UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

THE FUSION OF HORIZONS: INTERPRETING THE ARCHETYPE OF THE RESURRECTION MYTH IN CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART

by

Deléne Human

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS IN FINE ARTS

in the

DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL ARTS

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Celia de Villiers

May 2015

© University of Pretoria

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL ARTS

I (full names) Deléne Human

Student number 04397983

Subject of the work Dissertation for the degree Masters of Arts Fine Arts

Declaration of originality

1. I understand what plagiarism entails and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this dissertation is my own, original work. Where someone else's work was used (whether from a printed source, the internet or any other source) due acknowledgement was given and reference was made according to departmental requirements.
3. I did not make use of another student's previous work and submitted it as my own.
4. I did not allow and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of presenting it as his or her own work.

Signature _____ Date _____

© University of Pretoria

ABSTRACT

The aim of this mini-dissertation is to critically investigate the interpretation of the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art by identifying and analysing selected works by Diane Victor and Christian Boltanski. This is accomplished through acknowledging and briefly referring to the development of the aforementioned archetype and its portrayal in pre-historic and early Christian iconography. The intention is to consider the relevance of such iconography in the current socio-cultural environment. The two artists' fields of reference are worlds apart yet there is some communal significance in their artworks.

Furthermore, this study not only looks at the subject matter used to portray the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art, but also consider the expressive mediums and the site specific exhibition spaces used by the selected artists to enhance the understanding of this myth.

The main premise of this study is to appropriate the theories of Martin Heidegger on finitude, and Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutical phenomenology, with particular reference to his theory concerning the fusion of horizons. The analysis of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual culture critically deliberates not only the artists' intentions, but also the viewers' participation in this issue. This is achieved by considering culture as a signifying system where meanings are created within a given society. The above research serves as a framework for my own art-making.

© University of Pretoria

KEY TERMS

Archetype	ancient structure of understanding present in the collective unconscious
Being-towards-death	understanding the self in relation to death
Dasein	individual understanding of existence (the self) within a specific socio-cultural environment
Finitude	human mortality
Fusion of horizons	point at which understanding occurs
Horizon	understanding within a specific socio-cultural environment of given individual
Intertextuality	the influence of one text upon another
Lebenswelt	socio-cultural circumstance in which an individual understands his world
Monomyth	the narrative describing the journey of the hero
Myth	socially and culturally constructed 'truth'
Ouroboros	mythical snake eating its own tail
Prejudice	pre-conceived understanding and beliefs based on individual background, experiences and upbringing
Resurrection	life after death
Sachen selbst	the essentiality of matters
Sein-zum-Tode	*Being-towards-death*
Sitz-im-Leben	site-in-the-world; situatedness of individual within the world.

© University of Pretoria

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY..... ii
ABSTRACT..... iii
KEY TERMS..... iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS..... v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS……..... vii
LIST OF FIGURES……..... viii
LIST OF APPENDICES……..... xi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION……..... 1
1.1 Background…… 1
1.2 Problem statement…….. 6
1.3 Aims and objectives……..... 7
1.4 Theoretical framework..... 8
1.5 Research methodology…….. 10
1.6 Seminal sources and literature review..... 11
1.7 Overview of chapters…….. 15
1.8 Terminology……..... 16
1.8.1 Semiology..... 16
1.8.2 Myth..... 17
1.8.3 Intertextuality and palimpsest..... 18

CHAPTER TWO: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW – THE ARCHETYPE OF THE RESURRECTION MYTH..... 20
2.1 Tracing the origin of the resurrection myth..……..... 20
2.1.1 Journey of the hero..... 22
2.2 Pagan resurrection myths……. 26
2.3 Resurrection of the moon and sun.....……..... 30
2.4 Synthesis: Pre-historic and Early Christian resurrection symbols and iconography……..... 33

CHAPTER THREE: INTERPRETING THE ARCHETYPE OF THE RESURRECTION MYTH IN CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART……..... 35
3.1 A critical analysis of a contemporary representation of the archetype of the resurrection myth in the work of Christian Boltanski and Diane Victor..... 35
3.2 Artists' historical *Dasein* and *Being-in-the-world* in a contemporary society.. 36
3.3 Fusion of horizons……..... 43
3.3.1 Intentionality of the artist……..... 43
3.3.2 Meaning created through medium……..... 45
3.3.3 Religious symbolism and exhibition space…….. 51
3.4 Eschatology..... 56
3.5 Synthesis and conclusion..... 59

CHAPTER FOUR: ENDBORN……..... 60
4.1 Practice-led research.....…….. 60
4.2 Process..... 61
4.3 Intentionality, medium, exhibition space and subject matter..... 65
4.3.1 Medium 67
4.3.1.1 Bone..... 67
4.3.1.2 Concrete..... 68
4.3.1.3 Glass 69
4.3.2 Exhibition space..... 70
4.3.3 Artworks..... 72
4.3.3.1 *Alles ist lebend tot I, II,* and *III*.....…….. 72

© University of Pretoria

4.3.3.2 *Endborn*..... 75
4.3.3.3 *Oratio de vitae I, II* and *III*..... 77
4.3.3.4 *Scapha*..... 79
4.4 Conclusion 80

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION……..... 81
5.1 Summary of chapters……..... 81
5.2 Conclusion of study……..... 82
5.3 Suggestions for future research…… 85

SOURCES CONSULTED……..... 87

APPENDICES..... 94

© University of Pretoria

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Ms C de Villiers, for her constructive criticism and invaluable guidance throughout the process of this research study. She was always, under all circumstances, willing to help and support me. I appreciate her advice and patience during the course of this study.

I would also like to express my thanks to Diane Victor for her willingness to participate in interviews and provide insight into her artworks. Further artists I would like to acknowledge for their inspiration, motivation and support include Linda Antelme, Albertus van der Westhuizen, Bianca Viljoen, Ciara Struwig, Greg Miller, Ollybogang Djamba and Lwandiso Njara.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family, especially my mother, Ellen, for their understanding, patience and enthusiasm for the duration of my studies.

© University of Pretoria

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1: Amduat: Twelfth hour, [sa]……..... 1

Figure 2: Jonah being tossed overboard, late third century..... 2

Figure 3: Jonah thrown into the water, [sa]……... 2

Figure 4: Jonah in the mouth of the dolphin (fish), third century CE……. 2

Figure 5: Diane Victor, *Scavenger*, 2002……..... 3

Figure 6: Diane Victor, *Sleep No More*, 2012 …….. 3

Figure 7: Christian Boltansi, *Monument: Children of Dijon*, 1986..... 3

Figure 8: Diane Victor, *No man's land,* 2012……..... 9

Figure 9: Re's journey to the Netherworld, 30th Dynasty …… 21

Figure 10: The boatsman, Charon, on his way to the other side of the shore, 500 BC..... 21

Figure 11: Diane Victor, *No Country for Old Women,* 2013…… 22

Figure 12: Diane Victor, *Baited,* 2009.....…….. 23

Figure 13: Diane Victor, *Trojan Days,* 2006.....…….. 24

Figure 14: Diane Victor, *What's Bred in the Bone, Comes Out in the Flesh,* 1995..... 25

Figure 15: Diane Victor, *Going to the Dogs,* 1995.....…… 25

Figure 16: Diane Victor, *Like a Blind Horse,* 2004.....…… 26

Figure 17: Diane Victor, *Upstream,* 2002.....…… 26

Figure 18: Christian Boltanski, *Monument: Children of Dijon*, 1986..... 28

Figure 19: Diane Victor, *Binding*, 2012..... 29

Figure 20: Christian Boltanski, *Theatre d'Ómbres*, 1984..... 30

Figure 21: Dragon-like animal devouring the sun, ca. 20000-10000 BC……..... 30

Figure 22: Heaven goddess Nut curling over earth god Geb, 1000 BC…… 30

Figure 23: Skull of young athlete found with silver coin slipping from his eyes, first century CE..... 32

Figure 24: Model of boat with the sun god Re on its journey through the netherworld, 12th dynasty, 1938-1759 BC……..... 32

Figure 25: Diane Victor, *Lifeboat,* 1986.....…… 33

Figure 26: Christian Boltanski, *Ten photographic Portraits of Christian Boltanski, 1946-1964,* 1979. ……..... 36

© University of Pretoria

Figure 27: Christian Boltanski, *Photo Album of Family D.,* 1971. ……..... 38

Figure 28: Diane Victor, *Adoration of St Eugene,* 1988..... 40

Figure 29: Diane Victor, *101 uses of Electrical Current,* 1989. ……..... 40

Figure 30: Diane Victor, *Inglorious Bastards: study of the four riders- after Dürer*, 2010.. 40

Figure 31: Diane Victor, *Transcend VI,* 2010.....……. 41

Figure 32: Diane Victor, *Minder, Mater, Martyr,* 2004.....…… 47

Figure 33: Diane Victor, *The Eight Marys,* 2004…….. 48

Figure 34: Christian Boltanski, *No Man's Land,* 2010..... …….. 49

Figure 35: Christian Boltanski, *The Library of Hearts,* 2010.....…… 50

Figure 36: Christian Boltanski, *Lessons of Darkness,* 1986……..... 50

Figure 37: Deléne Human, *swallow,* 2010.....…….. 60

Figure 38: Deléne Human, *Alles ist lebend tot III,* 2015…….. 62

Figure 39: Deléne Human, *Alles ist lebend tot I,* 2015……. 62

Figure 40: Bone used in impressions for clay moulds, 2015……..... 62

Figure 41: Bone impressions in clay moulds, 2015. …….....….. 62

Figure 42: Bone impressions in ceramic clay moulds, 2015. ……..... 63

Figure 43: Slumped glass impressions, 2015. ……..... 63

Figure 44: Concrete cast in clay moulds, 2015. ……..... 63

Figure 45: Concrete cast in the process of being cleaned, 2015. …… 63

Figure 46: Ossuaries found at the Fontanelle cemetery in Naples, ca 1647..... 65

Figure 47: Capuchin crypt at the Santa Maria della Concezione, ca 1528..... 66

Figure 48: Deléne Human, *Alles ist lebend tot I, II* and *III,* 2015…… 72

Figure 49: Jerusalem ossuaries, dating ca.first century AD..... 73

Figure 50: Deléne Human, *Alles ist lebend tot II,* 2015…….....…… 73

Figure 51: Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015…….....……..... 75

Figure 52: Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015…….....……..... 76

Figure 53: Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015…….....……..... 76

Figure 54: Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015…….....……..... 76

Figure 55: Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015…….....……..... 77

© University of Pretoria

Figure 56: Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015……..……..... 77

Figure 57: Deléne Human, *Oratio de vitae I, II* and *III,* 2015..... 77

Figure 58: Deléne Human, *Oratio de vitae I,* 2015..... 78

Figure 59: Deléne Human, *Scapha,* 2015..... 79

Figure 56: Deléne Human, *Scapha,* 2015..... 79

© University of Pretoria

LIST OF APPENDICES

Page

Appendix 1: Consent form signed by Diane Victor……..... 94

Appendix 2: Consent form signed by Diane Victor……..... 95

Appendix 3: Consent form signed by Diane Victor……..... 96

Appendix 4: Consent form signed by Diane Victor……..... 97

© University of Pretoria

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Since pre-history the human race has relied on archetypes and myths in order to describe the ineffable and inexpressible. Humankind has made use of fictional and mythological narratives in order to clarify and make meaning of that which is otherwise indescribable. Most of these myths express some form of truth, which is the reason they have survived over centuries (McKenzie 2012:55). In his publication *Time and Narrative* (1984), the phenomenologist Paul Ricoeur (1984:68) infers that symbols, metaphors and myths are "an interplay between creative imagination and reason clarifying the postulate of reference within poetic and narrative discourse".

