiritual calling...But again within, I don’t want to call it Western, but within that framework of thinking there is no kind of provision or understanding for what is this person going through’. In setting the stage for the expression of his contestation, he had first began by saying, ‘this is contestation of space, right?’ He intentionally mobilised the conversation, his knowledge, and terminologies about mental health for the purpose of an epistemic contestation. The statement he was responding to came from a mental health professional and went as follows,

People didn’t have enough mental health services and they didn’t know, more especially Africans, they didn’t know much about mental health whether it’s something, it needs to be taken care of.... They thought only about the physical care.... People when they were going through mental health issues, they would think the best way to medicate themselves is alcohol or using drugs that’s why most of our people went the way of drugs...When I feel down...Because of lack of knowledge.

Mental health expressions and knowledge may also serve to express contestation over some behaviours of leaders who, purposefully or not, behave in ways that are perceived to be insensitive, corrupt, and inattentive to the needs of the populations they are supposed to serve. The illness terminologies do not mean that the leaders are necessary clinically ill. Coparticipants are offering their ‘non-expert’ diagnosis in a social context. The illness terminologies are meant as expression of frustration, of critique, of warning and so on. There was a sense that some coparticipants had lost words to describe and understand such behaviours. In their context, social and human relations are supposed to be governed by ubuntu,

dignity and common sense, values that at least their leaders are expected to live by. The use of mental illness terminologies is not meant to collapse or obscure agency and responsibility from the leaders.

Sometimes, I had the impression that coparticipants, Nkgabo as one example, took the opportunity of the seminar's conversations and other research activities to reach out to some of the leaders and public servants. Some might have seen this study as a way to communicate with some leaders they often said they had difficulty accessing, meeting, talking to and being heard. These illness terminologies might be one of the ways they wanted them to know how their actions were perceived. It might also have been just a way to share views, knowledge, and open up a space for needed conversation. They seemed confident that this study would reach the leaders, and they seemed to hope that it might help bring some change. Like Crouse, Robbins, Pretorius, Morris, and others, most coparticipants saw the exhibition and CS conversations as 'a site of contestation'. In this sense, what happened in the space, for example the illnesses terminologies used as metaphors, can be primarily seen as expressions of contestation. When coparticipants said that during the elections leaders came and promised things, even gave bribes for the votes and then they never saw them again until the next election campaigns; when they said that outside the election time, the attitude from some of the leaders was one of 'looking down' on people especially those most marginalized; when they said that leaders came to show off power and money while people were starving and basic services and infrastructures were failing; and when coparticipants called these behaviours 'insanity' and 'mental illness', coparticipants were not just pointing out problems, they were also trying to communicate, warn, make sense of, and contest over what comes out as violence or suffering that was chronic – new hurts and indignities complicating the ones from each passing day.

In 2019, in Galeshewe, when I was interviewing the coparticipant whose observations I started out with in this chapter, we were on the first floor at Mayibuye Art Centre. It was late afternoon. Some groups were moving in and out after rehearsals. As we moved to an office to find a quiet place where I could record our conversation, we had a view of the streets and surrounding areas. Not far from the building, a few potholes had been there for some time. In one of them, a big one, plastic bags and other trash were thrown either by people or brought in by the wind and rain. Later, in 2022 when COVID-19 lockdowns were over and I went back there to organise follow up conversations, we walked into a 'location', walking past the potholes. We were trying to get refreshments in shops nearby. I reminded the coparticipant of what he had said during our first interview four years back. His diagnosis was still the same. 'It's even

worse now' he insisted. He said that there were similar and worse situations happening inside the location far from the eyes' view. Then, he had asked, 'isn't this a mental illness?' His whole body, his hand, fingers stretched pointing, and his facial expressions, seemed to say that this was a mental illness. But his tone and the question mark at the end seemed to temper the confidence I read in his body. He was also asking if this was really a mental illness! The behaviour of leaders who pass through here every day and do nothing was incomprehensible. Since it was beyond how he and the community expected normal human beings to behave, let alone leaders. He did not know how else to make sense of it. What else could it be? But it sounded to me that the question mark and the tone had another significance.

The coparticipant did not seem to want to rush into saying that this was a mental illness. I was left to appreciate that he had some knowledge about mental health. But I was also left to appreciate that this knowledge was not enough. He wondered if this was a mental illness or not. At the same time, he wondered what mental illness it would be. As he questioned the context and the behaviour, he was also questioning, engaging his knowledge of mental health. Later when he came up with 'insanity', his bodily expression did not change much. But his hand sometimes covered his mouth, and sometimes he posed it briefly on the forehead as someone in distress or lost in deep thoughts. As I saw it, it did not mean that the ambiguity, uncertainty, and questioning were gone now that we had a name for the illness. The metaphoric use of 'insanity' may actually be a way to acknowledge and perhaps invite the ambiguity, uncertainty, and limits of any knowledge or understanding: 'In normal discourse metaphor serves as one kind of metacommunicational signal that something relatively unpredictable or unexpected is part of the communication' (Kleinman & Good, 1985:220). Nevertheless, we had a reference, something that served as a point of departure. It became perhaps easier to relate what we were talking about and what we observed. The terminology 'insanity' was his postulate, a hypothesis that could serve as a basis to keep thinking and narrating.

Like any narrative, the terminology was a creative construction. In his study of the illness narratives of the chronically ill, Kleinman stated that constructing narratives had an important meaning. 'Narratization', as he called it, is a process by which 'patients order their experience of illness – what it means to them and to significant others – as personal narratives' (Kleinman, 2020:47). The same seems to be applicable beyond the context of the chronically ill. Taking after Aristotle, Turner posited that we humans cannot do otherwise than postulate first causes to explain what we observe. According to him, we are cause-seekers, and this seems coded in our biology. Human beings construct myths and practice rituals for instance, to confront

unexplained physical and spiritual phenomena. Myths, rituals, art, religion, even science, are often attempts to give form to explain the world and to orient themselves in a universe of caprices and uncertainties. ‘Untoward events’ (Turner, 1987:165) or conditions of adversity, ambiguity, unpredictability, trauma, and suffering the coparticipant was talking about, particularly a ‘call out for a cause’ (ibid.). The coparticipant’s partly rhetorical question ‘isn’t this a mental illness’ and the mobilisation of ‘insanity’ as a term to explain what s/he saw, are postulates, narratives trying to give some sense of explanation, order and orientation in this ‘untoward’ context. Illness meanings, according to Kleinman, are bound within relationships. For this reason, meaning ‘is usually as much hedged in with ambiguities as are those relationships themselves’ (Kleinman, 2020:7). The coparticipant’s narratization reflects the challenging relationships in this context. His hesitations, question, assurance, uncertainty, and both the sense of care but also of despair sensed in him *vis à vis* the condition in the city and his location, are all fenced in the meaning of ‘insanity’ and in ‘isn’t this a mental illness’. But the physical, economic, political, and social contexts of the city and the ‘locations’ were not major sites where the most difficult and chronic relationship was to be found. It was on the inside, in ‘the psyche’, according to Robbins.

As noted before, Robbins saw the ‘psyche’ as a ‘much more important space’, the second type of space alongside the physical space. It is in this ‘inside the psyche of white and black’ people where he situated the site of an important contestation, a contestation over the preservation of ‘the integrity of humanity’, and Pretorius emphasised that this was about the formerly colonised and those affected by the violence of Apartheid reclaiming ‘their dignity’. Studies conducted elsewhere in various contexts, some of which I have touched on in previous chapters have advanced that colonial violence caused various disruptions including psychological alienation and intergenerational trauma (Kometsi, 2021; Baer, 2018; Pretorius, 2014; Jansen, 2009; Das et al., 2001; Das, 2000). At the core of colonisation was a violent psyche that hierarchised people and their humanity into inferiors and superiors (Lewis, 2016; Peterson, Gavua & Rassool, 2015; Krog, 1998). Robbins lived and studied in Kimberley, and like many youths of his time, he had to be conscripted. His use of the term ‘psyche’ and how he contextualised it, is anchored in his lived experiences and memories. I look at the use of these (bio)psychiatric terminologies to express contestation in the same way that Albert Einstein in the 1940s after fleeing to the US from Nazi Germany and writer Isabel Wilkerson (2020) used biomedical-related illnesses and terminologies to describe and express contestation over racism, its violence, and chronicity.

About Einstein, Wilkerson explained, he saw the treatment of black people as ‘the worst disease’ (2020:378): ‘I can escape the feelings of complicity in it only by speaking out’ (379). ‘The separation of races’ was ‘a disease’ he said: ‘I do not intend to be quiet about it’ (ibid.). Einstein went far more than verbal expression of contestation. When famous opera singer Marian Anderson was refused a room for a night at the Nassau Inn in Princeton (378), Einstein invited her to stay in his home. They would remain friends until his death. Names of illnesses and other biomedical terms are widely used in Wilkerson’s argumentation against the racial ‘caste’ system. When coparticipants use biomedical terms and names of illnesses to describe their context and the kinds of emotional impact they deal with, not only are they pointing them out and making them visible, they are also trying to speak out, expressing warning and or contestation as Einstein and Wilkerson did.

Contestation is also expressed in the fact that the use of (bio)psychiatric expressions implies having a certain degree of psychiatric knowledge, and that the circulation of this knowledge is in conversation with knowledge and experiences about mental health from other knowledge traditions. For scholarly views that regard ‘biomedical knowledge’ as Eurocentric or predominantly Euro-American (Kleinman, 2020; Nancy Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987), these ‘Other’ traditions may then be referred to as colonized or ‘subjugated’ systems of knowledge. The epistemic dominance in the sphere of biomedical knowledge, with associated marginalisations, erasures, and exploitation of ‘Othered’ knowledges, may be viewed as a form of ‘epistemic violence’, a notion owed to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1994). For Spivak, ‘the clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity’ (76). Building on her critique of Foucault, she states that ‘it is well known that Foucault locates epistemic violence, a complete overhaul of the episteme, in the redefinition of sanity at the end of the European eighteenth century’ (ibid). However, Spivak suggests,

that particular redefinition was only a part of the narrative of history in Europe as well as in the colonies...the two projects of epistemic overhaul worked as dislocated and unacknowledged parts of a vast two-handed engine. Perhaps it is no more than to ask that the subtext of the palimpsestic narrative of imperialism be recognized as ‘subjugated knowledge’, ‘a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low

down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. (citing PK, 82)

As an example, in her argument for this notion of epistemic violence, she refers to the ‘British codification of Hindu Law’ (76). An already existing law was translated and then constructed to suit colonial agendas. In his piece about medical anthropology in Nigeria, Chidi Ugwu (2018) noted that there, ‘traditional medicine was constructed as “demonic and sinful” ’ (575). Measures were taken to repress such systems of knowledge in the colonies (more or less the same was true in the peripheries of the colonial centres, in Europe itself). The head was often targeted by colonial violence for all sorts of humiliations, intimidations, and exploitations. Here, it is worth noting that, according to René Descartes’ theory of the mind mostly known as the Cartesian Legacy or Cartesian Dichotomy, the head was perceived to be the seat of the mind and rationality, of sanity and knowledge. Many heads were shipped to colonial centres for ‘science’ and display. Other formerly colonized or ‘subjugated’ systems of knowledge such as ‘Sumerian’, ‘Mayan’, ‘Chinese’, and ‘Indian’ equally have numerous and complex frameworks that go back thousands of years before modern medicine. It is my view that, in addition to, or as part of, the production of the Other, there was also the failure of ‘researchers’ to allow voices or to grasp non-biomedical systems of knowledge and frameworks. This failure or an inability to understand was probably more prevalent during the colonial time which was defined by violent and discriminating relations of power. Some of the implications for today are that sometimes ‘Othered’ modes of knowing about mental health and healing are either totally dismissed or romanticised and bio-medical modes treated sometimes suspiciously or over-estimated. Some coparticipants however, were able to adopt a pluralistic approach to their own health. For instance, some went to modern hospitals and clinics to see their psychologist and at the same time attended family gatherings and conducted rituals which they experienced as a source of emotional and mental support. Others went to church, or gyms and so on where praying, or exercising, were among their strategies for mental health wellness, and still they paid respects to their ancestors and some still consulted Sangomas and ‘traditional healers’. But still others drew clear lines. For them, knowledge was a monolith, a zero-sum game. In the name of their single frame of knowledge to health and healing, they would see the others’ heads on their bleeding feet.

In the current context in Kimberley, a diversity of dynamics ranging from political, to religious, ideological, economic, historical, and academic may explain some coparticipants’ statements

such as ‘African’ people have a ‘lack of knowledge’ of mental health, depression is for ‘white’ or for ‘privileged’ people, or ‘how are you going to heal people by just talking to them without using to bones’. These, and many other such statements and taboos, were engaged in contestation during the CS conversations. But coparticipants lamented at the lack of such conversations. Following a conference on CS that I facilitated in July 2022 in Kimberley, a group of coparticipants started organising a platform to share stories and talk about mental health in their communities, an awareness event was collaboratively organised at a local heritage and tourism information centre, and I was invited to facilitate activities, including a men’s dialogue, during World Mental Health month at UCT. Here, I shared a panel with a Sangoma. On another panel there was a consultant on ‘traditional healing’ newly hired by UCT to work with health services to care for students who would prefer such form of intervention. What was striking for me was not just the effort to give space, and voice, and bring into conversation diverse systems of knowledge about health and healing, but how mental health became a medium of communication, a language the speakers and the audience used to talk about life experiences, share their knowledge, and express disagreement, support, fears, and hopes. Coparticipants’ own historical and cultural values, experiences, and behaviours observed in their contexts serve as frames through which psychiatric illnesses and terminologies are made to perform certain positions, meanings, and knowledge.

Performing (bio)psychiatric knowledge: ‘*A whisper to Dr Saul*’

Our knowledge, and our thoughts, feelings, and actions, are based on our conceptual system. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have advanced that communication is based on this conceptual system, and ‘language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like’ (1980:3). ‘Our conceptual system’ they emphasise, ‘plays a central role in defining our everyday realities’ (ibid). (Bio)psychiatric terminologies are a medium of communication through which (bio)psychiatric knowledge enters and circulates in these everyday realities, and may shape our knowledge. For most coparticipants I engaged with, they could not find translations for (bio)psychiatric terminologies in their African mother tongues. There were no exact words for the English mental health let alone (bio)psychiatrically named mental health states. (Bio)psychiatric terminologies came from exposure to ‘expert’ knowledge from medical doctors and researchers when they delivered lectures at universities for example, when coparticipants themselves or their relatives were treated at hospitals and heard psychiatrists or other caregivers using such terminologies. But for most, the exposure came through radio, social media, television, newspapers, word of mouth, and social gatherings.

When the new mental hospital opened on 30 September 2019, a community radio called RTS, was present broadcasting live. I learned about some cases of suicide attempts, corruption cases, and protests in the health sector via these local radio stations and newspapers such as the DFA. Coparticipants shared mental health related news via WhatsApp and email. For instance, a case of a mental health patient who had allegedly committed suicide in a local health clinic, or friends attending or coming from traditional rituals. Several reasons, mostly unusually violent incidents, prompted the reporting and debates on mental health in the media. The period from 2015 to the first months of 2023 was particularly intense. On one hand, students and workers protests intensified. For example, the *Mail & Guardian* estimated that ‘in 2014, 1776 work days were lost’ to protests while ‘in 2018, 128 890 were lost’ (Smit, 2020). According to the DFA, the police in Kimberley associated ‘protest actions’ to ‘a sharp increase in the occurrence of crimes’ which in turn had much to do with various instabilities including ‘socioeconomic challenges’, the ‘deterioration of the moral fibre’ and so on (Wildenboer, 2019). On the other hand, incidents such as ‘the tragic loss of life following the discharge of mental health case users from the Life Esidimeni facility and COVID-19 (Santomauro, 2021; Lund, 2020; Nkonki & Fonn, 2020; Docrat, Besada & Lund, 2019) put mental health news high on media’s agenda.

Through the media, the local public including coparticipants, were exposed not only to the language of mental health and (bio)psychiatric terminologies, they were also exposed to opinion debates such as the heated debate between Malan, Msimang, and Falkoff referenced by Crouse, regarding the contradictory narratives from official and opposing parties, and current and historical legacies that often accompany or are part of interpreting and psychologising these incidents. Writing in the *Sowetan* on 12 September 2019 for instance, Mathatha Tsedu said that ‘mental slavery still dogs us even to this day’. It is the only way to ‘understanding our present-day situation when we seem beset by...madness’. ‘How else’, he asked,

do you explain adults burning a school...or university students, when not burning a law library, or throwing beds out of fourth floor windows, chasing a cow down the street and hack it to pieces before carting the meat to their hostels...How does one explain fully rational people...living in four-bedroom houses with all the modern appliances such as geysers, stoves, washing machines, etc., refusing to pay for electricity but are up to date with their DStv subscriptions?

In his interpretation, what he sees as irrational behaviour that now characterises any grievances that people may have is caused by psychological and mental chains. Terminologies about, or borrowed from, mental health circulate in tandem with modes of perceiving, interpreting and communicating social events, experiences, and behaviours in particular contexts. In relation to these modes of circulation through mediatic exposure, Charles L. Briggs remarked that ‘in the case of many diseases, epidemics, medications, and interventions, we experience them first – and often primarily – through their public representations that appear in the news and other media forms, on-line, and in advertisements’ (2011:459). He proposed the concept of biocommunicability, with the ‘goal to provide medical anthropologists with a new way of conceptualising their object of study and a framework for exploring how contemporary phenomena are created and circulate’ (ibid): ‘The concept of “biocommunicability” refers to sets of normative assumptions on the production and circulation of knowledge and information about health’ (Briggs & Hallin, 2010:149). To understand biocommunicability, the key points of departure are biopolitics and biosociality.

Biopolitics is a politics of power defined by Foucault as control through regulating human life, managing people and their bodies (Briggs, 2011; Foucault, 2003, 2001, 1977). Mass media, as well as schools, hospitals, prisons, art galleries, and museums are some of the apparatuses or

channels of circulation used not only to govern and exercise such control over bodies, but also to shape their subjectivities and rationalities. News mediums are a central technology in this regard. Daniel Hallin and Briggs have suggested,

that if biopolitical technologies are indeed transferred into regimes of governmentality, citizenship, and the production of subjectivities, a crucial and relatively unexamined site where this process occurs lies in the discursive practices of the news media, with their pedagogical power for reinscribing categories and their performative potential for shaping new ones. (2007:44)

While it may be said that coparticipants ‘consume’ and reproduce mental health terminologies and knowledge from regulated sources, it can also be said that they demonstrate agency in the way they appropriate, question, subvert, and produce meanings and new knowledge based on their experiences and understandings from their context. Briggs has indeed argued that ‘what we take to be biomedical objects are hybrid forms’. They carry ‘cartographies’ from ‘the sites where they were produced’ (2011:459). (Bio)psychiatric terminologies used by coparticipants carry cartographies from (bio)psychiatric authorities, but they also carry cartographies from media houses and other circuits they pass through. Briggs observed that by focusing on biomedical objects, ‘the spectacularization – and the forms of subjectivity, materiality, biosociality, affect, and ethics associated with them – get, to use Ralph Ellison’s (1972:152) powerful phrase “hidden right out in the open”’ (Briggs, 2011:460). This implies that people might not be aware of how their choices, thoughts, behaviours, vocabularies, everyday realities, and their individual and social bodies are regulated. Social events and phenomena have an influence on biological and mental states. Biosociality (Harris & McDade, 2018; Briggs & Hallin, 2010, 2007) implies this dialectical conversation between social and biological processes. Kathleen Mullan Harris and Thomas W. McDade (2018) defined *biosocial* ‘as a broad concept referencing the dynamic, bidirectional interactions between biological phenomena and social relationships and contexts’ (2). A biosocial perspective,

draws on models and methods from the biological, medical, behavioral, and social sciences. It conceptualizes the biological and the social as mutually constituting forces, and blurs boundaries between phenomena inside the body and outside of the body. It implies that attempts to understand one without the other are incomplete. (2018:3)

From this perspective, it may be argued that the contexts of violence associated with discriminating, invalidating, and stressful experiences described by coparticipants may have biological impact. Similarly, biological processes affected by such contexts may affect mental health, in some cases provoking mental ill-health.

Considering the implication of the mental and psychological, it seems appropriate to upgrade biosociality into biopsychosociality invoking George Engel's biopsychosocial model understood broadly as a model where a 'disease is construed as the embodiment of the symbolic network linking body, self, and society' (Kleinman, 2020:4; Engel, 1977). However, I cannot shake a realisation that even this model is still lacking. To do justice to the connectedness of experiences and life stories I heard or observed, and to account for the interactive and mutually constituting influence from all dimensions including, but not limited to, the spiritual, historical, economic, political, ecological, and cultural, a much more holistic model would be more generatively appropriate. With this holistic perspective in mind, I would like to proceed to share a few studies talking about the mutual link between one or more dimensions to the biological and the mental.

Studies such as the UCT's Alan Flisher Center for Mental Health together with the South African Medical Research Council (Docrat, Besada & Lund, 2019) have highlighted the impact of historical and economic legacies on mental health and on the quality of care. A study referred to earlier in this chapter by Singer and Toledo (1997) discussed how an environment of social and racial discrimination contributed to drug addiction, and how depression was perceived to stem from the low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness caused by that environment. Talking about depression, Scherper-Hughes and Lock observed that, 'while most psychiatrists know that the effectiveness of tricyclic antidepressants has something to do with their effects on brain transmitters, few believe that chemical abnormalities are the sole causes of depression. Therefore, they invariably explore the painful life events and difficulties of their patients' (1987:31). In light of biocommunicability, I would emphasise that media and coparticipants' (bio)psychiatric terminologies are deeply loaded with biopolitics and operate within a mutually constituting holistic context. I will elaborate on this using the models proposed by Briggs and Hallin (Holland, 2018; Briggs & Hallin, 2016, 2010, 2007). They identified three models of biocommunicability: the medical authority model, the patient-consumer model, and the public sphere model.

In the medical authority model, Briggs and Hallin argued that until recently, medical knowledge was understood to be produced by specialist medical authorities and passed down to patients through personal mediation of family physicians who were perceived as professionals who stand apart from politics and market relationships, people who put the welfare of patients and community first, ahead of other considerations. Patients were conceived of as passive receivers with a sole role to trust and obey the physicians. Media and journalists were understood as relatively marginal to this process. In the patient–consumer model, Briggs and Hallin suggested that the medical authority model is eclipsed to a large extent by the patient as a consumer. This, in their view, is caused by the increasing centrality of market relations in the sphere of health. They propose Foucault’s governmentality to understand the rise of this consumer model which is premised on the active responsibility of individuals to rationally maximize their own health and wellbeing. Like the previous model, the patient-consumer model also conceives of medical knowledge as the product primarily of biomedical professionals and received by patients who have a moral obligation to govern their behaviour accordingly. It expects lay readers to be active seekers of information, which they must gather, sift, evaluate, and use to make health choices.

In the public sphere model, Briggs and Hallin advance that the audience is imagined as being composed of citizens, rather than of patients or consumers. In the biomedical authority and patient-consumer models, information circulating in the mass media is assumed to be useful because it helps individuals to regulate their behaviour in the interest of their own health. In the public sphere model, the information is assumed to be useful because it helps citizens and policymakers make collective decisions about the public interest. This model implies that health issues should be subject to open debate and that conflicting voices will be heard. But Briggs and Hallin note that in actuality, existing public spheres will typically offer differential access to the process of debate. For example, conflicting voices may not be heard. As noted during colonial and Apartheid regimes, ideological and political agendas may determine which voices and what information is circulated according to what interests to serve. Various dynamics of today similarly shape whose voice and what, where, when any information is circulated. But issues of access, technology, literacy and more, might also determine what gets in and out of the media and who is able to enter the debate and be heard or not. There are also ambiguities noted by Briggs and Hallin about where the proper boundary might lie between the political public sphere and a specialized public sphere of medical science, where more restrictive norms of entry might be considered appropriate. Before I conclude, I would like to

note some of the ways through which I found some coparticipants try to enter the debate on mental health, engaging (bio)psychiatric knowledge in the process.

Coparticipants mobilise (bio)psychiatric terminologies and use them outside the sphere of (bio)psychiatric expertise and even beyond the health context into social, cultural, spiritual, political, and other dimensions of the community life, such as the critique of some of the leaders' behaviours noted in previous sections. Another example is about a group of young people including professional dancers. Building on workshops, seminars, and conversations I offered and particularly on the conference of July 2022, they created and presented – in October 2022 in person to the public and online – a performance they entitled 'A Whisper to Dr Saul'. The province's Premier is Dr Zamani Saul, but the piece was a metaphor referring to leadership in general, political, economic, medical, academic, and cultural. It engages with the theme of mental health and highlights various challenges that the members of the community in Kimberley face in their everyday experience. Through creative methods of dance and theatre, the performance brings dominant forms of knowledge and authority into conversation with popular embodied wisdom and socially-generated experiential knowledge. It aims to promote mental health by using art as media to confront taboos and highlight the lack of spaces for conversation. The initiative to create, to open up a space for expression and story-sharing through a performance that uses the language of mental health, demonstrates one of the ways coparticipants tried to enter the debate. They engaged anthropological and medical knowledge scholars and medical doctors who presented during the conference. In doing so they contributed to knowledge circulation, production, and contestation. Furthermore, the performance was also an attempt at 'expanding a realm' of possibilities, 'reconceptualising' selves and contexts, perhaps finding and suggesting 'new metaphors' and inspiring health and sustaining healing processes among some members of the performance group and the public.

At some points in their lives, some coparticipants, their friends, or relatives, had been diagnosed with depression, anxiety disorders, or bipolar. Others had experienced childhood abuse, and most noted direct or inherited traumatic experiences. What they shared in the context of this study and that I have shared in this chapter stem from experiences that affected their health and their lives. Here, health is understood holistically. Sometimes when coparticipants used the (bio)psychiatric terminologies, their verbal expressions matched changes in their bodily expressions. Sometimes they expressed revolt, protest, disbelief, disgust, anger, distress, numbness, and a variety of other emotional states. Their personal

narratives, if I may borrow from Kleinman, ‘do not merely reflect illness experience, but rather’ they ‘contribute to the experience of symptoms and suffering’ (2020:48) lived or observed in their living environment. Looking back on how coparticipants were speaking, performing, and thinking from their lived experiences, I suggest that their observations, performances, and interpretations embodied in their narratives and expressive terminologies cannot be separated from who they are as holistic human beings living in a context that equally requires a holistic approach. Coparticipants processed and communicated knowledge about health this context, and I have summarised the processual actions, insights, and language that were generated into biometaphorisation. This term is an acknowledgement and an abbreviation that stands for the way coparticipants took on biomedically defined states of mental health and used them as metaphors to open up space, analyse, construct, contest, and communicate their experiences, knowledge, and meaning within their complex context.