There are numerous myths depicted in ancient signs, symbols and narratives. Owing to the limited scope of this mini-dissertation, this study investigates the meaning and re-interpretation of only one such a myth in contemporary visual art, namely the myth of the resurrection archetype.

The depiction of life after death has been represented in a variety of ways in many cultures throughout human existence (Steffen 1963:107). Most religions give expression to this myth, especially the relatively young belief system, Christianity. It is a fact that Christianity's use of this myth is not a new phenomenon;[1] the resurrection myth was represented, retold and reinterpreted, even long before the creed of Christianity had been established. Examples of this include the pagan resurrection myths, such the early Egyptian narrative of the dying gods, represented through the sun's journey from birth- morning dawn- to death –nightfall (Figure 1), as described in *Die Nachtfahrt der Sonne* (1995) by Erik Hornung.

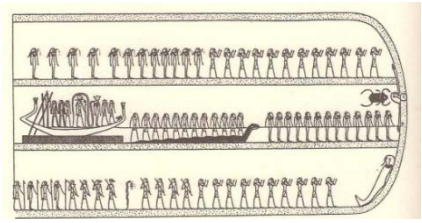

Figure 1:
Amduat: Tweflth hour, [sa].
Illustration of the journey of the sun.
(Hornung 1995:184).

A further example of the representation of the resurrection myth is the ancient Israelite story of Jonah (Jonah 1-4; see also Mathew 12:38; Luke 4:29-32) who, after defying God's wishes to deliver a message to the city of Nineveh, was thrown overboard by heathen sailors, and swallowed by a big fish (Figures 2-4). Because of his rebellion against God, Jonah, similar to many other mythic heroes, had to face death and the netherworld, while he was in the belly of the fish. There are similarities between this Old Testament narrative and the early pagan

[1] I am here specifically referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

© University of Pretoria

resurrection heroes, as well as the resurrection of Christ,[2] which are explored in chapter two of this dissertation. The early resurrection myths were often not only verbally transmitted,[3] but also captured in the form of visual arts and iconographical statements, through motifs on catacombs and sarcophagi. These prominent manifestations of the resurrection myth are still found in contemporary society.

Figure 2:
Jonah being tossed overboard, late third century.
Vatican Museo Pio Cristiano,
Photo: Robin Margaret Jensen.
(Jensen 2000:172).

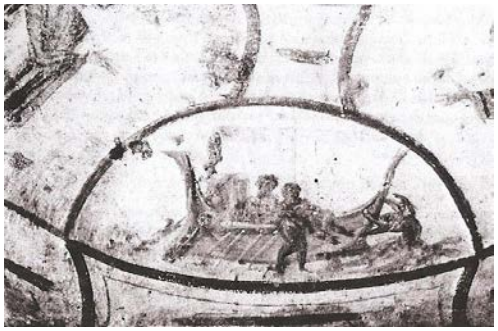

Figure 3:
Jonah thrown into the water, [sa].
Catacomb of Sts Peter and Marcellinus.
Photo: Estelle Brettman.
(Jensen 2000:11).

Variations in the interpretations of this myth are common. Considering, for example, the Jonah narrative, some visual expressions show how Jonah is swallowed by a sea monster, while others depict him being devoured by a dolphin (Figure 4). It is relevant to note that the word dolphin stems from the word *delph*, which means uterus (Steffen 1963:109). Jonah's descend into this 'uterus' and his return from it, can therefore literally be described as a form of resurrection or rebirth.

Figure 4:
Jonah in the mouth of the dolphin (fish), third century CE.
Illustration from the Catacomb of
Sts Peter and Marcellinus.
(Steffen 1963:11).

Each of the various depictions of the myth of resurrection has a distinct meaning or interpretation, which can be confirmed through consulting theories such as those of the Romanian historian and philosopher Mercia Eliade and the Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung,

[2] As explained by South African Theologian and professor in Old Testament studies, Dirk Human (2004:222), the New Testament narrative of Jesus Christ occurred a considerable period after Jonah's lifetime. Hence, it would be unwise to use the Christ narrative as a point of departure for this study.
[3] During prehistoric periods, as is referred to here, very few writing systems had been developed, and thus little written documentations exists which dates back to that time (Adams 2007: 28).

© University of Pretoria

as well as the American mythologist Joseph Campbell, whose interpretations of the 'Mythic Image' is discussed in chapter two. This notion of visually communicating and individually interpreting the resurrection myth is comparable to contemporary artwork of the South African artist Diane Victor, such as *Scavenger,* 2002 (Figure 5) or *Sleep No More*, 2012 (Figure 6) and the French born artist Christian Boltanski, for example his work *Monument: Children of Dijon*,1986 (Figure 7).

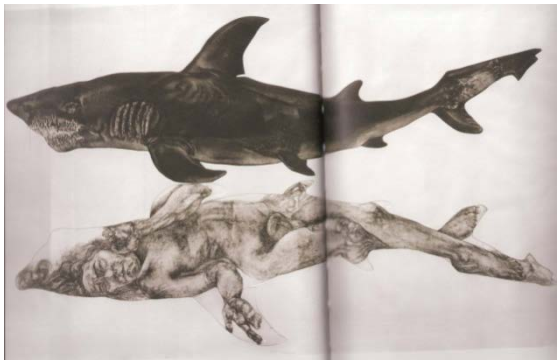

Figure 5:
Diane Victor, *Scavenger*, 2002.
Etching, Aquatint, mezzotint, 100 x 200 cm.
(Von Veh 2008:28-29).

Figure 6 :
Diane Victor, *Sleep No More*, 2012.
Detail: Ash and charcoal drawing, 167 x 259 cm.
Photograph by author.

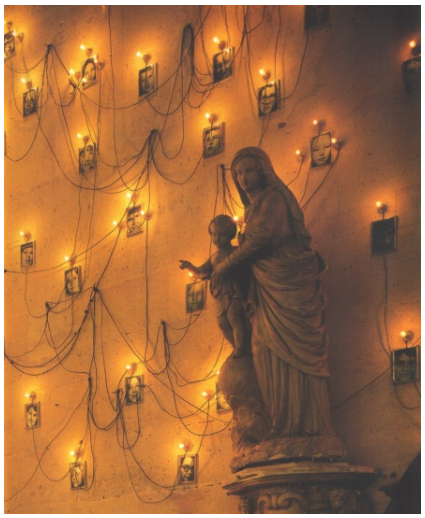

Figure 7:
Christian Boltanski, *Monument: Children of Dijon,*1986.
Installation, Chapelle de la Salpêtrière, Paris.
(Christian Boltanski [sa]:1).

Before interpreting and understanding a contemporary work of art it is helpful for the viewer to possess some frame of reference about the artist and the work, the subject matter, medium or particular exhibition site. The German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1927) referred to this as 'pre-understanding', a concept that was later developed further by German philosopher, Hans- Georg Gadamer (1960), who describes it as 'prejudice'. In *Wahrheid und Methode (*1960) (later translated to *Truth and Method* in 1989), Gadamer (1989:300-306) explains that each person has a background, a history, experiences and belief system, which defines a person's identity. These culturally and socially attributed characteristics cause people to have pre-supposed ideas about almost everything in life. Thus when interpreting a work of art,

© University of Pretoria

these prejudices influence the way people make and perceive meaning. Gadamer (1989:300-306) furthers his theory by explaining that these prejudices do not only reside within the interpreter or viewer, but also within the creator/ artist. In other words, the viewers are each situated in a unique horizon, as is the artist of the work. Understanding and meaning emanates from overlapping horizons, and a fusion of horizons occurs. This concept is clarified by looking at the artwork by Boltanski and Victor.

Christian-Liberté Boltanski was born 6 September 1944 in Paris, France. Growing up during World War II in a very close and over-protective family, Boltanski uses memories, identity and the loss thereof as his main subject matter (Grenier 2010:14; Gumpert 1994:9-15). Boltanski mainly relies on the use of photographs in his works, which are not just images of random people, even though they might seem like this at first. They are in fact black and white photographs of people who are already deceased. Linked to Heidegger's theory of finitude (*Being-towards-death)*, Boltanski's work does not only portray a subject-object relationship, but also a relationship of both the subject and the object with death (Semin 1997:27). Ricoeur (1981:112) explains "phenomenology is always in danger of reducing itself to a transcendental subjectivism". This means that the focus of interpretation should rather move "from the problem of subjectivity to that of the world" (Ricoeur 1981:112), as seen in the interpretation of Boltanski's work.

Parallel to Boltanski, Victor mainly focuses on moral, social and political injustices in her immediate society from which she draws her inspiration. Diane Veronique Victor, born 26 November 1963, approximately twenty years after Boltanski, grew up on a farm in Apartheid South Africa. Similar to Boltanski, Victor's subject matter focuses specifically on identity, loss and socio-cultural injustices. Her works are understood through a contemporary reading of Christian iconography and interpreted in the fragile mediums of smoke, stains, ash and glass. Using printmaking and drawing as her artistic process of choice, Victor attempts to break away from tradition and challenges restrictions and limitations, such as the scale, offered by a conventional printing press (Rankin 2008:4; Victor 2013a). Inventive images and mediums continuously place Victor's work in a new horizon. Her most recent works not only speak of "fragility, transience, liminality, uncertainty, vulnerability, change and loss", as Karen von Veh explains in *Diane Victor: Burning the candle at both ends* (2012), but also forces the viewers to examine their own mortality.