In concluding, I would synthesise the key points in this chapter as the following: the coparticipants’ expressive (bio)psychiatric terminologies are interpretive embodiments of a complex holistic context. The use of these terminologies reveals the extent to which the (bio)psychiatric knowledge and discourse have circulated and are performed in places, languages, and bodies. This has implications not least of which is how frameworks of knowledge about mental health and healing can be understood, imagined, and practiced. The language of mental health broadly and the (bio)psychiatric discourse particularly, is a window into coparticipants’ interpretations, experiences, and contestations. I have argued that coparticipants mobilise mental health related terminologies to contest the continued social, mental, and physical deteriorations they have observed or have lived themselves in their homes and community. In this context, mental health becomes a language that embodies contestation and intervenes in expressing and making sense of a difficult experience.

Conclusion: Exit-Opening

Globally, natural history museums have represented colonized people ‘as lesser human beings’ than their colonizers (Tinius & von Oswald, 2020; Rydell, 2011; Witz, 2006:115; Scheper-Hughes, 2001, 1996). Until the end of the 1990s, South African museums represented African and other colonized people in line with the colonial binary definition of humanity. This hierarchical system “wounded body and soul” (Ndebele (2016:105) of the colonized, and in establishing such superior-inferior relationship, the colonizers were also ‘dehumanized’ (Ndebele, 2016: 4–5). Despite the advent of democracy, the end of Colonial-Apartheid era, and the shift in political power, which started to affect changes in museum practices, colonial legacies still linger in these public spaces (Ngcobo, 2018; Mbembe, 2015). During the study of the CS exhibition, some coparticipants used the expression ‘trapped’ to share their meaning of CS and their physical and emotional response to it. The feeling of entrapment, they argued, is the result of living in a social environment characterized by enduring colonial and new forms of violence. In this last part of the dissertation, I conclude with a story I have entitled *Searching for an exit out of Greenpoint*, after which I present and reflect on *Exit-Opening* as one of the main insights to emerge out of the study. In a context of enduring violence, what I call *Exit-Opening* is that which opens a possibility to see what else that context could become.

Searching for an exit out of Greenpoint is inspired by my unexpected journey in the ‘location’ called Greenpoint here in Kimberley. Also, it is a story about and containing some closing reflections based on key insights I have shared in this dissertation. In the study, I was interested in contestation over the interpretation of violence in the context of CS, an art exhibition which ran from 2016 to 2021 at WHAG, Kimberley, South Africa. The guiding question was how did the coparticipants understand and define contestation in the CS? Building on previous anthropological ideas such as Karp et al.’s *museums frictions*, Anna L. Tsing’s *friction* and James Clifford’s museums as *contact zone* and others that support that contestation manifests differently in various contexts, I sought to find out how contestation manifest in CS, and how it was defined and understood by the coparticipants. In addressing the question, I started by finding out ways in which CS was specific. The obvious place to start was art since CS was an art exhibition. Curators used the medium of art, and according to Walley (2023), exhibitions are art forms. This was the first element that made this context specific. The second element

was naming. Among all the exhibitions I found, locally and globally, which have either been contested or set up as sites of contestations, for example the Human Zoos (Gordon, 2018; Rydell, 2011) of the 19th and early 20th centuries – when Ota Benga, Sarah Baartman, and others were exhibited –, *Miscast*, and *Digging Deeper*, none had a name such as CS in which contestation was more or less directly implied. Furthermore, the curators named two spaces, the unfolding of the colonial process and the anti-colonial struggle, as the two main focuses in the exhibition. With its naming, the exhibition was ‘put into circulation’ (Turner & Bruner, 1986; Geertz, 1986) and the two spaces were the object of public critical conversations. Third, violation, hurt, or wound was a thread connecting various forms of violence, past and present. I identified it by looking at memories and forms of violence mobilised and identified by coparticipants in the exhibition. The fourth and last one, biometaphorisation, was identified when I noticed that some coparticipants utilised (bio)psychiatric terminologies when they spoke about certain contexts and experiences such as economic deprivations, deteriorating infrastructures, corrupt and incompetent behaviours of some leaders, streets, and domestic violence, personally lived or witnessed. At first impression, CS is a space defined by violence – colonial, Apartheid, and Post-Apartheid violence. But it is about more than that. It is about humanity and human dignity, as the curators Robbins and Pretorius emphasized. Their emphasis here brought to mind some of the keywords Mandela used during his magnetizing and cathartic speech at his inauguration as the first democratically elected President, on 10 May 1994.

The time for the healing of the wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come. The time to build is upon us. We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender, and other discriminations...We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity (Mandela, 1994; Meredith, 2010: 515).

The denial of humanity and human dignity was the focal point of contestation in the CS exhibition. Central to Robbins and Pretorius curatorial approach is that the colonisation and Apartheid eras were spaces of denial of humanity and human dignity. This was reflected in the exhibition’s two main strands. The first being, the ‘advent of colonization and its unfolding through violence’, and the second, as ‘the struggle for liberation against colonization and

Apartheid when people are trying to reclaim their dignity’. Despite achieving liberation in 1994, and despite progress made since, the assessment of the current situation (2016–2023) for most coparticipants is not far from Mbembe’s, as captured in *negative moment*, an expression he used while in a conversation with #RMF in Cape Town, in relation to the protests of 2015/2016. ‘These times of ours’ (*negative moment*) he remarked, were a time of uncertainty, turmoil, and violence, like some African countries experienced after independence: ‘Like theirs in the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, ours is gray and almost murky. It lacks clarity’ (2015: n.p.). It ‘is a moment when new antagonisms emerge while old ones remain unresolved. It is a moment when contradictory forces – inchoate, fractured, fragmented – are at work but what might come out of their interaction is anything but certain. It is also a moment when multiple old and recent unresolved crises seem to be on the path towards a collision.’ (ibid.).

In his comments after witnessing the students protests at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, on 23 October 2015, Ndebele (2016) recorded his ‘disaffection with the current state of South Africa’ (105–106). He sensed ‘a visionary retreat...underway’ (ibid.). The students’ disaffection expressed in the burning of paintings and photographs of ‘colonials’ reflected

something in the national environment today, articulated on some university campuses in 2016 had reached that inner core in “black” students and appears to have destabilised that core significantly, such that the “black” appears to have lost control over the emergent means of self-definition in the evolving social realm. A “black” identity in the circumstances becomes a fundamentally reactive one, anchored in the residual agency of “whiteness” – real or imagined. (105–106)

As far as Kimberley is concerned, the *negative moment*’s characteristics noted by Mbembe such as uncertainty, crisis, and old and new antagonisms, culminated in March this year when public institutions such as museums, schools, and hospitals saw protesters blocking gates with burning tyres, and human excrement was thrown onto a hospital building. Between 2017–2022 at different occasions when I asked coparticipants to tell me or write down one word or phrase which described the current state the best, here is some of what they shared. ‘Nothing much has changed’ said some coparticipants, including Roena Hanz who heads a cultural institution here in Kimberley. A public servant said the ‘Big hole is full of promises but empty on delivery’. And her colleague wrote that healing was ‘swept under the mat’. Tuk Carla, a young female student in her twenties who introduced herself as being white, said ‘Trapped’, referring to how she felt while visiting CS exhibition. She felt the same way outside in the public social

space. Despite her desire and effort to connect and engage, she felt looked at and judged through the lenses of the past whose logic of othering and discrimination she did not ascribe to. She wanted to leave, fly away if she could. So, did her friend, Kund Meiyer. In a poetic response she wrote down taking the body as a theme; an extract reads almost like Ingrid Jonker (Viljoen, 2012; Mandela, 1994) wanting to be reborn,

My body make me an individual who thinks further than society wants us to.
Help me not to accept but to challenge
To act outside the box in a respectful manner.
Help me...to never look into the light of social construction
To avoid being blinded myself. (Carla, April 2020)

Interestingly, from the CS exhibition, Carla had chosen a painting about a woman ‘with the Red Cloth Over Her Eyes’ which was also chosen by another female student in her twenties, Lesedi Kala, who introduced herself as black. An extract from her responses reads,

Even though I’ve been enslaved for years and have only seen bloodshed
I keep my eyes covered with hope
Hoping that one day when I get over what I have seen
And when I get over what I have been forced to believe about myself and about
people around me
I will learn how to look in the mirror and see value, intellect, peace, wisdom,
gentleness and kindness
Whilst I’m still blindfolded in defeat, heartache, tragedy and denial
I will continue to hope for better days
Where I am no longer afraid
No longer afraid of leaving home and not being sure I’ll return unharmed
Not being afraid even in my own home. (Kala, April 2020)

Lesedi reflected through her own experiences about the current state in South Africa. She wrote that she had been living in Kimberley for three years, and before that she had lived in Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Cape Town, and other parts of the country. For her, different parts were at different stages. But all in all, the past was still present, and related pain and violence lingered.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ The text is not edited. Missing parts marked by ellipses are omitted for confidentiality reasons.

A lot of South Africans still haven't healed from the country's pay traumas such as Apartheid. In some parts of the country racism is still being taught ... I've had several bad experiences ... I'd go out with my friends from Netherlands and people would pass remarks like 'why is the white girl with the black girl' and people would be more than willing to serve her rather than me because of my skin colour. Black people in the same area haven't completely healed either and that's why they've become racist too in order to inflict pain on those that have inflicted on them ... Transformation is taking place but it's rather slow for instance in Kimberley there are many marks of the colonizer. statues, street names and names in areas too whereas in places like Johannesburg streets have been renamed and some statues that are triggering have been removed. (Kala, April 2020)

The inability of moving past the violence, the way social relations continued to be defined by race and other violent categories, the wounding caused by the past, the hurt experienced by old and young, were all some of the reasons for Lesedi, Carla, Meiyer, and other coparticipants' responses. CS felt, for some, like a mirror of what their social context felt like, a kind of entrapment, a space of unending violence, physical and psychological.

London Nkgabo, a coparticipant who was a businessman and a scholar, CS was not just a space to visit, study, and have conversation about contestation. It was a site to use for contestation. In general, most coparticipants believed that the pledge Mandela made in 1994 to liberate people from 'the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discriminations', and to ensure respect of 'inalienable right to human dignity', remained unfulfilled. Mandela, who would later, in 1997, express contestation over 'the depiction of African people as lesser than human beings' (Ngcobo, 2018; Karp et al., 2006) in some South African museums, and someone who had been locked away for 27 years, probably understood best what it meant to have one's humanity defined and trapped by a context of continuing violence.

Thirty years after his inaugural speech, the general feeling among coparticipants is one of 'entrapment within an eternal present of violence' (Das et al., 2000:135), and most protests are said to be organized in the name of fighting against social and economic conditions that are, if not the same, as undignified and as dehumanizing as in the colonial past. What I argue for is that contestation, in such a context of enduring dehumanizing violence, is mostly driven by a struggle for the reclamation of humanity and human dignity. The denial of these fuels

contestations which have at times turned violent. During my observations of the CS exhibition and with the support from the coparticipants' responses, I advance that the way contestation manifests itself may help to describe and understand the progress or paths the journey of the reclamation can take: *entrapment*, meaning 'stuck', 'trapped', 'frozen' in a *status quo* of violence and being wounded; *resistance*, endless violent confrontations, characterized by violent fracturing, antagonisms, contradictions, causing wounds; *flow*, marked by finding ways out of the 'trap', bridging racial, social, and other enduring hurtful divisions, opening and sustaining possibilities for recognition, belonging, and healing. Amidst a situation of *entrapment* or *resistance*, an *Exit-Opening* would be something that would help coparticipants to see possibilities of what else that context could be. In order to deepen the understanding of this idea, I first share the story to set the basis for the concluding analysis.

Searching for an exit out of Greenpoint

Living deep in the cracks of invisibility is a 'location' called Greenpoint, not far from the airport in Kimberley. I found it by chance on 1 January 2023. Around 11:00 AM, I left my writing desk and went for a run. The running stopped however after about 30 or so minutes later. I had just emerged from under the bridge on Stanley Street and had turned left onto Fabricia Street. A few meters away as I was getting ready to turn right on Memorial Road, I looked to my left and saw a little skybridge that looked abandoned. Its surroundings were dilapidated. One house next to it was in ruin. And it looked like there was a railway overgrown with wild plants. The bridge was meant to help crossover this railway. To reach it, I jumped a few potholes where dumped rubbish sank into a black soil. It looked like no one went there. The pathway to it was almost invisible. I went closer and reached the other side. From there I took few pictures. A young woman passing by helped me take a few more. She was going to the other side to visit her 'grandma' she said.

I headed in the direction that she had come from, casually walking, and sometimes running to keep the blood warm. But I needed to know which street this was and where I was, so I asked a young man I saw seated under a tree, drinking. He rose as he saw me approaching and said this was Dutch Reform road. Pointing across the street, this residence area was known as Diamond Park. Next was Greenpoint. He lived there. I wished him a Happy New Year and continued running. From there a kid ran with me, smiling for a few meters until he reached what looked like his home, a shack where a mother with a baby in her arms waited for him in front of the door. I went ahead from Diamond Park to Greenpoint. In between, I met young and old. Some adults were drunk and walking with beer bottles on the side of the street. Others were sitting listening to music and chatting in front of their houses. From a church I heard gospel singing. It was a vibrant place. I waved sometimes wishing people I met a Happy New Year. All smiled widely and waved and wished me a Happy New Year back. I had to keep my eyes up to see people and the places, but I also had to keep eyes on the ground as well. Here and there were large potholes. Some seemed to have been there in such a state for a long time, deep and dark with an intense smell. In the middle of living areas and play grounds were large dumping sites. Heaps of rubbish stretched for dozens of meters before scattering away, as if sinking back into the people and the place's body. It was with much surprise that just meters

away down the road from these potholes and dumps I encountered Wilfred Delporte's 'The Appeal for Peace and Justice'. Few people I talked to, including a young man who took some pictures for me, did not know the name of the artist or the meaning of the artwork. One man passing by interpreted it as being a hand. 'It's the hand', he said, imitating it, pointing an open hand in the air towards the sky.

Later, I would find out online from a post by Morris, that it was unveiled in the Greenpoint Community Square in 1998, and that the design was initially made in 1968 as an appeal to the Apartheid government to release all political figures including Nelson Mandela. The few people I asked who live in Greenpoint did not know, even though they saw it every day; it was invisible to them, in a sense. Some told me 'this is Greenpoint'. But the name of the square itself, about five people or so I asked said they did not know. To find it they advised checking online! I thanked them, and they left as I was also leaving, but I kept a certain unease in what I had just experienced. It was more about how people I had just met related to the place more than the state it was in. But perhaps what mostly provoked the uneasiness was the perceptions from the outside.

The first time I had heard about this location, it described as a place of extreme poverty. Criminality was rampant there, I had heard. It was not advised to go there. In a sense it was invisible. Mwiri, from Galeshewe in a part which does not fare much better than this, expressed surprise when he saw the pictures I sent him of me in the Square. He asked why it was empty that time. Usually, he said, it was full of people drinking and smoking and so on. It was visible to him in a certain way. This emptiness he saw in the pictures, the vast square with the work of art in it, the stories I told him about my casual walk and run, and the joy and friendliness I experienced, summoned a different side of this place. They presented a kind of disruptive breach into the usual fixed narrative. They were a kind of opening. But I had to look for an exit, a real physical opening through which to walk home back to my writing. I wanted to find it without tracing my steps back to where I had came from.



Image 17: Taken by Mario, a resident of Greenpoint, 1 January 2023

Right after leaving the Square, I turned right onto a smaller paved road. I kept walking, hoping to find an exit that would help me reach the main road. It was long past midday. It was hot. I was in a new unfamiliar place. I could have asked for a way out, but I did not. I wanted to keep looking, to live the experience of finding it. After about a hundred meters or so, I saw a much smaller road. A slight turn led me towards another dumping site. It looked much bigger and dirtier than what I saw before, but I suspected it might be hiding a way out because from there I could see signs that the main road was closer. A couple of people were walking in from that side, and a few more were behind me as if they were also walking towards an exit. The biggest sign however was one big board emerging slightly over the houses. This alertness, this attentive presence to where I was going, to the details in the surroundings, was enhanced by the fact that I was walking in a place I had never walked before. Usually, when I run or walk in new places like this, I expect to see few things at the turn of a corner. Either there would be a way to continue or there would be a dead end.

To get out of Greenpoint, I crossed a small sewage area, leading into a dumping site, as seen in the picture. Two young men were sharing crumbs of bread they seemed to have just picked up. The crumbs were collected in a transparent plastic bag. One of the guys was holding it up as if to measure how much was left. After giving some to another young man, the man holding the plastic left fast as if taking the rest somewhere, maybe home. This place was right next to another bridge, a large one this time. On top of it, I recognized the road going to the airport. I had used it a few times. From up there, what happens here is invisible. It was as if the road and the bridge built for connecting had turned into a veil that isolated this place and sustained its exclusion and invisibility. There, I see exits. There, after the dump I saw two possible exits. One, small, made of concrete stairs rising up to the main road. Even though constructed on the ground, it seemed to be sliding over it, built on it but not from it. It was sustained by it but felt separate from it. The other exit was also smaller, but kept opening wider as it went. It was not paved. It was a bit dusty and sandy. But it was clear and also opened onto the main road.

Far ahead, I could clearly see some signs and names – Kimberley, a sign of a diamond, a sign about keeping Kimberley clean, the Pavilion Mall, an Oliver Road sign, a garage, N8 road sign, and many other signs and names. This was an exit. I could see way far ahead. There was no dead end. I started running again. It felt like this exit was opening into a much larger and

promising path. The sandy soil pulled me, guided me, as if it held my hand. It felt connected, right, and ok to walk on it, or rather to follow it. It was almost like we were making the path together, the soil, the surroundings, the path itself as it emerges and me. It was an *Exit-Opening*. Its searching, its finding, its physicality, and the feeling and experience of all of it, how it held my feet and embraced my whole body and soul, how it opened up to a wider world of possibilities, it was not just an exit. It was an *Exit-Opening*!



Image 18: The dumping site, before the exits, Greenpoint, 1 January 2023.

Exit-opening

An *Exit-Opening* is that which opens a possibility to see what else a context of violence could become. In this section, I explore how this idea helps to think about *entrapment* and a possible way out of it. First, I would like to share three examples that illustrate what comes to mind when I think of an *Exit-Opening*.

Mandela's inauguration was an exit. It was lived and interpreted as an opening to a new era of change, of healing, and of possibilities. But the coparticipants, for example Hanz who said that 'nothing has changed', do not see it that way. Maema also observed that, despite some progress, there is no healing. There is political progress, but no psychological healing, Maema emphasized. The general feeling is one of being 'trapped' as Carla shared, escalating a kind of permanent *negative moment* (Mbembe, 2015).

The 1995 World Cup, the 2010, were *Exits*, but they never materialized into Openings.

The whole of South Africa erupted in celebration, blacks as joyful as whites. Johannesburg became a giant street party. In the Northern suburbs. Domestic workers

rushed out on the streets shouting: 'We've done it! We've done it' Never before had blacks had cause to show such pride in the efforts of their white countrymen. It was a moment of national fusion (Meredith, 2010:527).

For many, at least those participating in this study, these events seem to have been forgotten and faded into invisibility. Like Mandela's inauguration, especially his solemn and magnetizing speech, the World Cups were lived and responded to intensely by all people from all backgrounds. It was as if the mental and physical weight of the heritage of hurt was lifted. The wall of division erected on colonial categories of race, wealth, and such, had suddenly cracked, allowing some light in. There were cathartic moments, 'rite of passage', and momentarily 'catharsis' (Meredith, 2010).

Several letters were issued in 2020 in the context of the recent global protests against systemic racism, by the American Anthropological Association (AAA), American Association of Physical Anthropology (AAPA), and the European Association of Archaeologists, and in conversations on several anthropological organizations and platforms. For example, the AAPA wrote, 'the concept of race has developed hand-in-hand with racist ideologies over the last five centuries, and biological anthropology has played an important role in the creation and perpetuation of both the race concept and racist ideologies' (Association of Physical Anthropology [AAPA], 2020). In their statement, the AAPA acknowledged that,

Over our history, the AAPA, and many of its members, have been complicit in producing and reifying racist ideologies via the misuse, falsification, or biased production of scientific information. We acknowledge this history...We acknowledge that outdated and inaccurate ideas about race, and racism, still inform scientific research today, and are sometimes embedded in what otherwise appears to be 'modern', technologically - advanced science. We stand against such practices.

While the AAA clarified that,

Early in the 19th century the growing fields of science began to reflect the public consciousness about human differences. Differences among the 'racial' categories were projected to their greatest extreme when the argument was posed that Africans, Indians, and Europeans were separate species, with Africans the least human and closer taxonomically to apes'...'Race' as an ideology about human differences was subsequently spread to other areas of the world. It became as strategy for dividing,

ranking, and controlling colonized people used by colonial powers everywhere. But it was not limited to the colonial situation. In the latter part of the 19th century, it was employed by Europeans to rank one another and to justify social, economic, and political inequalities among their peoples. During World War II, the Nazis under Adolf Hitler enjoined the expanded ideology of 'race' and 'racial' differences and took them to a logical end: the extermination of 11 million people of 'inferior races' (e.g., Jews, Gypsies, Africans, homosexuals, and so forth) and other unspeakable brutalities of the holocaust (2020).

I consider such acknowledgements and critiques, in forms of letters, articles or books, as *exits*. Some of these may turn into real changes in theory and or in practice, others not. The ones that go further and contribute towards opening (new) paths, for example eradicating racism, contributing to healing, are *Exit-Openings*.

The last example I want to share, which was presented in front of us recently, and is still going on in some parts of the world, is the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, which has created a situation that challenged the *status quo* and has made visible the cracks. These include, for example racial and economic inequalities and imbalances in access to health, security, education, technology and so on, most of which were already revealed and discussed by various branches of anthropology and other disciplines even before the pandemic (Manderson & Levine, 2018; Barrett, 2009; Marcus & Fischer, 1986), but were not as visible and as pressing as COVID-19 seems to have made them to become (Mate, 2022,2021; Manderson, Burke & Wahlberg, 2021; Manderson & Levine, 2020; McDonald, 2020; Nkonki & Fonn, 2020; Bernardo, 2020). One of the sectors impacted by the pandemic was the economy, and the consequences are still deeply felt. During my study, I established that the economic factor was understood by coparticipants to play an important role in how the progress of healing was interpreted by coparticipants. For them, getting out of the trap of violence is not possible without addressing poverty and other economic-related challenges such as 'joblessness', 'access', and 'slow transformation'. These words were among phrases and metaphors used by coparticipants to describe the current condition, some of which I shared in the first sections of this conclusion.

This view is also held by those who are not 'poor' or affected directly by such challenges. For instance, one public servant advanced that 'the insufficient transformation of the economy inhibits the healing'. Wells' view is that healing was achieved 'by people who have money,

people with low income have not access to better healing’. A security officer at a museum who identified as white, also observed that the situation was worse for ‘black people who are still in poverty’ as he stood in front of the painting *Games*. Next to it, if I may remind, there was a label mentioning ‘greed’ and ‘corruption’ as the drivers behind Apartheid. These same causes, the coparticipants noted, were behind current economic and related challenges. Some coparticipants, however, argued that everyone was affected, albeit differently. A colleague researcher wrote in feedback during a research forum in 2019 after I presented the progress of my study, that ‘people of all races are very hurt by the challenges, political and economic’. In a general sense most coparticipants saw the economy as a key factor on the journey to the reclamation of human dignity and healing. The progress was affected negatively, and healing was not happening because, as some coparticipants wrote, it was like ‘painting over the cracks’ – superficial, not reaching to the roots of the problems – and ‘transformation’ was ‘forced’ rather than unfolding ‘naturally’; there was also ‘incompetence’ and a lack of service ‘delivery’. Seeing and experiencing first-hand challenges such as deteriorating roads (potholes) in Greenpoint put in perspective the responses, and observations I had done about CS.

I witnessed protests (sometimes violent) in other areas of the city, for example in March 2023, the McGregor Museum where I stayed completing the writing of this dissertation was blocked, like many institutions in the city, by burning tyres and trash bins that blocked the gate. Such events were ‘live’ as opposed to the static events frozen inside the artworks in CS exhibition. Being there, outside in the community put ‘flesh on the meat’ of many ideas and observations from the artworks and their interpretations. But walking inside the exhibition room, studying it from inside had its own ‘liveness’ or ‘visceralness’. Walking in Greenpoint re-evoked the memory of being in the exhibition room. It felt like being inside a big box. If not for the two big openings, lights, and air-conditioning it would be a big dark room, a kind of a trap. The state of being trapped inside a box is not a normal one. It makes me think of breath, convulsions, walking over objects, and possibly falling down. As a consequence of being in such a space, I think of some people who would resign themselves to standing or sitting in one spot and not move. I think of others who might lose interest in living quickly, perhaps might commit suicide. Perhaps some might experience mutations, enabling them new abilities, for example to be able to sense or clearly see in the dark.

While visiting a cave known as *Wonderwerk*⁴⁶ together with a team from UCT's student affairs and SPU soon after lockdown ended, I remember two people who remained inside the cave with me for a while. Because of loadshedding, the lights were off at the time. After staying in that darkness for few minutes, our vision had gotten clearer and clearer. We were amazed by being able to see in the dark, and we marvelled thinking that we were probably standing in the same spot experiencing something, an aspect of a life people who passed through or dwelled here thousands of years ago had. We never worried about how to get out because the cave's entrance was big, clearly visible and it ushered in some stream of light. We could see it. From outside, the entrance looked like a mouth wide open. Once inside it was like a big round star shining brightly at the end of a dark tunnel. In the CS room, it was only once inside the room that you could see the letters Exit visibly on top of one of the two big rectangular-shaped mouths.

In Greenpoint, there was no exit written anywhere. But I did not panic. In case I got lost, I knew I had the option to trace my steps back to where I had come from, or as a last resort, ask around. Panicking apparently increases the consumption of oxygen, so that is out of question when I feel lost or in a kind of a trap. The kind of 'trapped' some coparticipants talked was a kind that consumed oxygen quickly. It was the kind that suffocates. It prevents breathing, continuously. It takes the lights out. Its floor is not a comfortable one to sit or lie on. It is not as smooth and soundless as the WHAG's carpet in the *Piano Room*. It is not as the sparkly clean charcoal-coloured floor of the exhibition room. It is thorny and rocky at some places and times, extremely hot in some, and cold in others, and all of these states at once sometimes. Here I think for example of artist Enid Anken who described the context (current state) during one of our conversations, as 'in South Africa it's bipolar. You're so happy then you're so sad, then you're frightened. It's up and down, up and down, always some panacea, coming to fix things and back again'. Mutating and becoming able to see in the dark does not take the darkness away. Getting used to the dark brings a sense of walking in the dark, moving on with the way things are, because there is no visible option. Here, I am thinking of Carla and Meiyer, who stay because they can't take a flight out. However, Carla's poem seemed to reveal someone who would rather contest, challenge the status quo, refuse to fit in the 'social constructions' she did not want to ascribe to.