Dying and death is a topic that is rarely discussed in everyday conversations. It is almost as if it is something we are ashamed of, that needs to be hidden away, because it is so appalling. Both Victor and Boltanski remind us of the fact, that we are all going to die, and we need to talk about it. David Loy (1996:57), professor at the Faculty of International Studies at Bunkyo University, Japan, discusses the feeling of mastery over life and death and the embracing of

© University of Pretoria

finitude. Viewing and interpreting artwork representing the archetype of the resurrection myth is one possibility to consolidate the knowledge and understanding of our finitude.

Gadamer (1989:306) indicates that the interpreters'/viewers' horizons are constantly shifting. Because change continuously occurs, repeated testing of prejudices is necessary. This is also true for the two selected artists, Boltanski and Victor, as they are both still alive. Placing their creative outputs in a static horizon, when interpreting their works, thus becomes problematic. Gadamer's hermeneutical phenomenology, which is an interpretative approach, supports this investigation in establishing how contemporary artworks can be understood and evaluated with regard to historical resurrection myths, by considering both the artist and the viewer.

In order to comprehend Gadamer's applications of hermeneutical phenomenology, it is important to understand the philosophical development of phenomenological hermeneutics. Due to the limited scope of this study an in depth analysis is not possible, but for the purpose of my premise it is vital to comprehend Heidegger's writings and influences on Gadamer. In *Sein und Zeit* (1927) (later translated to *Being and Time* in 1962), Heidegger aims to "call the whole Western metaphysical tradition into question", by explicating that *Being* does not only refer to one's own ideology, but instead focuses on a complete historicality and temporality of *Being-in-the-world* (Palmer 1969:124-125). In other words, the interpretation of a text (written or pictorial) relies on the lived experiences of the interpreter. Gadamer (1989:xxxi) agrees with the above, but elucidates that it is not only the *Lebenswelt* (life-world) or *Sitz-im-Leben* (site-in-the-world) of the interpreter that needs to be taken into consideration, but also that of the creator/ artist.

This study thus considers it essential to take the background of the aforementioned selected artists into consideration when comparing their works, especially looking at the way in which both keep their background somewhat private. Victor (2013a) supposes that art should speak for itself, and not be influenced by the intentionality or narrative created by the artist. Boltanski's childhood is completely fictitious and constitutes stories, which he has created and re-told over the years (Grenier 2010:5-19). Thus, when incorporating Gadamer's hermeneutical approach, there seems to be a conundrum: it becomes unclear whether the meanings transmitted to the viewers by these artists, are in fact 'true', since Boltanski invents his background and experiences, while Victor tries to conceal hers. However, they both represent a communal platform – Victor through dealing with South African, feminist and gender politics[4] and Boltanski through dealing with the death of particular groups and communities of people. Owing to this complexity, it is thus possible to say that the artists are

[4] Victor (2015) does not consider herself a feminist. However, her work continuously references the role of women in a contemporary society.

© University of Pretoria

fusing horizons themselves, which causes once again a shifting of horizons to occur. Meanings created are therefore not only dependant on a fusion of the artist's and viewer's horizons, but instead on multiple horizons of both the artist and viewer and often the curators, which are constantly shifting.

1.2 Problem statement

Dermot Moran (2000:224), professor of Philosophy at the University College Dublin, explains that "human existence is pre-occupied with meaning". In a society where war, criminal violence, injustice, illness, abuse, pain, torment, and natural disasters serve as the reminders of death, meaning and hope seems to evade this species in search of life. In various ways (art-making included) humankind attempts to deal with the inevitability of death. This notion is validated by Heidegger (1962:296-311) who exerts that it is necessary for humans to embrace their finitude, in order to have meaningful experiences in life and therefore attain "freedom towards death" (Heidegger 1962:311). However, contemporary societies live in a death denying culture. Moran (2000:226), clarifies this in the following manner:

> Death, for instance, is a feature of factical life, but one which gets covered up in our everyday "world-laden-concerns". Nevertheless, death is also the phenomenon which makes the *temporality (Zeitlichkeit)* of our human existence manifest to us...making one's individual life fully one's own.

Heidegger (1962:47, 238, 282) realises that every action, and the meanings of those actions, are influenced by our *Sein-zum-Tode* (Being-towards-death). The very action of death can only be authentically experienced by ourselves, and thus the death or pending death of others can never be experienced in the truest sense. Similar to my own body of work, discussed in chapter four, as well as the exhibition catalogue, the works created by the two selected artists, are questioned in terms of whether it is the artist's own imminent death or the death of others that they attempt to deal with. This is done by implementing the resurrection myth in various ways, while simultaneously posing these questions to the viewers. As seen in examples throughout this dissertation, both Victor and Boltanski predominantly make use of portraits of the human figure in their works. This study aims to illustrate that this reflects the artists' own *Dasein* as *Being-in-the-world*, as described by Heidegger (1962:23-29). As aforementioned, Heidegger (1962:296-311) exerts that it is necessary for humans to embrace their *Being-towards-death* and make peace with the fact that they are mortal, in order to have meaningful experiences in life. Heidegger (1962:304) infers that "authentic Being-towards-death signifies an existential possibility of *Dasein*". In other words, the human understanding of existing and being alive, can only be validated if humans accept that death is unavoidable. Therefore, the concept of rebirth becomes relevant when investigating these two artists' *Being-in-the-world* and their *Being-towards-death* in the way in which they attempt to give new life, and therefore new meaning to certain elements within their works.

© University of Pretoria

Focusing on the artists, this study argues that, because of each *Being's* realisation of the inevitability of death, humans need to find a way to understand and accept their own mortality. By employing Heidegger's theories on finitude, I argue that both selected artists', as well as my own artworks are driven by the desire to derive meaning of death, and what happens thereafter. As mentioned above, Loy (1996:57) agrees that humans need to find a way to deal with death. He (Loy 1996:52) expands by confirming that "the best we can hope for is to integrate a little more of death into our lives to learn to cope a little more with anxiety, and in that way become a little more aware of our transferences, so we choose less dangerous illusions". In this study I investigate whether and how this is relevant to the depiction of resurrection myths as implemented by the selected artists.

Therefore, this research does not only have significance for the contemporary art society, but also for the culture of our time, especially South Africa, where we deal with death on various levels on a daily basis. The inevitability of human death is something we all wish to ignore. On multiple levels however, this study draws the attention back to the harsh reality of human mortality.

1.3 Aims and objectives

This study is mainly exploratory and investigative. It focuses on interpreting the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual culture with the main premise of employing theories of Heidegger on finitude and Gadamer on hermeneutical phenomenology. Gadamer's theory concerning the fusion of horizons is incorporated when decisively analysing artwork of contemporary visual culture.

The aim of this study is to critically investigate and compare two contemporary visual artists, namely South African artist Diane Victor and French born artist Christian Boltanski, and their artwork. Not only is there an analysis of the occurrence of the archetype of the resurrection myth within their subject matter, but also the relationship of the use of medium and exhibition space is investigated as an important influence on the interpretation of their work. I have specifically selected a national and international artist, in order to deploy hermeneutical aspects of the various interpretations in the consideration of the societal, cultural and personal experiences and influences of the respective artists.

The strategy of this study is to compare resurrection symbols and myths of pre-historic and the early Christian era to that of symbolism found within the works of the two selected contemporary artists. Consequently, the main objective of this research paper is to investigate and answer the research question concerning the meanings of symbols and how they have changed over time, and question their continued relevance in a changing environment, such as the diverse backgrounds and shared consciousness (horizons) of the contemporary

© University of Pretoria

viewers (and curators[5]). The analysis of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual culture thus not only critically investigates the artist's intentions, but also the viewer's participation, by considering "culture as a signifying system" that consists of a network of shared and contested meanings, which are created within the given society (Storey 2010:1).

Moran (2000:267) asserts that in *Truth and Method* (1989) Gadamer basically "raises the question of what it means to live in a culture and tradition, to appropriate it, to preserve and transform it, to live within it, and to allow it to carry us along". Considering this description, and placing Heidegger's phenomenological *Dasein* and our attitude towards finitude parallel to it, the secondary argument of this research is to acknowledge the validity of these theories for certain situations, while simultaneously questioning their validity in others. When interpreting the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art, all of these theoretical aspects are intended to serve as a framing document for the artworks created towards my Masters of Arts degree.

1.4 Theoretical framework

This study is situated within the theoretical frameworks of a hermeneutical and phenomenological approach, with clear reference to finitude and the fusion of horizons. The role of these theories are debated in the creation of meaning and understanding, in individual experiences and interpretations perceived in the contemporary artworks by the selected artists. It is therefore crucial that this study follows a literature based practice led research approach**.**

Hermeneutic aspects of this study include not only the intentions, prejudices and situatedness of the artists, which are incorporated in the interpretive philosophies introduced by Gadamer (1960; 1989), but as aforementioned takes into consideration the social circumstances and cultural environment in which contemporary viewers find themselves. Therefore, the viewer's phenomenological *Dasein* and *Being-in-the-world*, as described by Heidegger (1927; 1962), forms part of this research.

In *Being and Time* (1962), which serves as one of the primary sources, Heidegger examines the problem of *Being.* Heidegger (1962:80) explains his phenomenology of *Being*, as "the formal existential expression for the *Being of Dasein*, which has *Being-in-the-world* as its essential state". Moran (2000:222) clarifies this by elucidating that *Being* can be understood through a "transcendental phenomenological description of the essential structure of human existence, *Dasein,* and an appreciation of the temporal, cultural, and the dispersed nature of human historicality". It is important to note, that for both Heidegger and Gadamer, their philosophies are about *die Sachen selbst* (the actuality of matters themselves) (Heidegger

[5] Because of the limited scope of this research paper, there is not an in depth discussion on the role of the curator in this process. It is however, important to note that the curator adds a new dimension and further complexity to this conundrum.

© University of Pretoria

1962:50). It is about experiencing and seeing something (i.e. art) for what it is in itself in a new way. Phenomenology is thus a way of self-manifestation; "seeking after a meaning which is perhaps hidden by the entity's mode of appearing" (Moran 2000:229).