⁴⁶ A heritage site managed by McGregor Museum (Morris, 2010, 2009) in the Northern Cape Province.

Cases of those who give up and commit suicide are not uncommon. Mental health is a challenge, symptomatic in some respects of this state of feeling ‘trapped’. Coparticipants, for example Yvonne Magxala from the Department of Health, and students, for example Dimpho, Furaha, Mnini and others, highlighted a number of suicide cases that have much to do with the current situation where economic pressures for instance, makes some feel that they do not have other options. Some of those who chose to continue walking, moving in the dark do it not just because they feel they have no option, but maybe because of numbness to the violence, to the way things are. Robbins (2015) reflects, as he recalls a memory of Crouse’s painting of *Rian Malan*, ‘had the prolonged proximity to violence rendered Malan callous and uncaring, his back to detail and smoking a cigarette? Perhaps the prolonged proximity had numbed us all?’ (34). General numbness, withdrawal, not feeling interested in anything, wanting to just sleep, and not attending classes, were among the behaviours and feelings Furaha said she had when she had depression and had been seeing a psychologist before attending some of the workshops and conversations I facilitated. According to experts in mental health and related challenges such as depression and suicidal cases (Maté, 2019; Yapko, 2018; der Kok, 2015) associate not seeing possibilities, the feeling of ‘not having another option’ with many cases they have seen. Mvura Sharama, a middle-aged lady who came directly to speak to me right after the research forum in 2019, disclosed seeing a therapist, and said,

I got to therapy because of depression. We found that the cause is those time of Apartheid. We were the first generation to go to the white schools, often the only black in a whole class. TRC didn’t do anything. We need to have these difficult conversations to be able to heal. Apartheid was designed by a psychologist ... Xenophobia ... this xenophobia is a symptom, one very small of the symptoms of the underlying pain that’s been there ... started ... years back.

She recalled feeling of loneliness, confinement, and discrimination. She painted a picture of an environment opposite to Mbembe’s space of *radical hospitality*, a place of ‘co-belonging and openness as opposed to separation and closure’ (2019:242). Her seeing of a therapist, walking to me, and generously sharing important personal experiences from her past and present, summoned an image of someone who had been passionately searching for an exit out of a space of confinement from her past. It was a task to come to terms with a ghost which still perforated physical and mental frames of her well/being. The experience at the school might have ended, but its spectre popped up in the symptoms such as violence against women and children, xenophobia, Afrophobia, and so on. Mental ill-health is one of the ‘symptoms’ (to use

Sharama's expression) of this state of feeling 'trapped'. The burning of tyres, blocking of roads, throwing of human excrement, and other such actions, are also social 'symptoms'.

But despite the darkly painted picture, the desperate context of feeling 'trapped' may also hide expressions of some hope. This is not to minimize the physical and mental violence and pain involved. I am thinking for example in terms of Ndebele's personal experience where he recounts that, 'despite the overt power of the racially oppressive system' of Apartheid, 'there was something in me beyond its reach' (2016:105). He explains that 'no matter how economically or militarily powerful they may have been, it was replaced by an enormous sense of inner possibility and power which did not minimise the brutal reality' (ibid.). But perhaps a more direct example, or rather analogy, may come from my own childhood experience.

As a child I remember competing with other kids to hold out breath, sometimes we did it under water for as long as we could. We wanted to see who would last longest. As the oxygen ran out, the body started to show some signs. The heart rate increased. The chest tightened. Sweating started sometimes. Unable to open the mouth, the eyes opened wide, the arms and legs stretched as if to pull in some air through the fingers and toes. And when someone stopped holding their breath, the first thing was to open the mouth so wide an inhale and exhale long, loud, and deep breaths. While the physical experience was intense and challenging, the panic and the fear of really not being able to breathe was a big challenge. Both the psychological perception and the biological functions influenced each other. The feeling of being 'trapped' in CS invokes some similar images, except much worse because of the context of violence, and the current and past memories cannot be locked out. Ghosts do not know boundaries. They cannot be fenced out or in. They keep haunting the 'trapped'. Perhaps the 'trapped' is haunted even more because of the darkness and lack of lights. Everything becomes intense. For instance, an extract from Carla's response to the woman 'with the Red Cloth Over Her Eyes', suggests that when 'blindfolded', I imagine like being 'trapped' in a dark box, one faces memories, constantly. In her case, they are difficult memories of scars, blood, and death, not healing. The poem deepens an understanding of what she meant by 'trapped'.

Now I'm blind to that which was set in place for healing and transformation.

The red cloth left a scar, it covered my eyes to late.

I'm now constantly seeing my last memory disappointment and struggle, blood and war and death.

My memory is all I see because the red cloth blinded my reality. (Carla, April 2020)

In such a context, trapped and lacking air, the heart rate would increase, the body convulse, the mouth would open wide to let in every bit of air except that there would be none or it would not be enough. Every muscle would shake and dig as deep as possible inside itself to squeeze out every atom of oxygen left. The hands and legs would kick as if the void inside the trap had become a heavy wall to break to let the air in. It is a deeply frightening experience. However, the shaking, stretching, opening the mouth and eyes wide, reaching out with stretched legs and arms, the sound of the heart screaming louder and louder, though they presage an ending of life, they are also gestures of hope. They are not only signalling the loss of air/air hunger, but they also indicate a vigorous searching inside. They signal a kind of hope that the body/mind has somewhere in the closed dark box some air. Or, somewhere inside the body there is some possibility left that can be tapped into to sustain life a little longer.

I am reminded of Mbembe's argument referring to the students protests of 2015/2016, that 'at the core of these events is the hope, especially among the youth, for something new, which would not simply be a repetition of what we thought we had got rid of' (Mbembe, 2019:239). Ndebele's and his generation's sense of possibility experienced during his difficult times came from a sense of hope for something new, something different not just in the future, but in himself and in the connection with others, creating an expansiveness within, which 'countered' the confinement, 'the Apartheid-imposed limitations on my movements' (105–106). 'Wellbeing' was achieved 'through effecting some autonomous agency in creating a society based on new relationships among ourselves and with all other people' (ibid.).

CS presented such opportunities to imagine new relationships, to connect with the past, the present, each by 'looking' at art and through it looking at the 'Other'. This experience was healing in itself according to Robbins and Pretorius. The challenge, or the key question, raised here, is a question of inheriting the past, most especially a violent and/or traumatic one. From a hauntological perspective (Good, Chiovenda & Rahimi, 2022; Derrida, 1994) 'ghosts of violence cannot be effaced' (Good, Chiovenda & Rahimi, 2022:448). How in such a context people are willing and able to come to terms with the past is the question: 'Inheritance is never a given, it is always a task' (Derrida, 1994:67) and 'one never inherits without coming to terms with [s'expliquer] with some specter' (1994: 24). Mbembe drawing on Ndebele's 'they are burning memories' (2016:1), provocatively asked, 'what should we do with institutions inherited from a cruel past? Are such institutions "reformable" or should they simply be "decommissioned" or, for that matter, literally burnt down in the hope that from the ashes, something new will eventually emerge?' (Mbembe, 2019:239). The CS exhibition tried to

present alternatives to violence by proposing conversation. In visiting and looking at art and having conversation, the assumption was that people could find healing, and if they did, or at least if they came to acknowledge each other and recognize each other's humanity and dignity, then there would be no need to resort to fire and other violent means.

Coparticipants noted the critical importance of conversation in finding solutions to the 'cruel past'. However, many of them, for example, Kala, N'kgabo, Carla, Furaha, Vuma, and others mentioned several times that such conversations were 'scarce', yet much 'needed'. 'We need to have these difficult conversations to be able to heal' Sharama emphasized in her feedback. There are many areas of interventions which cannot wait for government, business, politics, universities, or any other institutions to do anything without first and foremost the involvement of people themselves. Government, businesses, and institutions can set up activities such as seminars, conferences, festivals, symposiums, competitions, games, charities, and outreach projects, but it is up to individuals, communities, and groups to make these spaces of encounters meaningful. There are many events happening all the time at museums, universities, government spaces, online, and in person. Sometimes imposing amounts of budgets are spent but with nothing more than just scratching the surface of a complex and contested subject. What the study highlighted for me is the question of how meaningful conversations about the past in the present and related questions and challenges such as healing and preventing further wounding and violence came out as pressing concerns, to take seriously both in abstract and practical terms.

'Galleries like WHAG are part of the collective of institutions and spaces where heritage can be used for dealing with the difficult past and present' Dr Zvaka Ndate argued during the conversations at WHAG. Zylla also emphasized that these institutions and artists can 'play part, bring all the different people together...For me art was like a tool. That was always the thing...I want to use art to change society'. Underlying these thoughts is the assumption that bringing people together, exposing them to information and knowledge, would be enough to lead to some kind of change and possibly to healing. However, the following observations from a young lady, journalist, living and working in Kimberley poses a dilemma and pushes this knowledge to the edge of a big hole.

I transcribed her words and re-arranged them in poetic form to try to capture her rhythm, and allow her words and ideas to rhyme. By doing this I hope to highlight some of the key thoughts and emotions she expressed. I see her telling and contesting the idea that information and

exposure to knowledge are enough to bring change or healing. Her words bring back into my memory her bodily expressions. For instance, her sudden laugh over some racist incidents she witnessed, some of which she experienced herself. The pace of her voice becoming faster at times as if she raced with time trying to fit in her story and her time slot as many ideas and details as possible, because this was a 'scarce' opportunity. At the end, the insight I got from her is about a conversation constantly taking shape between past and present, and that ghosts whether we chose to acknowledge them or not, live with us and in us. Another insight from her spoke about the future, pushing me and the audience to go beyond the edges of times (past and present), to keep thinking and rethinking what Derrida (1994) strongly saw as ethics itself, which is 'to learn to live with ghosts' (xvii). Based on her input, I would suggest something that Derrida would probably agree with, that there is no way of finding an exit out of a cruel past that would not involve learning to have conversation with its ghosts.

As the people of today we know about the past
We know what happened
We know that you are not supposed to have that hatred in you for another race
But we still do it
We still do it
I asked to two of my colleagues why do they think we do that
If we know what we came from
If we know what this caused
Why do they think we still have that thing
Of if there is maybe a group of coloured people
Walking pass a group of white people
You would either want to say something
Just to stir up
Or being two different races
There would be that uncomfortableness

One of them said we live in luxury
We live in luxury
Even from what happened in Rwanda
There's so much beauty that can come from tragedy
People don't see it

I mean even with the Apartheid system
In this moment we are supposed to understand
That we came from something terrible
People died
People were taken
Away from their families
You know
We came from something like that
So now we are actually supposed to be closer
To each other and understand humanity
And life
And the way that it works
But we are not doing that
We are still keeping those borders
And those lines
We are still refusing to cross them
And try and see the other person
As a human being.

Thirty years after the end of Apartheid, the ghosts of the past are not yet laid to rest. Kimberley is still generally a segregated place, spatially, socially, economically, and racially. New 'locations' and categories based on 'class', 'literacy', political subjectivities, and affiliations emerge and complicate the already complex context. Poverty, marginalization, corruption, incompetence, high levels of unemployment, criminality, current politics, and inherited legacies of the past mix up together; they play a significant role in shaping expressions of memory, experience, and interpretation of the everyday social context. Meaningful human connections and critical but generative conversations in such a context are very challenging and 'scarce'. The Post-Apartheid condition, as viewed through CS, is a very contested, fractured, and wounded terrain as evidenced by interpretations – stories, testimonies, assessments, and perceptions – from the coparticipants.

Alongside contested histories and present challenges that make any form of engagement difficult, the economic factor influences not just the interpretations of historical and contemporary violence and economic progress made since the end of Apartheid, but it also

affects how coparticipants experience and interpret progress in terms of healing since then. The situation seems to be well-captured by Adam Habib's comment made in 2020, saying that 'We live in a toxic, contaminated society... We are an ethically compromised society, partly because our political elite is so ethically compromised and, frankly, our economic elite is not any better' (Fengu, 2020).

CS conversations, for example the one centred on Reshada Crouse's *Rian Malan* presented in Chapter Six, which despite the difficult and divergent emotional and intellectual responses, ended with some coparticipants expressing some shifts in their initial perceptions and interpretations, was a kind of a breakthrough. It was an *Exit-Opening*. In the conversation, coparticipants engaged across these complex social, economic, racial, and other challenges. I take it as an example of an *Exit-Opening* because it helped open a possibility for coparticipants to see what else that context could become. The same space described as 'trapped', 'colonial', and 'violent', helped to see and get a sense of a possibility beyond it. This possibility was visible at different levels. For instance, holding the conversations despite existing divisions, memories of violence and hurt. Coming and staying together in the difficult conversation was the first step towards imagining and possibly building a new sense of belonging and community (Anderson, 1991[1983]).