Seeking for significance also becomes evident when considering the philosophy of Eschatology, especially the post Vatican II Christian views of heaven and hell, the last judgement, life and death and life after death (afterlife). Theologian Peter C Phan ([sa]:218) explains that Vatican II "avoids giving the impression of providing insider information on the afterlife but rather presents the teachings of the faith in a sober and restrained manner". The main principle remains: after Christ delivers his last judgement, there will be "the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting" (Phan [sa]:216). Even though more often than not the immortality of the soul, rather than the physical resurrection of the body is emphasised, the fact remains that our actions in this life influence the course of our future (afterlife). Heidegger (1962:47, 238, 282) emphasizes that all human actions are influenced by the knowledge that eventually we all die. Phan ([sa]:218) concurs by emphasising that Eschatology is placed in a "new context, namely that of a deep commitment to the transformation of the world and human history". In *Contemporary context and issues in eschatology*, 1994, Phan (1994:[sa]) however, identifies major problems: "reality after death, the centrality of the creed regarding the resurrection and future life [is affirmed]. Unfortunately, it points out, the Christian life everlasting is seriously threatened by the contemporary cultural and theological context". This is evident in the artworks under discussion.

The meaning of the works created by the two selected artists are interrogated in terms of whether it is their lives, the afterlife, their own imminent death or the death of others which they attempt to deal with. They implement the resurrection myth in various ways, while simultaneously posing the above questions. For example in Victor's *No man's land*, 2012 (Figure 8) the 'neither here, nor there' concept becomes evident. South African academic, Professor Elfriede Dreyer (2012:5) elucidates, in this work "a magnitude of fragmented figures are 'buried' in the landscape in an almost apocalyptic way; in a manner of anecdotal reference to known and unknown things". It is therefore possible to argue that Victor captures the despair of loss and hopelessness in this work.

Figure 8:
Diane Victor, *No man's land,* 2012.
Charcoal and ash drawing,
150 x 300 cm.
Fried Art Gallery, Private collection.
(Dreyer 2012:4).

© University of Pretoria

As aforementioned, since pre-historic times the human race has relied on archetypes and myths in order to describe the inexpressible. Because this dissertation is mainly occupied with notions of the incomprehensible, it is essential to note that many themes and arguments form part of the aesthetics of the sublime**.** Due to the limited scope of this study an in depth analysis is not possible. But there is clear reference to this concept throughout the study, which is derived from Edmunde Burke's *A philosophical Enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and the beautiful* (1990), as well as Immanuel Kant's *On the Beautiful and Sublime* (1960).

1.5 Research methodology

The methodology of this research comprises a multidisciplinary literature study of various philosophies, theories and art embedded in readings about phenomenology, hermeneutics and even theology. The theories and postulations of Heidegger on finitude*,* and Gadamer's hermeneutical phenomenology are applied to the individual experiences and interpretations perceived in the artworks by the selected artists and are either confirmed or disproved throughout the study.

The outcomes are implemented and portrayed as a process of *Being-in-the-world* and *Being-towards-death* in the phenomenological sense in my own body of artworks, and thus reflect my personal interpretation of the archetype of the resurrection myth. All of the above aid in the exploration of the resurrection myth in a quest to ascertain whether it is still relevant in contemporary visual culture.

In order to attain an in-depth overview of the given problem, the abovementioned theoretical aspects follow a qualitative approach employing historical and contemporary literature based research in order to form a basis for my work. These are extensively explored and analysed, and conclusions are drawn, in relation to examples of work by the two selected artists.

In addition to the above, interviews have been held with artist Diane Victor, to ascertain and verify certain claims and statements made throughout the study, as well as provide a personal contribution to the understanding and meaning of the work. These interviews are recorded, transcribed and interpreted by myself and are adhering to strict predetermined permission forms read and signed by the artist.[6] It is vital to note that many findings of this study are based on a personal interpretation of Victor's work, and do not necessarily reflect the artist's intentions. The analysis and understanding of Victor's work, as described in this study, therefore comprises a fusion of Victor's and my own horizons.

[6] See Appendices 1 to 4 for signed consent forms.

© University of Pretoria

The results of this theoretical approach are also evident in the practical component of this study, which is presented through the body of artworks in *Endborn*. This research therefore is based on a practice-led research process.

As explained by Julia Marshall (2007:23-41), through practice based research, "ideas, concepts and information [are] transformed into visual images, objects or visual experiences". She (Marshall 2007:23) explains that these transformations can either be concrete and understandable, such as the creation of diagrams or maps, or they can "allow information to be seen differently, in a fresh, more meaningful, personal, and experiential way", for example through art, symbolism, myths or metaphors. Marshall (2007:23) thus proposes that insight comes through the creation of images, or at least, the conceptualisation of certain ideas resulting in images. This means that the departure point for this research is located in the body of work produced by me, as well as the artworks, exhibitions and cultural materials and sites used by the two selected artists.

It is therefore appropriate to conclude that my own body of work, chapter four and the exhibition catalogue, encompasses all the theories described throughout this dissertation and practically represent my findings and conclusions of the problem stated above.

1.6 Seminal sources and literature review

In order to investigate specifically the motifs and symbols of the resurrection myth used in contemporary visual arts, seminal sources include the chapter *Das Jona-Motiv in der Kunst* in *Das Mysterium von Tod und Auferstehung* (1963) by Uwe Steffen and *Understanding Early Christian Art* (2000) by Robin Margaret Jensen. Jensen (2000) explores early Christian art and signs, trying effectively to interpret them in terms of contemporary understanding. Other primary sources that deal with the notions of Jonah as a parameter for the resurrection myth include Human's article *Jona se opstanding uit die dood: Perspektiewe op die opstandingsgeloof vanuit die Ou Testament* (2004) and his *Mitologiese taal: verduistering of verheldering? Jona as illustrasie*, in the book *Vaste Rots op wie ek bou* (2011) edited by CJA Vos and DJ Human.

This research refers back to a previous research paper entitled *Breaking Dawn – the rise of early Christian resurrection semiology in contemporary visual culture*, written by myself for the BA (FA) degree in 2010. The study provides a basis for the current research on the resurrection myth, in its engagement with the prehistoric and early Christian use of specific motifs and its conclusions on how those symbols still carry similar interpretations in contemporary visual artworks. However, for this particular study the primary sources are Heidegger's theory of finitude in *Being and Time* (1962) and Gadamer's views on hermeneutic phenomenology in *Truth and Method* (1989) which contextualizes the investigation on the meaning and understanding of contemporary visual artworks engaging

© University of Pretoria

the archetype of the resurrection myth and its interpretations. I intend to show that these interpretations do not only depend on the socially and culturally devoted meanings given to certain objects, but also largely rely on both the tacit knowledge of the artist, as well as the viewer (and often the curator). A seminal source of reference in the interpretation of theories by Heidegger and Gadamer are writings by Paul Ricoeur. In this regard, Ricoeur (1981:107) infers that "interpretation is the process by which, in the interplay of question and answer, the interlocutors collectively determine the contextual values which structure their conversation".

The relevance of this resurrection myth archetype is investigated in the context of contemporary visual South African art. As Gadamer (1989:306) explains, interpretation and understanding comes from both the interpreter and the creator. Since I am based in South Africa, my understanding of the representation of the resurrection myth is influenced by the current *Being* of this country. A seminal source that is used throughout this endeavour is a book of essays (written between 1986 and 2009), *Culture and Power in Cultural Studies: The Politics of signification*, compiled and rewritten by John Storey in 2010. Throughout his publication Storey attempts to define the struggle of social reality. He (Storey 2010:viii) suggests that certain cultures "make the world (and the things in it) mean in particular ways and with particular effect of power". Storey (2010:ix) thus wants to make the readers aware that instead of looking for the true or essential meaning of things, some meanings "acquire their authority and legitimacy, knowing that dominant modes of making the world meaningful are a fundamental aspect of the process of hegemony". Furthermore, in their publication *Practices of Looking* (2001), Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright (2001:12) question whether the systems humans use to interpret what they see around them are in fact mere reflections (mimesis) or whether it is actually a construct created by the society in which they live. The publication *Mythologies* (1972) by Roland Barthes has also been constructive for this study. Barthes (1972:129) comments on the situation by explaining that "it is the reader of myths himself who must reveal their essential function". The viewer should thus ask "how does he receive this particular myth today". This is exactly the quest of my intended research.

In addition to various sources discussing the role of phenomenology, a valuable source for this dissertation has been *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts* (2009) by Paul Crowther. Reference is made to the chapter entitled *Sculpture and Transcendence*, which considers the significance of art in relation to a transcendental state of understanding and whether it can be achieved through sculptural and installation work. Crowther (2009:86) explores various elements that contribute to the embodiment of phenomenological depth in sculptural works. With continued reference to Heidegger and Gadamer's theories, the role of the viewer in achieving phenomenological depth is investigated. This is significant when considering my own body of work, which falls in the sculptural installation genre.

© University of Pretoria

The importance of the viewer is explored in Eliade's theory on the myth of everlasting return in his publication *The Myth of the eternal return* (1954). This timeless text has been beneficial in discussions of the reality and perceptions of the viewer, as well as those of the artists, especially when considering what Eliade refers to as archetypes. Eliade (1954:6-7) explains that human existence comprises of more than one 'world' or reality:

> Every terrestrial phenomenon, whether abstract or concrete, corresponds to a celestial, transcendent invisible term, to an "idea" in the Platonic sense. Each thing, each notion presents itself under a double aspect… Our earth corresponds to a celestial earth. Each virtue practised here below, has a celestial counterpart which represents true reality. The creation is simply duplicated.

This primary source has clear influence on how the resurrection myth is understood and interpreted in contemporary society. Not only does Eliade's theory influence the way the viewer might read the work, but also shows a definite influence on the development and interpretation of the archetype of the resurrection myth throughout human history.

This belief in pre-existing narratives, such as the archetype of the resurrection myth, also has a distinct reference to Carl Jung's theories of archetypes and their link to the collective unconscious. It is possible to argue that the archetype of rebirth and the myth of resurrection is embedded in our contemporary cultural existence, and therefore is an integral part of our society. Jung (1959), in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, postulates that the human psyche can be divided into two parts, namely the collective unconscious (which is made up of various archetypes) and the self or ego, which is the conscious part of our being and is influenced through our individual experiences, upbringing and culture.

However, in *The Soul's Code: in search of character and calling* (1997), James Hillman, an American psychologist, proposes that each individual has a specific archetype embedded in his/her being.[7] He refers to this as each individual's *daimon* (or guardian angel). Hillman (1997) furthermore asserts that the *daimon* within each of us has specifically chosen us from where they originate in the celestial world, as also described by Eliade (1954:7). Their purpose is pre-determined and they provide direction towards a specific archetypal image. This 'acorn-theory', as proposed by Hillman (1997), serves as the driving force behind the attraction of each individual to certain archetypal images, and thus a specific interpretation of these images by each individual. These postulations are considered in relation to the work of the artists selected for this study.

The purpose of this study is not to repeat what so many critics have already uncovered on the writings of Jung and Hillman. Many may even argue that Eliade's writings are outdated. It is however essential to refer to these seminal theories, which historicise and explain the internal

[7] Hillman's 'being' could be here replaced with Heidegger's '*Being.*'

© University of Pretoria

(mental) interpretations of the resurrection myth and the origin of this archetype, in order to fully grasp the external, present-day (cultural and physical) significance of symbols and emblems and their connotations.

According to Stander (2011:339) symbols can be described as a universal language, in his article *Opstanding en simboliek in die vroeg-christelike kuns* (2011). They can be understood by different cultures and languages, and thus surpass language barriers. A single image can transmit the same (or a different) message to multiple cultures and societies across the world. It is also possible to argue that meaning is unique to specific individuals or groups within a specific context, as proposed by Allen (2000:17) in *Intertextuality* (2000). In order to understand the relevance of certain symbols and iconography of which the meanings are culturally and mythically determined, the implementation of Julia Kristeva's notion of intertextuality as found in *Desire in Language* (1980) and Gerhard Genette's notion of palimpsest published in *Palimpsestes: la litterature au second degree* (1982) are utilised, in addition to the abovementioned philosophers.

The scripts by the South African academic Karin von Veh are valuable sources. Von Veh, who works closely with Victor, has published various texts on Victor's works. Two main sources in this regard are *Diane Victor* (2008) and *Diane Victor: Burning the candle at both ends* (2012), and are both referred to in this study. Another seminal source is von Veh's PhD thesis, entitled *Transgressive Christian imagery in post-apartheid South African art* (2011). Furthermore, interviews with Victor aid in identifying Victor's hidden messages (whether consciously or unconsciously) within her works, as well as the reason behind her use of certain media (smoke and ash) to enforce these meanings.

Even though there are multiple publications on Christian Boltanski and his art, this particular study has selected the following three texts, which are primarily employed: *Christian Boltanski* (2010) by Catherine Grenier, translated by David Radzinowicz, *Christian Boltanski* (1997) by Didier Semin and *Christian Boltanski* (1994) by Lynn Gumpert. All three these books deal with the works and life of Boltanski and include interviews with the artist, which aid in the understanding of the artist's background, prejudices, experiences, beliefs and his pre-occupation with birth and death, as well as his use of 'resurrected' materials. There is however, also reference to other publications on Christian Boltanski throughout the study, such as online videos and interviews.

All of the above literature based research is considered in relation to the practice-led research conducted during the creation of my own body of work for this study. The practical component of this study is reflected in my exhibition titled *Endborn.*

© University of Pretoria

1.7 Overview of chapters

This dissertation serves as a framing document for my own body of artworks, presented at *Endborn.*[8] The structure of this study is divided into five chapters. Each chapter serves as an integral part to create an overall understanding of the research conducted for my Masters of Arts degree.

Firstly, the introduction in chapter one aims to contextualize the research problem and provide an overview of the study. A theoretical framework, research methodology and literature review is provided to emphasize the aims and objectives of this dissertation and provide the reader with a theoretical understanding as a point of departure for this text. A brief reference to seminal terminology is provided, which furnishes the reader with an understanding of concepts referred to throughout the dissertation.

Secondly, chapter two comprises a historical overview, through acknowledging and briefly referring to the development of the archetype of the resurrection myth and its portrayal in pagan, pre-historic and early Christian iconography. The intention is to consider the relevance of such iconography in our current socio-cultural environment of South Africa. Reference is made throughout this chapter to artworks of the two selected artists, as well as the hermeneutical phenomenological theories of Heidegger and Gadamer.

Chapter three in depth analyses and interprets the artwork of contemporary artists Diane Victor and Christian Boltanski. With reference to previous sections of this study, as well as my own body of artwork, this chapter investigates the relevance and symbolism used to represent the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art. By considering the subject matter, medium, as well as specific sites used by the artists, conclusions are drawn on the artists' intentions and interpretations of the aforementioned myth in relation to finitude.

Chapter four should be read in conjunction with the exhibition catalogue (additional booklet) accompanying the Master's Degree exhibition. This chapter contextualises my own body of artwork with reference to the above described theories and artworks. The practice led research approach and processes utilised throughout this study are scrutinised and explained. The catalogue gives an overview of the various artworks, their symbolism and intentions. All of the above is achieved by considering the relevance of the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual culture.

Lastly, this research paper concludes in chapter five with a summary of the previous chapters, a synthesis and conclusion of the study. Suggestions for future research are also provided.

---

[8] *Endborn* comprises the body of artworks practically completed for this study and was exhibited at the chapel at the Drama department at the University of Pretoria from the 5th to the 8th of May 2015.

© University of Pretoria

1.8 Terminology

In order to understand the relevance of certain symbols and iconography and their culturally and mythically determined meanings, the implementation of Kristeva's notion of intertextuality and Genette's concept of palimpsest, as well as theories by additional philosophers, such as Eliade, Campbell and Barthes, are briefly emphasised. The aim is to compare symbols with specific meaning from pagan and early Christian periods, to those used in the contemporary works of the selected artists. The intention is to explore the meanings of the same symbols and how they have changed over time due to the changes in culture and society, which provides the semiology, background and shared consciousness of the contemporary viewers.

1.8.1 *Semiology*

The concept of *semiology* was introduced by Charles Pierce in the nineteenth century and later extended by Ferdinand de Saussure in the twentieth century (Sturken & Cartwright 2001:28). Roland Barthes (1972:106) describes semiology as "the science of signs[9] and symbols and their role in culture and society". It is therefore "a science of forms, since it studies significations apart from their content" (Barthes 1972:111). Hence signs[10], which can be depicted in written or pictorial form, are used to point towards a certain idea or message to its viewers (Barthes 1972:115). A symbol, however, carries meaning in itself. Like the myth, it has a double function: "it points out and it notifies, it makes us understand something and it imposes it onto us" (Barthes 1972:117). The symbol is the idea and reality in itself and not merely an image or representation of reality (Chaperouge 1984:5).

Philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (in Allen 2000:17) argues that meaning is unique to specific individuals or groups within a specific context. This notion is implemented throughout the study, when considering what Gadamer (1989:xxxi, xxxv, 9) refers to as the viewer's *Sitz-im-Leben*. Depending on the viewer's culture, experiences and his or her intentions, the viewer's perceptions of certain circumstances and events would differ from that of others. The viewer's *Lebenswelt* is completely different to a person from another culture, society and time period.

As discussed throughout this study, it is clear that the interpretation of a myth, sign, symbol or artwork, depends on the viewer, the artist as well as their epoch and socio-cultural circumstances, which determines their situatedness in the world. Gadamer (1991:18)

---

[9] A sign consists of two parts, namely the signifier and the signified. It is important to note that a sign is arbitrary, i.e. the signifier does not necessarily resemble the signified (Barthes 1972:126). For example one could consider Rene Magritte's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, 1928-29, a painting of a pipe with a caption that translates to 'this is not a pipe'. Pierce did not only form a distinction between the signifier and the signified, he added a third concept, namely that of the *referent*, the object itself (Sturken & Cartwright 2001:30). He further distinguished between an indexical, iconic and symbolic sign. Barthes on the other hand differentiated between the denotation, literal, descriptive meaning, and connotation, culturally specific meaning, of a sign.

[10] The terms 'sign' and 'symbol' are often used interchangeably. It is however, important to note that all symbols are signs, yet signs are simply used to *point at* the signified. Symbols on the other hand are used to *represent* the signified (Dupré 2000:1).

© University of Pretoria

attempts to illustrate this development between a historical background, as well as the direct orientation towards the subject matter. Ricoeur (1981:112) further explicates "the world is manifested no longer as the totality of manipulable objects but as the horizon of our life and our project, in short as *Lebenswelt*, as being-in-the-world".

1.8.2 *Myth*

Historically, nascent rituals and religious rites in the form of myths were humankind's earliest forms of expression, in an attempt to explain the incomprehensible and inexplicable. Art thus mainly existed in the form of religious representations and are generally understood to have originated from pre-history (Dupré 2000:69).

The term *mytho*s, originating from Greek literature, refers to a narration or a word spoken out loud (Human 2011:134-135). Since the 5th century BC, the word 'myth' was also understood as 'fiction' (Groenewald 2007:11).[11] Karen Armstrong (2005:7), British Theologian, and scholar of the Roman Catholic order explains in her book *A short history of Myth* (2005) that since the eighteenth century humans have tried to prove history in a mere scientific sense. Yet in the pre-modern era, it became more important for humans to understand what a certain event meant, rather than when this event occurred.[12] It is therefore understandable why people would and still do compare myths to something that is untrue or fictional. As Barthes (1972:110-112) explains, whether "ancient or not, mythology can only have a [pre-] historical foundation, for myth is a type of speech chosen by history". This notion is comprehended in contrast to the historic and contemporary periods (Human 2011:135), where a myth has to be considered within its original context. The quest of my study here is to determine how and why a contemporary society continues to rely on an archetypal myth to make meaning of death and life hereafter.

In this regard, Barthes uses the term 'myth' to refer to socially and culturally constructed truths (Sturken & Cartwright 2001:19). The meaning of a myth is constructed by a particular society in order to convey a specific meaning or message to that society. Dupré (2000:94) concurs that "every society interprets and reinterprets its history and heroes in keeping with the need". Myths are constructed to seem natural and real. Barthes (1972:129) explains that the very principle of myth is to transform history into nature. He continues that "everything happens as if the picture naturally conjured up the concept, as if the signifier gave a foundation to the signified" (Barthes 1972:130).

In relation to the above and considering the purpose of symbols (described in section 1.8.1), myth is understood as the exegesis of the symbol and therefore the language that interprets

[11] People living during that period made a distinction between *logos* (word – something factual) and *mythos* (spoken word – something "unhistorical). (Groenewald 2007:12; Human 2011:134-135).
[12] This theory links with Eliade's theory of archetypes.

© University of Pretoria

the symbol (Dupré 2000:91).[13] Myths are still dominant in contemporary society (so called 'urban legends' serve as a good example). The meaning thereof should rather be lived than rationally understood, since "a mythical explanation is an emotional response to a problem that is never purely theoretical" (Dupré 2000:98). This notion is confirmed by McKenzie (2012:1), who, with specific reference to the resurrection myth, explains that myths express "an esoteric speculative doctrine in story form" and therefore "contain symbols that always point to transcendental values but never actual facts".