Thinking about *Exit-Opening* requires considering some of the insights that emerged from previous chapters, such as the need for and importance of having difficult conversations, acknowledging and incorporating a hot interpretive approach (Uzzell & Ballantyne, 2007) in these conversations, embracing and engaging, not repressing spaces and voices of contestation, and most of all engaging in building a *fuller story*. Had I not walked and run in Greenpoint, I would have never had a glimpse into another side of people living there, and their place and their stories. The not-so-dignified conditions, such as dumps, dark smelly potholes, and broken sewages, cast a dark shadow on Mandela's covenant based on the inalienability of 'human dignity' and tied to the 'healing of wounds' from the past; access to better health, education, housing, economy; Black and white walking tall without fear. All coparticipants engaged in the study have a sense of agency. It is visible in the fact that they generated knowledge which is shared here. It is manifest in their debates and willingness to grapple with difficult questions and emotions searching for the meaning of contestation, contributing to the understanding of CS, being passionate about understanding and contributing to healing. It is present in their naming not just of the CS, but also of the challenges, the mental and physical deteriorations they witnessed or experienced in the exhibition and beyond, in their social spaces. I

experienced it seeing them walking, bending, sitting down, singing, dancing, making, and looking at art, looking at themselves and ‘Others’, some of them doing such difficult and in-depth work together for the first time.⁴⁷

Their world of CS, like any world of other residents in Kimberley, is entangled with layered dynamics, historical and contemporary, which pose challenges to their attempts at freeing their humanity, or to use a beautifully evocative phrase from Ndebele, ‘to free the human from the historical distortions of race’ (2016:109) and other historically Othering definitions. How humanity was defined and denied by colonial ordering is the central point of contestation in CS. The definition and treatment of the colonized as ‘lesser than human beings’, the denial of their humanity and dignity, has been the root cause of major contestations historically, peaceful as well as violent. Contestation is a deeply embodied social phenomenon tied to the politics of recognition and belonging, and how these politics speak back to a resilient colonial hierarchical ordering. How humanity and dignity are denied or affirmed by material, mental, and political conditions in CS, plays a significant role as to whether the journey of reclamation and healing becomes one of *entrapment*, *resistance*, or *flow*. Based on the insights from this dissertation, and in light of my observations and available contributions from most of the coparticipants who describe and associated the CS exhibition with the feeling of being ‘trapped’, I propose to understand contestation in this specific context as a struggle over the meaning of violence from the past in the present and how this meaning closes or opens up possibilities for an *Exit-Opening*. In the context of enduring violence and hurting, what I call *Exit-Opening*, is that which opens a possibility to see what else that context could become.

⁴⁷ I keep a moving memory of Joy Furaha telling Fiona Barbour that she wished she had heard her and other white people sharing personal experiences like she did at one of the seminars.

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Appendix 1. Contested Spaces exhibition: Select artworks from the catalogue



Our nation has been formed on the anvil of war. In our relatively short history our country has experienced turbulent conflict after conflict. Peoples have been scattered, oppressed, and vast areas devastated. Kingdoms and empires have been formed and have disappeared, leaving our people with a complex and diverse heritage.

The accounts of those early battles and struggles are to be found in the oral traditions of our peoples or have been recorded in books, writings and pictures. Some have been vividly recorded in rock paintings to be found throughout the country. In later years there appeared a school of military or war artists who have carried their brushes and paints into the fields of battle to capture the images of war on canvas or on any other material available.

Maj Gen P Pretorius

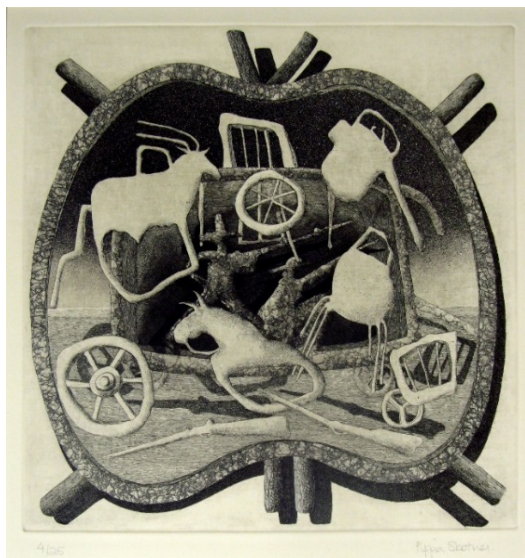
SA National Museum of Military History: Director

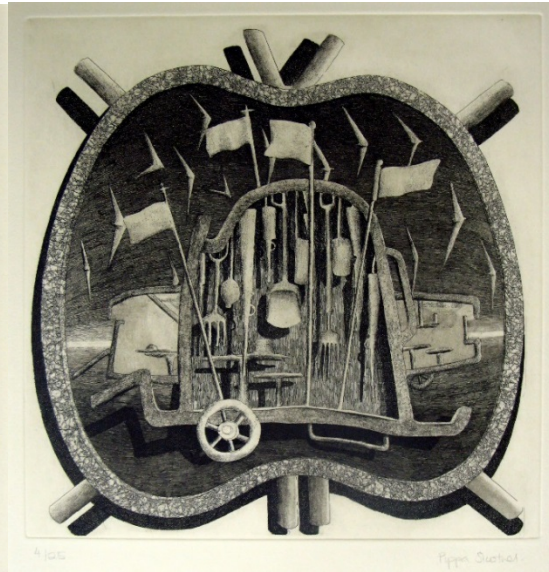
The word, *kaffir*, is derived from the Arabic word, *kāfir* (كافر). The translation of the word generally means “non-believer”, with the word originally applying to any non-Muslim person. *Kaffir* would therefore have applied to non-Muslim black peoples who were encountered along the Swahili coast by Arab traders. As a pre-Islamic term, the word, *kāfir*, is the active participle of the Semitic root K-F-R, meaning either “to cover” or “a non-believer”. It was initially used to describe farmers burying seed in the ground, who “covered” the seeds with soil while planting. Thus, the alternate meaning, “non-believer”, refers to a person who rejects Islamic faith, or “covers [viz., the truth]”. From the 17th century up until the early 20th century, *kaffir*, was adopted by several languages such as English, Dutch and Afrikaans, and so underwent a number of variations. In Portuguese, French and Spanish, the variant, *cafre*, was used. In the context of South African apartheid history, the word is associated with a particularly violent racial slur. In Afrikaans, the term is more commonly spelled *kaffer*.

Skotnes, Pippa (1957 -)
White wagons - Portfolio of 7 etchings

Etching

2126





Text was collected at the beginning of the 20th Century by an Irish Presbyterian missionary, from the Hietshware Bushmen of the Eastern Kalahari. It tells of the impression made on the Hietshware by the first appearance in their country of the wagons of the Trek Boers. The text describes the incomprehension of the people and their experience of aggression when they came directly into contact with the Trek Boers themselves. The Trek Boers were desperate to reach Lake Ngami but many of them and their oxen died of thirst and sickness before they could get there. Others were killed by the Bechuanas who also took their women. In the end, as the unknown narrator put it, "The wagons died on the veld".

Adapted from *In the Wake of the White Wagons*, Pippa Skotnes.

Westbrook, Walter (1921 - 2015)

1986

Oil on canvas on panel

2822



Bester, Willie (1956 -)
Dogs of War III (2001)
Sculpture of metal with found objects)
Various mediums
3526

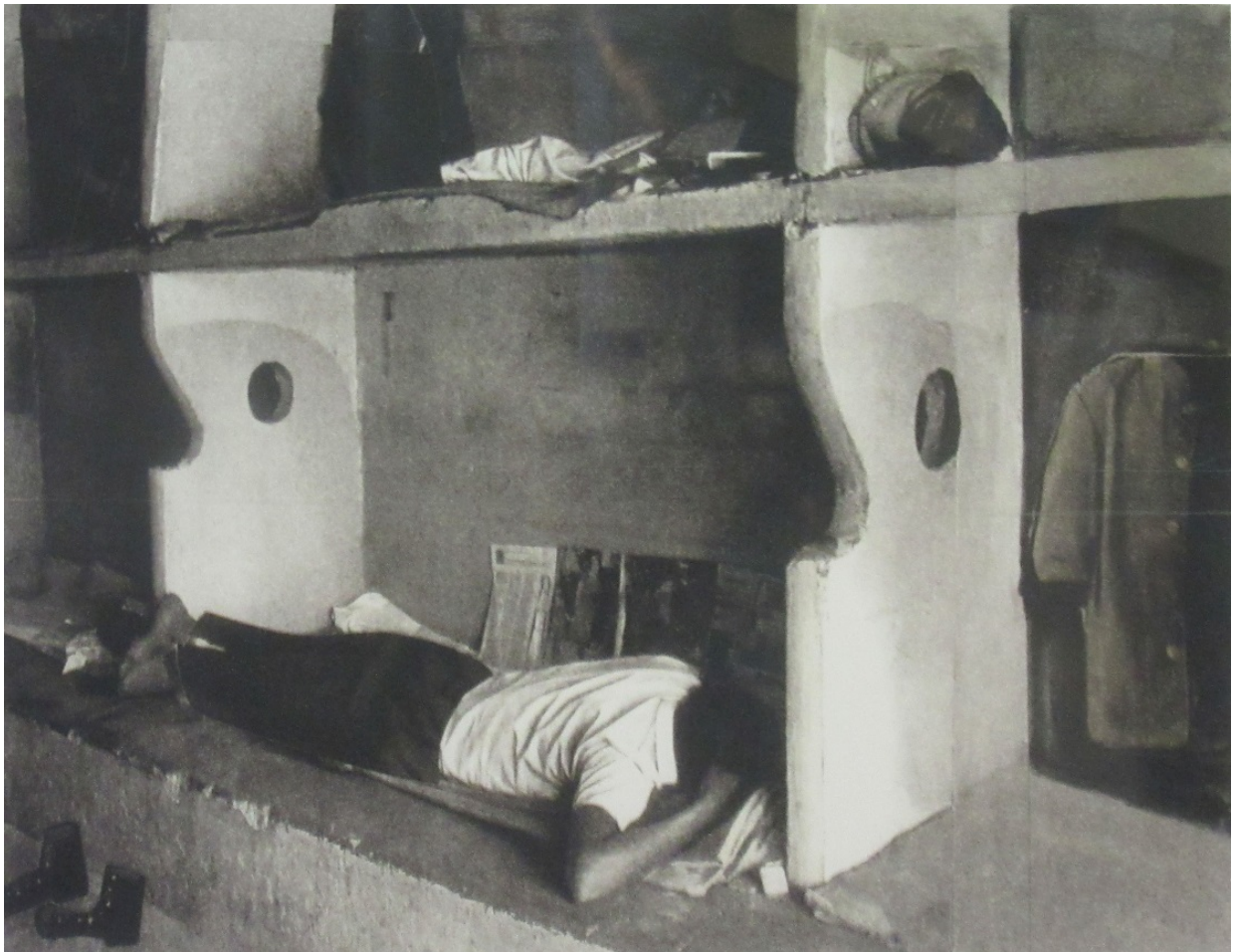


Nhlengethwa, Sam (1955 -)

A Tired Miner

Lithograph

3559



Nhlengethwa, Sam (1955 -)

Humiliation

Lithograph

3560



Crossley, Liz
When People run like buck I
Mixed media
3721



Crossley, Liz
When People run like buck II
Mixed media
3722



Crossley, Liz
When People run like buck III
Mixed media
3723



Crossley, Liz
When People run like buck IV
Mixed media
3724



When I pulled the *Guardian Weekly* out of the mail box in Berlin in 1992 and saw the image of ANC supporters fleeing before the bullets of the Ciskei homeland guards, I was riveted to the spot. At a time when one had really begun to hope for real change, there again were people being forced to flee for their lives. As I slowly mounted the stairs to my studio, the figures in the back drew my attention more and more. I started drawing and re-drawing these figures, echoing the way in which San artists had depicted human and animal figures in motion. I grounded A4 sheets of paper with acrylic and started working up the layers of paint, rubbed pigment into the ground, added pastel and oil stick. A series of over 40, which were exhibited as a block in Bonn and Berlin, plus a two-metre by three-metre piece on paper and a series of five pieces on paper (100 x 70 cm) resulted over a period of months. The theme of flight and survival has remained with me. *Here I stand* (derived from a quote from Martin Luther King) shows the feet of people applying for refugee status standing, not running, demanding their right to a refuge. One of these works is part of a portfolio, *Home/Homeless*, created by foreign women artists and presented to the Berlin Senate by the Villa Oppenheim. At present I am developing ideas for an artwork on refugees. It seems to me that people have always moved and will always move. Very often the only way to survive is to flee. If one looks back into one's own family line, the theme is there, for all of us. If we happen at present to be in the happy position of being in a place in which we feel safe and not forced to move on, we should not forget those who are in need of refuge now. There is room for all of us.

Liz Crossley, 2007



Zylla, Manfred (1939 -)

Bullets and Sweets

Mixed media

3842



Clarke, Peter (1929 - 2014)

For some the pathway to education lies between thorns

Linocut

4071



Clarke, Peter (1929 - 2014)

Africa, which way?

Mixed media

4072



Delporte, Wilfred (1937 -)

Open Hearts and Doors '76

Screenprint

4368



Phokela, Johannes

Assimilation is Inevitable

Oil on canvas

4620



Zylla, Manfred (1939 -)

Composition Baby II

Etching

4659



Zylla, Manfred (1939 -)

Composition Baby III

Etching

4660



Van Bosch, Cobus (1962 -)

Lonmin mine

Oil on canvas

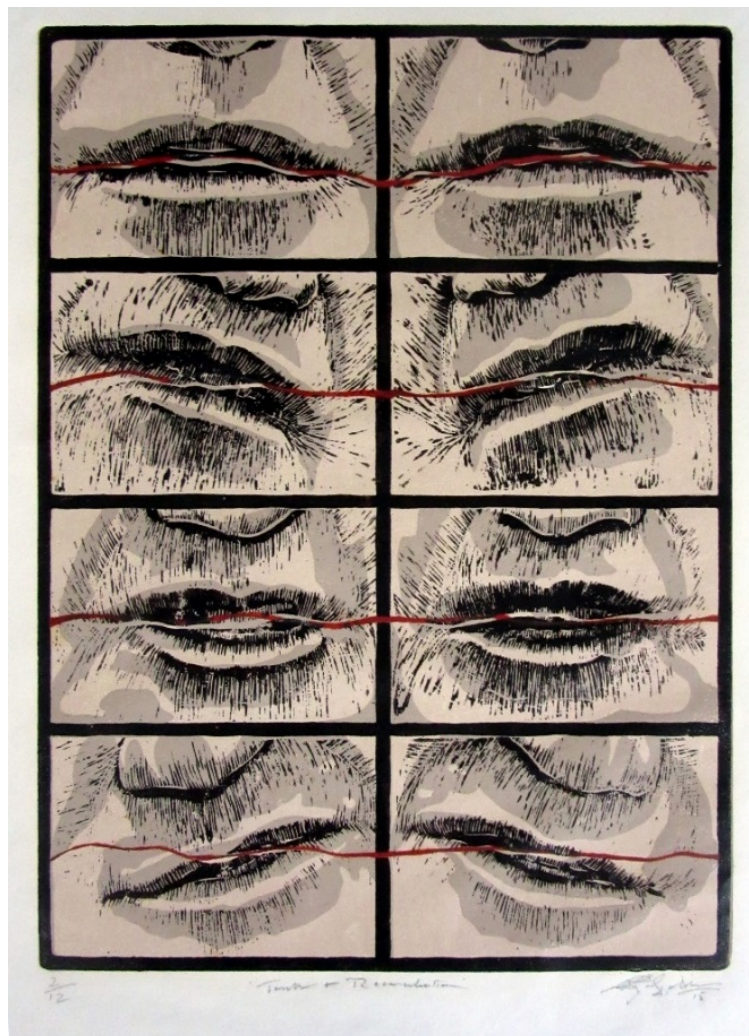
4890



Coutouvidis, George
The Raft of no return
Oil on canvas on board
4929



Grobler, Alan
Truth and Reconciliation
Woodcut
5186

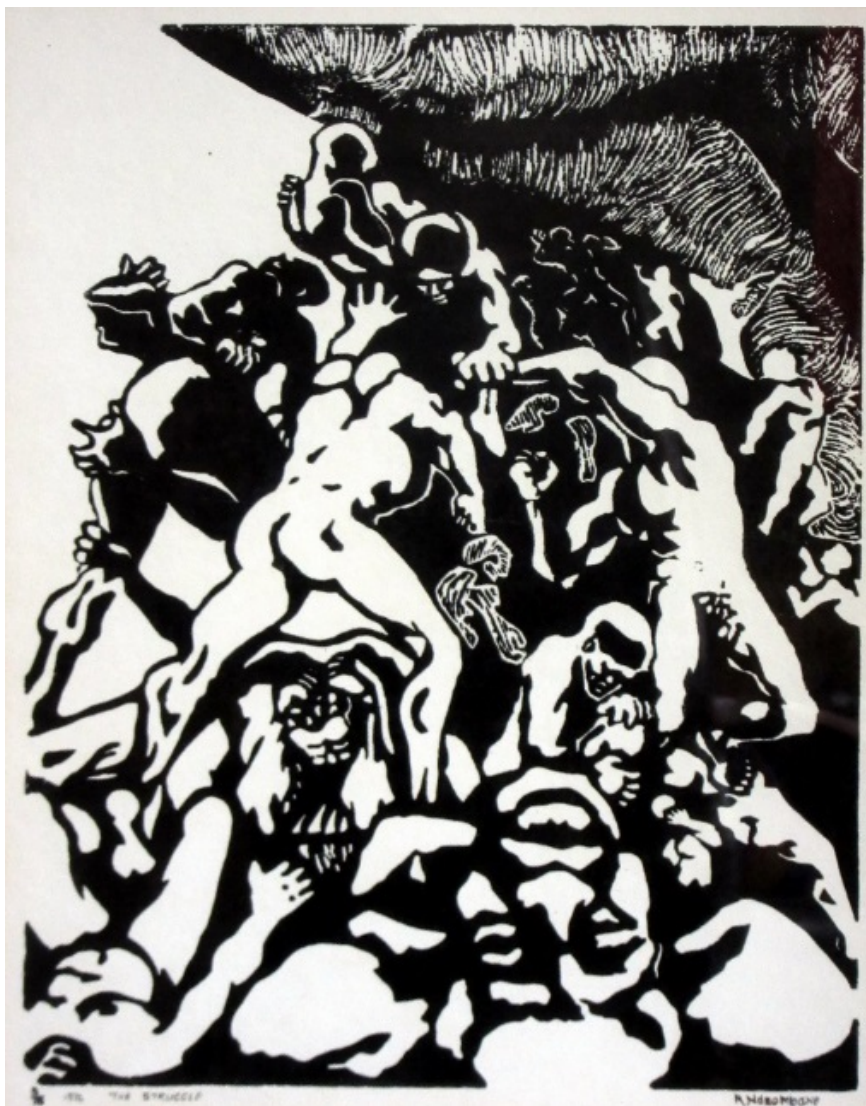


Ndzombane, Ronnie (1945 -)

The struggle

Linocut

5191



Grobler, Alan
Archbishop Desmond Tutu
Linocut
5304



McLean, Diane (1963 -)
Knowledge and the Ship of Fools
Oil on canvas
5332



Momberg, Anton (1951 -)

Sol Plaatje

Bronze

5167

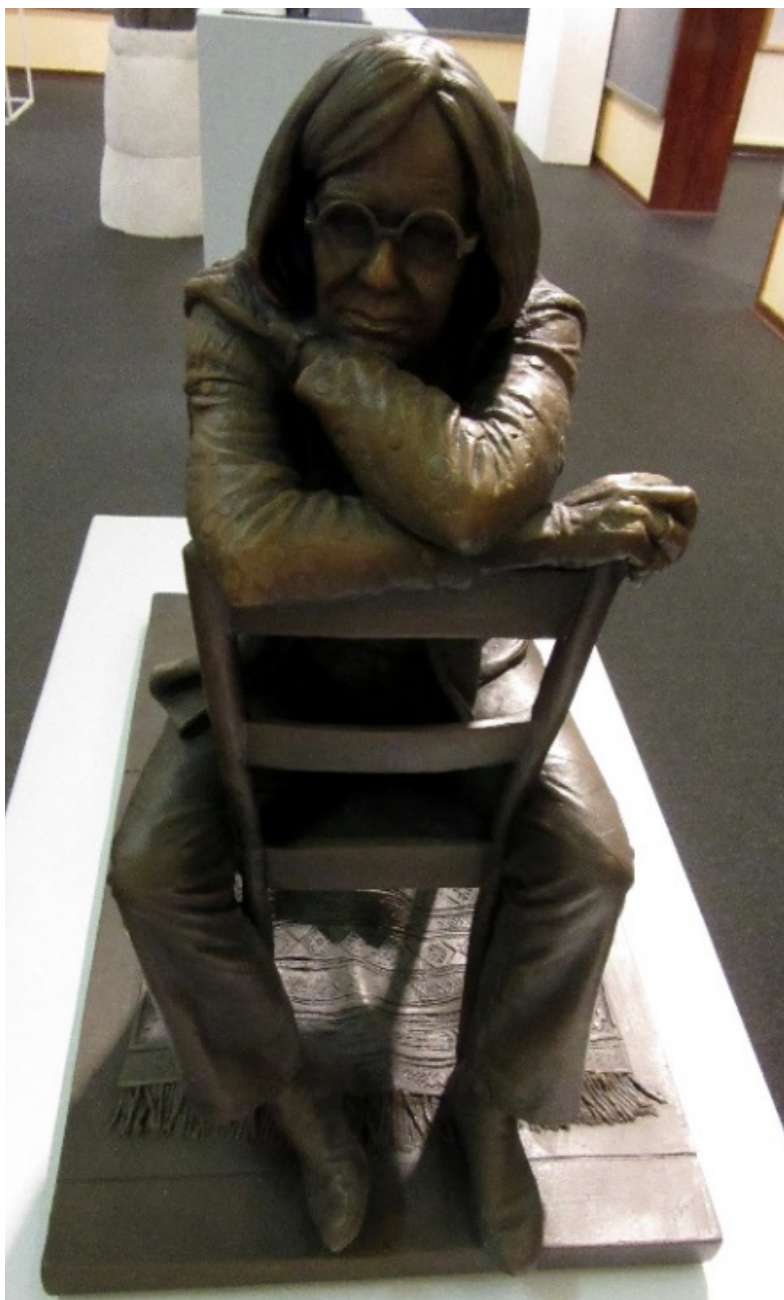


Taylor, Angus (1970 -)

Portrait of Antjie Krog

Bronze

5277



Watson, Lynnley (1951 -)
Adelaide Myeke - The Nanny

Stoneware

4463



LYNNLEY WATSON

Watson studied Fine Art Painting and Ceramics in the 70's.

She has a National Teacher's Fine arts diploma, and Ceramics Diploma (cum laude). After her Fine Arts Diploma she worked in various studios in London and Italy before returning to South Africa to pursue her career in ceramics.

Watson has won many awards, and has exhibited nationally and internationally. She was a finalist in the Nelson Mandela Municipality Art Museum Biennale in 2006. Her work is in private and public collections locally and abroad.

In her figurative sculptures social concerns permeate. These reveal a particular pathos, celebrating the lives of impoverished women who, against all odds, have contributed to society. She recently completed a commission for the Sunday Times, honouring the prophetess Nontetha and has also interpreted Nongqawuse of the Cattle Killing episode.

Her large figure sculptures were selected for the Keble Art Award 2003, 4 and 5. "The Nanny" and "The Embroiderer" were entered in 2005 under the title "Disappearing Icon and Emerging Icon"

"Nannies in South Africa formed the backbone of society, especially in the period in which I grew up when there were no day care centres and after care facilities.

"The Nanny" is my response to the fact that these women gave up their time with their own children in order to bring up the children of their white employees. This in turn led to a fracturing of their relationships with their own partners and their children. To exacerbate this they often received little recognition or thanks for this service.

I asked Adelaide, (a domestic worker who had worked for a neighbour for many years) to pose for me as she epitomized the idea that I had of a nanny. I feel there is such forbearance and resignation in the stance and expression of her face.

I was brought up on a farm in the Transkei and had nannies to care for me. The fact that I do not remember them consciously makes me feel sad, and making the sculpture acknowledges them too."

Appendix 2. Depression costs SA over R 230 billion

NEWS

TUESDAY OCTOBER 10 2017

PAGE 5
DIAMOND FIELDS ADVERTISER

DEPRESSION

costs SA over R230 billion

ANA CORRESPONDENT

DEPRESSION costs South Africa more than R232 billion or 5.7% of GDP due to lost productivity either due to absence from work or attending work while unwell, the London School of Economics and Political Science 2016 IDEA study has found, the Psychiatry Management Group (PsychMG) said.

In a statement ahead of World Mental Health Day today – focusing this year on mental health in the workplace – PsychMG chairperson Dr Sebolelo Seape said organisations and individuals alike needed to be more aware of the reality and impact that mental health had on the workplace.

"With more than 9.7% of the South African population (or 4.5 million people) suffering from depression, the chances are quite real that the person sitting next to you in the office is at some stage in their lives of coping with the condition.

"It's not only the duty of the individuals suffering from mental health issues but also organisations and colleagues to fight the stigma associated (with it)," Seape said.

Depression had a significant impact on productivity which in turn aggravated the resulting problems at work and the relationship with colleagues and line-managers.

"Depression causes problems with memory, procrastination, extreme fatigue, difficulty concentrating, anxiety, fear, and panic which will add to work-related stresses, crippling the output of the employee."

Seape said the cost of presenteeism – those being at work while suffering from depression – had the most significant impact and equated to a loss of 4.23% of the

country's GDP, and based on a world-wide study, the proportion lost to GDP was the highest in the world.

"In South Africa, employees are very likely to keep working during periods of depression, impacting their productivity and performance at work.

"This can be due to fear of losing their jobs, being ostracised from colleagues, or lack of mental health knowledge, not understanding why they are going through a spell of periods of not being well.

Taking a few days off but then only sitting at home doing nothing would not help one to cope when one returned to work.

"Although depression (except in severe, chronic, and debilitating cases) is not a disability, it can cause impairment at work and have an impact on daily life, from sleeping to work, concentrating, regulating emotions, or caring for oneself and needs to be addressed via the correct channels," Seape said.

"You need to work together with your medical doctor and psychia-

trist to determine the best treatment and how to manage your time off, special needs required at work, or flexible working hours. By discussing the issues with your line-manager or human resources department and finding out the options available to you might alleviate a lot of the anxiety associated with depression while working.

"You can't expect the person suffering from depression to be the only one to be held accountable.

"The onus is on both the employee by seeking help, discussing with line-manager or HR or dedicated mental health staff member, and compliance with treatment through medication, therapy and life-style changes; and equally on the employer.

The law in South Africa stated that an employee with a mental health condition had a constitutional right to equality, human dignity, reasonable accommodation, and fair labour practice.

An employer could therefore not demote or transfer a person or reduce a salary because of a mental health condition. – ANA

NEWS FLASHES

PROVINCE The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in the Northern Cape, in partnership with various schools and communities in the Province, will embark on a hand washing campaign to celebrate Global Handwashing Day (GHW) on October 15.

The DWS will, from October 13 to 30, conduct public hand washing demonstrations and distribute soap at primary schools and communities with the objective of inculcating the habit of washing hands with soap after using the toilet.