This notion is further emphasized by Eliade (cited in Allen 2002:65), who believes that all religious behaviour is founded by myth and thus that religion provides the foundation for understanding myth. Through the use of symbols and iconographical statements, Allen (2002:66) explains that "myths both make possible and give expression to central experiences of the sacred". He continues that "myths are the most general and effective means of awakening and maintaining consciousness of another world, a beyond, whether it be the divine world or the world of the ancestors" (Allen 2002:67). Hence, when referring to biblical mythological motifs, there is bound to be confusion and misapprehension amongst both early and contemporary Christians. Human (2011:136) explains that there is in actual fact a strong connection between myths and the truth, and myths and a 'divine (godly)-experience', i.e. experiencing the sublime, as described by Burke and Kant.

1.8.3 *Intertextuality and palimpsest*

The notion of intertextuality was coined by Kristeva in 1969, in relation to Bakhtin's notion of dialogism (Allen 2000:128).[14] Kristeva (1984:60) describes every text as a "field of transpositions of various signifying systems (intertextuality)". In this regard, Beal (cited in Allen 2000:128) refers to intertextuality as:

> a theory that conceives of every text as a set of relations between texts, an intersection of texts that are themselves intersections of other texts, and so on. Every text is a locus of intersections, overlaps and collisions between other texts. Every text is an *intertext*, that is, a between-text, a paradoxical locus of dislocation, without centre and without boundaries.

This means that every text is somehow linked to another, and another, and another. The interpretation and analysis of symbols in the selected artworks can therefore be broadened when applying intertextuality. Looking not only at the new and current meaning that symbol carry, but investigating texts (images and symbols) from varying cultures and societies over many time periods, is helpful in understanding the use and origin of certain contemporary myths and symbols, as becomes visible in chapters two to four of this research.

[13] The symbol exists before the myth is created, yet it is the myth that gives meaning to the symbol.
[14] Beal (cited in Allen 2000:129) maintains that the process of applying intertextuality when interpreting is something never ending. He (Beal cited in Allen 2000:129) infers that it is the interpreter decision as to when to stop this process. The choice of where to draw the line when interpreting is usually not spontaneous, but is determined by the hermeneutical background and life-world of the interpreter.

© University of Pretoria

The concept of intertextuality "... has nothing to do with matters of influence by one writer upon another…" explains Kristeva (1980:15), it rather is defined as "the transposition of one or more systems of signs into another, accompanied by a new articulation of the enunciative and denotative position". French philosopher Genette (1982:30) explains that "the ability to constitute a system is precisely the characteristic of any set of signs, and it is this constitution that marks the passage from pure symbolism to the strictly semiological state". Genette therefore believes that a reader, and hence interpreter, creates new structures out of already existing structures and rearranges elements in this new structure, which are already arranged in the pre-existing structure. The new structure is thus not identical to the pre-existing structure, but instead describes and explains the original structure (Allen 2000:96).

The term *palimpsest*, first used by Genette (1982), describes how an interpreter can read one text with an underlying earlier version erased or obliterated, with the original text (or architext) still visible in some form. Therefore, palimpsest is the act of reading one text in relationship to at least one other text (Champagne 1983:243). Furthermore, the latest text is always influenced and affected by the earlier text (Dillon 2007:332). Thus, "the architext is, then, everywhere – above, beneath, around the text, which spins its web only by hooking here and there onto that network of architexture", explains Genette (cited in Allen 2000:100).

The notions of intertextuality and palimpsest are used when interpreting myths and their representations in the following chapters. The next chapter investigates the archetype of the resurrection myth as conceived by pagan societies, early Egyptian, Asian and early Christian communities. The theories described throughout chapter one serve as a theoretical underpinning for the discussions to follow.

© University of Pretoria

CHAPTER TWO: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW - THE ARCHETYPE OF THE RESURRECTION MYTH

2.1 Tracing the origin of the resurrection myth

In order to interpret the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art, this chapter investigates the development of the archetype of the resurrection myth by considering its representation in pagan societies, early Egyptian and Asian communities and early Christianity. This study uses the Old Testament biblical narrative of Jonah's journey as the primary horizon of contemporary understanding, which creates a platform of comparison throughout history.

Considering that the prophet Jonah was summoned by God to deliver a message to the city of Nineveh and deliberately chose to disobey God and travelled in the exact opposite direction (Jonah 1:3), Campbell's monomyth (described in chapter 2.1.1 below) is brought to the foreground. After running away from God, Jonah found himself on a boat in the midst of a storm. The heathen sailors realised that the storm was God's wrath on Jonah and threw him overboard (Figures 2 and 3). Shortly after this, God sent a 'big fish' to swallow Jonah (Jonah 1:17), where Jonah had to face death and the netherworld, while he was in the belly of the fish (Jonah 2:1-10). Jonah's fate however, changed. Instead of dying Jonah was given a new life: God lifted him out of *Sheol*, the netherworld. Various depictions of this mythical event exist throughout history as an archetype of the resurrection myth. Due to limited space, this study only briefly discusses selected narratives in relation to contemporary examples.

Similarities between the Jonah narrative and the resurrection of Christ, which occurred a considerable period after Jonah's lifetime, can be drawn (Human 2004:222). Thus the use of the Jonah narrative and motifs, which is the most frequently found symbol on the catacombs and sarcophagi in the first six centuries CE (Stander 2011:348-349), describes the hope for eternal life and resurrection that early Christians fostered. Steffen (1963:111) clarifies that the term 'sarcophagus' derives from the notion *Fleischfresser* (flesh eater). In other words, the sarcophagus alludes to the idea of being swallowed or devoured by death. The use of the Jonah motif on the sarcophagi and catacombs thus describes the hope of being resurrected and given an eternal life, after being devoured by death itself. This form of depicting the resurrection myth is used throughout history, and can be found on catacombs and sarcophagi of not only the early Christians (Figures 2 and 3) (Steffen 1961:112), but also Egyptian, Asian and Greek graves (Figures 9 and 10), and artworks by contemporary artists (discussed below and in chapter three). This study illustrates how contemporary artists incorporate ancient symbols, iconographies and emblems in their work, in order to deal with notions of death and finitude in various ways.

© University of Pretoria

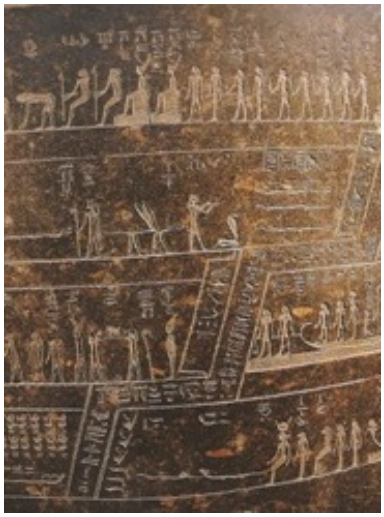

Figure 9:
Re's journey to the Netherworld, 30th Dynasty.
Drawing on sarcophagus, size unknown.
(Gahlin 2001:75).

Figure 10:
The boatsman, Charon, on his way to the other side of the shore, 500 BC.
Drawing on a Greek Lekythos, size unknown.
(Buxton 2004:211).

The motifs and symbols used to describe Jonah's journey from life to death to resurrection are not new concepts in themselves. Stander (2011:338-339) explains that every symbol that is used within the Christian milieu has an extra-biblical origin. Especially after the first three centuries CE, Christians were pursued and prosecuted (Stander 2000:12). In order not to draw attention to itself, Christianity inherited many of its myths from its predecessor Judaism. Judaism in turn drew its myths from the ancient Near Eastern milieu (Dupré 2000:111). Before the late second century CE, the depiction of the resurrection myth was mostly transmitted through verbal communication, rather than written or pictorial forms (Jensen 2000:9). One reason for this might be that early Christians believed in a "transcendent and invisible deity who commanded abstinence from earthly luxuries" and hence these believers were more spiritual than material (Jensen 2000:9). As the myth survives and passes from one faith to another, one society or culture to the next, each belief system incorporates new structures of meaning. It is important to note how intertextuality and palimpsest is present during this process.

Gadamer (1989:xxxii) would describe the importance of the understanding of these pagan and early Christian references as proving that "…the province of hermeneutics is universal and especially that language is the form in which understanding is achieved... [it] embraces 'pre-hermeneutic' consciousness as well as all modes of hermeneutic consciousness. Even the naive appropriation of tradition is a 'retelling' ". This use of mythical symbolism as a horizon of understanding plays a vital role in both selected artists' works, as can be seen in Victor's *No Country for Old Women*, 2013 (Figure 11).

© University of Pretoria

Figure 11:
Diane Victor, *No Country for Old Women,* 2013.
Installation: Wood, glass and smoke drawings, ca. 420 x 600 cm.
KKNK Oudtshoorn, Private collection.
Photograph by author.

The use of Christian iconography and its adapted meanings are evident in the subject matter. Victor (2013a) notes that in this work she has used symbols, such as the Mary and Christ figure, sheep, halo, heart, and arched windows, of which the connotations have been re-appropriated over time, adopting accumulated meanings and interpretations, which are interpreted differently by each viewer.[1] Considering the definitions of symbolism, discussed in chapter one, the meaning of various symbols depend on the context in which they are read. Depending on the viewer's *Lebenswelt*, his/her perceptions and understanding of the given myth differs from another viewer.

Similarly, the early Christians used pre-existing 'texts' as the basis of explaining their belief system. Gadamer (1989:153) concurs by stating that the religious symbols are "relic[s] of past life, and its existence attests to what it indicates: it makes the past itself present again" and renders it recognizable and valid. Furthermore, Gadamer (1989:154) attests that these religious symbols are "understood by everyone, unites everyone". The fusion of horizons, as described here by Gadamer, has thus already been (possibly unconsciously) implemented by early civilisations, in order to make meaning of and understand death. Most of these pre-existing texts refer to the journey of the hero as an archetype, in order to understand the cyclical and continuous nature of the resurrection myth, i.e. terrestrial death and celestial rebirth.[2]

2.1.1 *Journey of the hero*

In order to understand the origin of the resurrection myth, Joseph Campbell's theory of '*the hero's journey*' is investigated, while keeping in mind Eliade's definition of archetypes. For ancient societies all important acts of life were revealed by heroes (Eliade 1954:32). Therefore humankind used stories of heroes as an archetype to re-create pre-existing narratives as a way of transforming a certain myth into real life. In other words, the historical figure is transformed into a mythical figure (Eliade 1954:42).

[1] A more comprehensive analysis of this work is discussed in chapter three.
[2] Note how this concept relates to Eliade's theory of the Eternal Return.

© University of Pretoria

In his dated but relevant publication *The hero with a thousand faces* (1949), this classical monomyth described by Campbell, focuses on the three phases that a hero[3] undergoes, in order to reach redemption (or a transcendental state of *Being*).[4][5] These phases are distinctly depicted through historical narrations and visual representations of the archetype of the resurrection myth. During the first phase, *Separation,* the hero leaves his home and the world he knows behind. The second phase, *Initiation,* often includes sacrifice, during which the hero overcomes multiple trials. The last phase, the *Return,* could be described as a form of rebirth. The hero has learned how to deal with his gift and returns to share and apply his new knowledge to save his fellow men (Campbell 1949:49-238). It could be questioned whether contemporary artists depict themselves as the heroes and by producing work of a resurrected nature (subject matter, space or medium) share knowledge and insights about a transcendental state with their fellow humans (contemporary society).

During the Separation and Initiation phases the hero has to cross the threshold from one world into another. This event is often represented by the devouring of the hero by an *Ungeheuer*[6], which relates to Jonah's story. While the hero is in the belly of the *Ungeheuer,* he undergoes some form of transformation and is reborn into the 'new world' (this is due to his transcendental enlightenment)[7] with renewed strength and confidence. The 'devouring' motif is represented in various ways throughout the world: most significantly, societies living on islands and close to water often use the symbol of a 'big fish', sea-monster or whale (Steffen 1963:30).[8]

The *Ungeheuer* motif, as well as the rebirth and purifying qualities of water, is important when interpreting and comparing the work of contemporary artists, since they incorporate this semiology within their own subject matter. Examples can be seen in Victor's *Scavenger*, 2002 (Figure 5) or her various horse etchings, e.g. *Baited*, 2009 (Figure 12) or *Trojan Days*, 2006 (Figure 13). Victor places her paper in water prior to printing the etching or aquatint. Apart from the technical implications in printmaking, water in itself has symbolic value in relation to threshold journeys or rites of purification.

Figure 12:
Diane Victor, *Baited,* 2009.
Etching and digital printing,
ed of 25, 105 x 200 cm.
(Goodman gallery 2012:1).

[3] The hero here refers to both the mythological and historical hero figure.
[4] *Being* should be read with reference to Heidegger's *Sein-zum-Tode*.
[5] This transcendental state of Being can be equated to reaching a transcendental phenomenological state of understanding.
[6] The term *Ungeheuer* is synonymous with 'sea-monster', 'dragon' or 'big fish', as described in various depictions of the resurrection myth. It also refers to the trials and tribulations a hero conquers, in order to reach a transcendental state of *Being*.
[7] Note the reference to the sublime.
[8] In Germany and Russia, the *Ungeheuer* is generally represented by a wolf. The symbol of a tiger or panther is mostly used in Asia, whereas Africa shows the *Ungeheuer* as a snake, crocodile or elephant (Steffen 1963:30).

© University of Pretoria

Figure 13:
Diane Victor, *Trojan Days,* 2006.
Etching and embossing,
ed of 20, 60 x 42 cm.
Photograph by author.

Heidegger's notion of *Being-towards-the-end* is emphasised here by depicting self-portraits of Victor captured inside an *Ungeheuer* i.e. shark or horse. The figures seem uncomfortable, hence possibly indicating their (the artist's) discomfort towards death. Heidegger (1962:304) postulates that "authentic Being-towards-death cannot evade its own-most non-relational possibility, or cover up this possibility by ... fleeing from it". In other words, even though *Dasein* is dependent on *Being-in-this-world*, humans wish to push aside the reality of their demise. However, by accepting *Being-towards-the-end*, there is still discomfort in the *Dasein*, there is a realisation that earthly existence will eventually cease (Heidegger 1962:299, 304-311).

The obvious reference to Jonah, his flight from God's instructions (to bring life), and the big fish is also depicted in *Scavenger*, which reflects a female figure (self-portrait of the artist) caught within the inverted contour lines of a shark. Juxtaposed is a second shark, revealing hints of a human figure inside. This work could thus allude to Victor perceiving herself as a hero (as suggested above), who is in the Initiation phase of Campbell's monomyth and is captured in the belly of the fish (shark).[9] Symbolically, she could be fighting and conquering an *Ungeheuer,* that will ultimately lead to a transcendental state of *Being*. As is further discussed in chapter three, it is possible to imagine that Victor is struggling with the realisation of her own impending death. Victor has been diagnosed with an inheritable kidney disease, which in recent years has been responsible for her decline in health. As the hero, she had been faced with two possible outcomes: either she could have died, had she not receive a transplant, and experience death in the truest sense by "holding death for true, [as] death *is* just one's own", as suggested by Heidegger (1962:309). This would denote that Victor "attests phenomenally that death must be conceived as one's ownmost possibility, non-relational, not to be outstripped, and – above all – *certain"* (Heidegger 1962:302). Alternatively, she could conquer death (postpone it for a short period of time). Heidegger (1962:296) refers to this action of postponing the acceptance of death as "constant tranquillization". However, with this alternative, Victor is able to share her

[9] Victor (2015) explicates that her work does not directly nor consciously refer to death or to life everlasting. Instead the figures captured inside the animals are intended by the artist to represent the "beastly" within all humans.

© University of Pretoria

experiences and new knowledge and understanding (of life and death) with her fellow humans (through new artworks).

Even though one's initial thoughts might have been at the implied resurrection of the captured figure, the mood created rather suggests that the figure is trapped and not yet ready to be freed, hence receive a second life. This could allude to Victor's acceptance of the factual knowledge that "one's own *Dasein* is always dying already", and therefore, she exists in *Being-towards-the-end* (Heidegger 1962:298). The intertextuality and palimpsest of ancient and historical belief systems are explored by the artist. By incorporating early-Christian resurrection semiology, it could be argued that Victor re-interprets the archetype of the resurrection myth in a contemporary manner.

With reference to this work, Victor (2014) explains that she considers sharks as "perfect killers". She (Victor 2014) elucidates that they are predators driven by society. Similar to people, they are slick, polite, fast and "ready to unexpectedly take you out", just like death (Victor 2014). The reference to the Zambezi Tiger Shark therefore lends itself to make analogies and represent Victor's conversations with people with a predatory instinct, specifically referring to Christians "on the hunt" (Victor 2013a; Victor 2015). The art historian Elizabeth Rankin (2008:25) on the other hand infers that this work portrays a figure that "lurks within a dark silhouette of a shark, which preys on diminutive Christian symbols of embossed fish. The implication [is] of foreign religion preying on endlessly replicated followers..." Intertextuality as discussed in chapter 1.8.3 is visible in the form of the repeated fish symbol, as can be seen in for example *What's Bred in the Bone, Comes Out in the Flesh,* 1995, *Going to the Dogs,* 1995, *Like a blind Horse,* 2004 and *Upstream,* 2002 (Figures 14 - 17). The *emblematic* fish, as seen in Figure 17, is universally known as a signifier for Christianity. However in Victor's work, the images of fish are often transformed into sharks, which as described above, allude to the predatory characteristics of humans.

Figure 14:
Diane Victor, *What's Bred in the Bone, Comes Out in the Flesh,* 1995.
Etching, aquating and ,mezzotint,
ed of 60, 30 x 25 cm.
(Rankin 2008:13).

Figure 15:
Diane Victor, *Going to the Dogs,* 1995.
Lithograph and silkscreen,
ed of 25, 75 x 40 cm.
Printed by Malcolm Christian, Caversham Press.
(Rankin 2008:14).

© University of Pretoria

Figure 16:
Diane Victor, *Like a Blind Horse,* 2004.
Etching, aquatint, mezzotint and embossing, ed of 25, 20 x 30 cm.
(Rankin 2008:18).

Figure 17:
Diane Victor, *Upstream,* 2002.
Etching, aquatint, mezzotint and embossing, ed of 10, 100 x 200 cm.
(Rankin 2008:26-27).

Rankin (2008:38) refers to this phenomenon as "draw[ing] on her own use of the shark images that suggest predatory religious practices, radically shifting a traditional reading of the fish motif that stood for Christ as Saviour". Furthermore, "destabilising such symbols and signs, drawn from, but also critiquing Christian narratives, pagan myths and African beliefs, social stereotypes and popular media, creates open-ended iconographies that invite imaginative interpretations of these uneasy partnerships of spirituality and satire, lust and laughter" (Rankin 2008:38). It therefore, becomes clear that Victor employs symbolism and iconographies in her work as a strategy to evoke various interpretations by different viewers. Evidently, the interpretation of certain symbols depends on the *Lebenswelt* and *Being-in-the-world* of the individual viewer, as discussed above.

Nevertheless it is impossible to separate Victor's own phenomonelogical *Dasein* and her attitude towards her perceived impending death (her horizon) from the interpretation of the work (viewer's horizon). It is also interesting to note, that the above understanding of the described work changes, as soon as the viewer becomes aware that Victor has received a transplant towards the end of 2014, and is no longer faced with the same *Ungeheuer*, as when she created the works. This affirms that "hermeneutic philosophy is an open process which no single vision can conclude", which is also referred to as the 'hermeneutic circle' (Ricoeur 1981:109). The monomyth of the hero's journey can thus serve as an archetypal reference to describe the resurrection myth, but is definitely not the sole element that contributes to the interpretation of ancient or contemporary works.

2.2 Pagan resurrection myths

The hero's journey, as described in Campbell's monomyth above, has already unconsciously been implemented by pre-historic and ancient civilisations, to describe and make meaning of the

© University of Pretoria

cyclic changes in nature (Frazer 2009:296-297; McKenzie 2012:21).[10] It is apparent from this how Jung's collective unconscious is at work and how palimpsest and intertextuality applies to the description of the archetype of the resurrection myth.

In relation to the above, Sir James Frazer in the chapter *Dying and Reviving Gods* of his book *The Golden Bough* (originally published in 1922), refers to the pagan Resurrection myths of various Gods and divinities who, similar to Campbell's hero, suffered, died and rose from the dead. Examples of these hero-gods include the mythical narratives of Hercules and Adonis (Babylonia, Syria, and Greece); Attis and Hyacinth (Greek mythology); Osiris (Egyptian God); Dionysus / Bacchus; Tammuz; Demeter and Persephone (McKenzie 2012:21; 28-45).[11] Each of these Gods suffered from a fatal encounter with an *Ungeheuer,* but through a miracle they were resurrected either in body or in spirit. Either way, they inspired mortal humans and gave hope of a life after death. This notion can also be depicted in Victor's work *No Country for Old Women* (Figure 11), mentioned above and further discussed in chapter three. These figures represent women who had suffered a great deal, mainly because of their gender. After their death however, Victor has resurrected them from the ashes (literally drawn in smoke and ash), and given their life new meaning.

When interpreting works of art, it is thus possible to say that, the focus is on recognising and understanding the essentiality of the elements at play. Not only the viewer's *Dasein* and *Being in the world* is significant, but also the *Dasein* of the given elements or objects. This notion is applied when interpreting the work by Victor and Boltanski. It is after all the viewer's entire Being, body and mind, which is immersed in the environment when encountering these works. The relationship of the use of medium and space/site[12] is thus essential and needs to be considered when the artworks are analysed.

In *Mortality / Immortality: Legacy of twentieth century art* (1999), Coddington (1999:19-24) questions the use of materials in contemporary art, while Gratten and Williams (1999:67-74) attempt to explicate the importance of knowing and understanding the material. Most materials will only last for a certain period of time, such as plastic and rubber, or smoke and ashes, as is seen in the discussion of the works by Victor, or disposable objects such as clothing, as in Boltanski's work. Thus, when knowing the ephemerality in the use of materials (such as smoke, stains and charcoal) and its behaviour, an artist can incorporate this material in order to not only suit the culture and society in which the work is placed and understood, but also support the subject matter and symbolism as intended by the artist and 'read' by the viewer.

[10] The natural seasonal changes that affected vegetation were often attributed to the workings of divine powers (McKenzie2012:21). Societies relied on the moods of the Gods to bless (or curse) their villages. The decline of prosperity could be attributed to the Gods' own health. Various ceremonies were held and offerings made to the vegetation Gods, in the hopes of reviving and resurrecting the dying Gods, in order to give new life to the crops (McKenzie 2012:21).
[11] Due to limited space I will not expand on the individual narratives of each of these hero-gods. It suffices to say that the narrations follow the archetypal structure of Campbell's monomyth.
[12] This study recognizes the essential differences between space and site. Due to limited space, this research does not elaborate on these differences.

© University of Pretoria

However, the interpretation of the artwork should also focus on the intention of the artist and thus his/her horizon. Sometimes it is the artist's intention to create a work that only exists for a specific time and place; on other occasions the work may be created with the ideal that the work exists for centuries to come. Coddington (1999:20) questions whether an artwork should be preserved and restored, or even recreated, as seen in the installation work by Boltanski and smoke/ ash drawings by Victor. He questions whether this will show an utter disrespect to the artist and his intentions. Yet by re-creating or moving a work, new meaning is created. This meaning might not relate to the artist's original intention, but one may surmise that a new life (resurrection) is given to the artwork by a new 'artist' (the gallery or curator). Storr (1999:35-40) supports these views, and furthermore claims that the emotion created by a certain work could be reproduced. This however becomes problematic, since the question of authorship[13] then arises, which interrogates whether the feelings created are real or authentic. Here one needs to take not only the horizons of the artist and the 'new' viewer into consideration, but also the horizons of the 'original' viewer. Within a different society the meaning created thus depends on the overlapping and fusion of multiple horizons, as well as the original intentions of the artists and the intentions of the curator at a new space/site. This issue falls into an extended notion of re-birth, as becomes apparent in chapters two to four.

The above described notions are also evident in Boltanski's work *Monuments: The Children of Dijon*, 1985 (Figure 7 and 18), which incorporates photographs of deceased children. Even though the children are presently not amongst the living, the photographs were taken during their lifetime before the holocaust. Boltanski resurrects universal memories of children (and childhood itself), by showing the viewers that these children have in fact been alive once. This work depicts black and white photographs of children, illuminated by individual light sources, representing Byzantine icons. The installation structure follows the configuration of traditional shrines and altars, exhibited in various spaces, including galleries and cathedrals, creating moods of "solemn, respectful remembrance" (Gumpert 1994:83). Both works by the two artists are exhibited in a space with religious associations (discussed in depth in chapter three), i.e. a church and a cathedral, which re-enforce the notion on religious and godly involvement in the resurrection of a hero.[14] This is also the aim of my own body of work, discussed in chapter four.

Figure 18:
Christian Boltanski, *Monument: Children of Dijon,* 1986.
Installation, mixed media.
Chapelle de la Salpêtrière, Paris.
(Christian Boltanski 2010:1).

[13] This can be further explored in Roland Barthes article *The Death of the Author* (1977).
[14] The hero does not necessarily refer to the historical hero, but instead to humans that have died as martyrs or for something over which they had no control.

© University of Pretoria

Frazer (2009:366) emphasizes that "as with all religions of redemption Christianity [also] features a God who dies and rises again; its followers obtain immortality by oneness with and obedience to the god". It is important to note that the process of dying and rising again, even during pagan times, occurs during a three day cycle period, as can be seen for example the Greek god Dionysus (also known as Attis), who after three days rose from the dead and became immortal. This notion is repeated with Jonah and Jesus who rose from the dead after three days. The significance of the number three as a symbol is encountered throughout history and is discussed in more depth during the discussion of my own artworks in chapter four.

As seen above, it is thus possible to compare the early Christian, as well as the contemporary interpretation of the resurrection myth, to the pagan foundation of seasonal changes i.e. "rebirth after winter's death" (McKenzie 2012:21). However, not only seasonal changes are responsible for the pagan belief in resurrection. Before Christianity was established as a religion of faith, Mithraism[15] (Persian mythology) thrived in the Roman world.[16] The Mithras followers[17] believed in a god of light,[18] who similar to Christ offers immortality after death.

It is important to note that Eliade (in McKenzie 2012:45) infers that Mithras is the first God (Pagan and Christian) who did not undergo death and resurrection himself, but instead uses blood as a medium to create new and resurrected life. This of course has reference to the blood of Christ yielding resurrecting powers. The selected contemporary artists may not use blood in their artworks, but also make symbolic use of mediums that represent resurrection such as water (a life-giving substance), ash and smoke (Figures 6, 11 and 19) and light and shadows (Figures 7,18 and 20), which have ephemeral qualities with symbolic connotation of flames and fire.[19] This reference to fire and flames may tie to the notion of Mithras, the light and sun god, and later Christ, as well as Egyptian sun-myths.

Figure 19:
Diane Victor, *Binding*, 2012.
Smoke drawing, 150 x 100 cm.
Private collection, South Africa.
Photograph by artist.

[15] For more information on Mithraism, refer to Manfred Clauss' *Mithras Kult und Mysterium* (2012).
[16] It is believed that Mithras was the last "pagan god dethroned by Christianity" (McKenzie 2012:44).
[17] They would celebrate the life of Mithras on December 25, and believed that after this date the Sun would once again reign after months of Darkness (McKenzie 2012:44-45).The importance of this date continues in Christianity as the date of birth of Christ.
[18] Mithras was also known as Sol, the Sun god. His descendance from pagan beliefs is clear, as his story describes Mithras as having slaughtered a bull where after the blood spilled on the ground was responsible for growing herbs, health-giving plants and wheat.
[19] The flames and fire in turn have mythological connotations, such as the rebirth of the mythical phoenix, who after burning to death, rises from the ashes.

© University of Pretoria

Figure 20:
Christian Boltanski, *Theatre d'Ómbres,* 1984.
Installation, Paris.
(Gumpert 1994:79).

2.3 Resurrection of the moon and sun

The cyclical recurrence in nature, which obviously relates to Campbell's monomyth, as well as Eliade's notions of the eternal return, as explanation in an attempt to understand the archetype of the resurrection myth, continues in sun- and moon-myths, found especially in ancient and Near Eastern societies. One can observe the importance of intertextuality and palimpsest and how different texts, and thus horizons overlap and influence each other to create various representations and depictions of the resurrection myth throughout various cultures and societies.

The moon has, since the beginning of humankind, been viewed as having mysterious and inexplicable characteristics and can be traced throughout many mythological motifs. During full moon it reaches its peak of full strength (*Herrschaftspunkt*) and reigns over the darkness of the black night i.e. *Ungeheuer*. Soon after this, the light of the moon starts diminishing until the moon is extinguished and finds itself in the midst of death.[20] This description has reference to the hero monomyth and is seen as another narrative depicting the resurrection myth archetype.

Figure 21:
Dragon-like animal devouring the sun,
ca. 20000-10000 BC.
Illustration, ca. 1400mm, Schischkino (Siberia).
(Steffen 1961:34).

Figure 22:
Heaven goddess Nut curling over
earth god Geb, 1000 BC.
Illustration on Papyrus, size unknown.
(Littleton 2003:36).

[20] On the third night thereafter the moon regains its strength and is reborn into a new cycle of life (Steffen 1963:36). In ancient Greek communities the beginning of lent as the Sun god's rebirth and siege over the dark powers of winter was celebrated (Steffen 1963:38). It is possible to refer to the *Kreislaufmythos*, when referring to either the moon or the sun myth.

© University of Pretoria

Similarly, as aforementioned, the 'sun-myths' originate from societies living close to water (Figure 21) (Steffen 1963:31).[21] [22] These myths are undeniably related to explanations of the sunset, which in turn are related to fire and flames, as seen in section 2.2. Similar representations of the rebirth of the sun are found on Egyptian sarcophagi dating back as early as to 10 000 BC (Figures 1, 9 and 22). Ancient Egyptians believed that similar to the way that the goddess Nut[23] [24] guides and resurrects the sun, she will guide the dead and lead them to a resurrection in the world hereafter (Gahlin 2001:39). Symbolic representations of these narratives are explored in my own body of work, discussed in chapter four.

The sun found in the celestial heavens can be described as a symbol of the son of God i.e. Christ, who according to Eliade's descriptions of the celestial world, could serve as an archetypal representative of what humans wish to obtain, i.e. life everlasting. Following Eliade (1954:9), it can then be argued that humans live on an imperfect earth where they employ archetypes to copy the celestial or 'heavenly' world, which is the perfect duplicate of our reality. Therefore, every happening and every event that humans experience on earth has an archetype. No narrative or story is truly unique, but instead is based on pre-existing narratives reflected onto the human reality (Eliade 1954:10).

The link to the investigation of meaning and re-interpretation of the resurrection myths in contemporary artworks become plausible when reading this text with reference to Heidegger's notion of finitude. This study argues that the artists create their work in such a way as to deal with their own mortality and death, and hope for a beyond that awaits them. Heidegger (1962:304-311) asserts that *Dasein* is constantly aware of the possibility of its own demise. Therefore, "to