Schools and communities to benefit during the campaign include DuToitspan School in Kimberley, Badihile in Joe Morolong, Danielskuil, Groen Water in Warrenton, Vlugfontein and Victoria Wes primary schools among others.

"According to research done by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, if everyone routinely washed their hands, a million deaths a year could be prevented. It is also estimated that washing hands with soap and water could reduce diarrhoeal disease associated deaths by up to 50 percent," department spokesperson, Amogelang Moholoeng, said.

KIMBERLEY Electricity supply will be disrupted in several areas in the city this week as the Sol Plaatje Municipality conducts essential transformer maintenance. Municipal spokesperson, Sello Matsie, said that work on transformers would start at 8am and continue to 4pm each day.

"However, the supply interruption to the various affected areas is expected to last for about two hours."

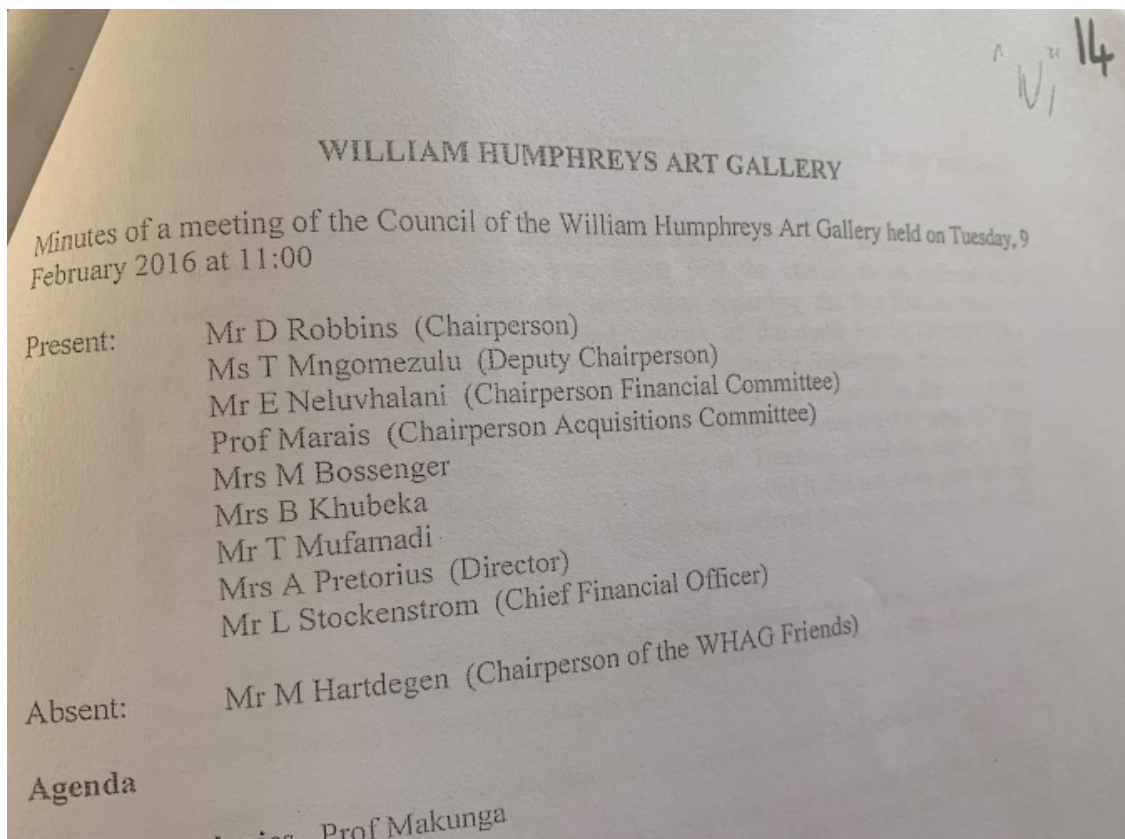
The interruptions will be limited to the specific areas mentioned:
Today: Gogga Pump Station Number 1 and Number 2, affecting Keslamang Street and the surrounding area in Galeshewe;
Tomorrow: Northlathia Street in Galeshewe and the KSOK Substation in Galeshewe;
Thursday: Olympia Street in Herlear, Freeman Place in Beaconsfield and Graham Eden Street in Klisserville;
Friday: Ons Huis Old Age Home, McGregor Museum in Belgravia and Boys' High School.

Matsie warned that all electricity appliances must be treated as "live" at all times, because the supply can be restored at any time.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

WINNERS: Stephnie Honiball (right), from Xpanda, is seen here handing over the prize to Mr and Mrs Namukolo, the winners of the Xpanda Getaway weekend at the Mattanu Private Game Reserve.

Appendix 3. WHAG Council's minutes: 9 February 2016



10.0 General

10.1 Residency: Theogene Niwenshuti

The Chairperson informed Council that the Director had been approached by an Academic from the University of Johannesburg regarding a PhD student currently registering at UFS in Bloemfontein. This approach had been made as a result of the reputation WHAG had gained regarding the residency of Dumisani Mabaso. Essentially the request was that the student be permitted to reside in the SguzuWHAG facility and perform certain functions for WHAG in lieu of rent. The Chairperson had met with the UJ Professor and Theogene (Totto) Niwenshuti and had been impressed by the quality and education of Totto and saw many ways in which Totto would be able to facilitate dialogue around issues such as racism, xenophobia and genocide which were all current causes for concern in our country. This could even be in collaboration with the Sol Plaatje University. Council

Appendix 4. Ann Pretorius: Curatorial statement

CONTESTED SPACES: A permanent exhibition from the WHAG collection dedicated to the struggle — lest we forget

During the past 15 years the transformation of the WHAG permanent collection was the most important strategic objective and the successful achievement of this objective has seen artworks purchased which deal very specifically with the advent of colonisation, the eventual rise of Apartheid and oppression of the indigenous peoples, and the struggle to regain their independence in a free and fair society. Interestingly, these artworks were made by a broad spectrum of artists across all racial groups. At the time the state censors and security police did not possess the visual vocabulary or visual literacy to understand the underlying protest statements and time has proven that these artworks were an incredibly powerful revolutionary tool for change. This objective of purchasing appropriate artworks is not an easy quick fix matter and unfortunately in an environment where the art market has boomed many of these artworks have become out of the reach of public collections and as a result there have been many disappointments. However, many black artists not previously represented in the collection have been purchased and seminal works have been added that articulate the injustices of our past and speak more eloquently than words in history books or political speeches.

These artworks curated into a permanent exhibition in a dedicated exhibition wing would contribute in huge measure to many of the current national imperatives such as redress, social cohesion, and the building of a shared national identity. It would commemorate and celebrate those histories that we have in common rather than the ethnic differences that polarise us. In doing so we would build understanding, respect and tolerance for all races which would lead to a natural bonding rather than an artificial regulated quota system. Visual arts, performing arts, poetry and music all possess the same power to affect change and consciously used as a tool for that purpose can contribute to the achievement of many of the current national imperatives.

As a result of the lively schedule of temporary loan exhibition the permanent collection does not rotate as often as one would like and many of these priceless heritage assets remain in

storage for far too long. If a large proportion of these artworks were to be permanently on display the congestion in the storage area would be alleviated to a fair degree and this would minimise the current risk caused by overcrowding.

This exhibition would also serve as a warning not to repeat the mistakes of the past. The very real danger exists that in bunkering memory we forget, and the growing apathy that the young citizenry sometimes shows towards the evils of the past is disturbing. If one were to include some of the disgraced public sculptures of figures such as Verwoerd, Vorster, Botha, and de Klerk alongside struggle heroes a fuller story would emerge. Special attention could be paid to Kimberley struggle heroes such as Sol Plaatje, Robert Sobukwe, Galeshewe, Frances Baard etc. National icon Nelson Mandela would also be included in the exhibit. This juxtapositioning of the powerful personalities that shaped our past would enlighten and encourage ordinary working-class citizens to work towards an inclusive future. It is well researched and documented that all education takes place through the senses and heritage institutions and particularly exhibitions such as the one proposed could be a significant contributory facet of any educational programme.

A liberally illustrated publication or extensive exhibition catalogue would serve many purposes, namely, to celebrate the transformation of a national heritage institution and world class art collection, to generate funds and to be used or emulated as a model for transformation. It would also be an excellent educational tool.

Building a shared national identity

Until we come to terms with our history and reach an understanding of those events that have polarised us as a nation, we will not be able to reach or achieve a shared identity. This exhibition would enable a perspective on our past that would assist dialogue between citizens, and it is in this kind of ‘free space’ that people can communicate normally on a social level.

Where to construct

The WHAG premises are not big enough to accommodate an alteration to the building on the ground level. It would be possible though to raise a second storey on top of what is known as the ‘new wing’, which was constructed in 1988. This would accommodate a large exhibition

and would do justice to the history that needs to be recorded. Part of the improvements could include the renaming of the exhibition wings with appropriate South African artists' names. This would require sizeable capital works funding but would achieve a strategic objective that has as its focus an unambiguous transformation ethic.

This exhibition would become a 'must see' exhibition for international and domestic tourists. It could involve the Sol Plaatje University Heritage Studies students and could also involve a number of interns as a model or case study.

Appendix 5. Ethical clearance



School of African & Gender Studies, Anthropology & Linguistics

Anthropology Section

AC Jordan Building, University Avenue, Upper Campus
Private Bag, Rondebosch 7701, Cape Town, South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 3680
Email: helen.macdonald@uct.ac.za
Internet: www.uct.ac.za

To whom it may concern,

RE: Ethical Clearance for Application Number: EARC2018-10

Théogène Niwenshuti is a PhD student registered at UCT's Anthropology section of the School of African and Gender Studies, Anthropology and Linguistics from 2018 (UCT student number: NWNTH001). The PhD research proposal has been presented to the ethics review committee and was approved.

Please contact me should you require further information.

With best wishes

Signed by candidate

Dr. Helen M. Macdonald

Chair, Ethics in Anthropological Research Committee

21st June 2018

Appendix 6. Survey-questionnaire: A sample

[**CONFIDENTIAL**]

Place:

Date:

Names (optional):

Profession:

Other interests:

How long have you been living in Kimberley ?:

What do the following words mean for you? Please use one word to respond if possible. A metaphor, a proverb or popular saying are also acceptable. Feel free to use any language you want. If you write down something in any language other than English please provide some explanations in English under it. Thanks.

"LISTEN TO YOUR BODY" ?	
--------------------------------	--

MENTAL HEALTH ?	
------------------------	--

ART ?	
--------------	--

HERITAGE ?	
-------------------	--

MACGREGOR MUSEUM ?

CONTESTATION ?

MUSEUM?

DECOLONIZATION ?

ACADEMIA ?

INSTITUTION ?

GOVERNANCE ?

HEALING ?

KIMBERLEY ?

LEADERSHIP?	
--------------------	--

THE ENVIRONMENT AT YOUR INSTITUTION?	
---	--

WILLIAM HUMPHREYS ART GALLERY ?	
--	--

HAVE YOU EVER VISITED ANY MUSEUM(S) OR GALLERY (IES) IN KIMBERLEY? IF YES, PLEASE NAME THEM AND DESCRIBE YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCE	YES	NO
NAMES	DESCRIPTION EXPERIENCES OBSERVATIONS	

Comment:

DO YOU THINK MENTAL HEALTH IS A PROBLEM IN KIMBERLEY ?	YES	NO

Comment:

DO YOU THINK MENTAL HEALTH IS A PROBLEM IN ACADEMIA ?	YES	NO

Comment:

DO YOU THINK MENTAL HEALTH IS A PROBLEM IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS?	YES	NO

Comment:

IS THERE ANY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND LEADERSHIP?	YES	NO

Comment:

IS THERE ANY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE?	YES	NO

Comment:

LIST THE MOST PREVELENT MENTAL HEALTH RELATED ISSUES IN ACADEMIA ?		
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	

	5	

Comment:

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST PREVALENT CAUSES OF MENTAL HEALTH RELATED ISSUES IN ACADEMIA?		
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

Comment:

WHAT STRATEGIES DO YOU USE TO DEAL WITH ANY MENTAL HEALTH RELATED ISSUES YOU MAY FACE IN YOUR WORK IN ACADEMIA?		
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

Comment:

ARE THERE ANY 'AFRICAN-BASED' STRATEGIES, PRACTICES OR TOOLS YOU KNOW THAT MIGHT HELP WITH MENTAL HEALTH IN ACADEMIC CONTEXT ?		
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

Comment:

HOW WOULD A MENTAL HEALTHY ACADEMIA LOOK LIKE?		
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

Comment:

HOW WOULD A MENTAL HEALTHY INSTITUTION / MUSEUM LOOK LIKE?		
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

Comment:

HOW WOULD A MENTAL HEALTHY KIMBERLEY LOOK LIKE?		
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS, COMMENTS, QUESTIONS:

RATING HEALING AND TRANSFORMATION: SOUTH AFRICA

Please rate out of 10. The lowest achievement is 0 and the highest is 10

HEALING ACHIEVED SO FAR IN SOUTH AFRICA?	
--	--

TRANSFORMATION ACHIEVED SO FAR IN SOUTH AFRICA?	
---	--

RATING HEALING AND TRANSFORMATION: KIMBERLEY

HEALING ACHIEVED SO FAR IN KIMBERLEY?	
---------------------------------------	--

TRANSFORMATION ACHIEVED SO FAR IN KIMBERLEY?	
--	--

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS, COMMENTS, QUESTIONS: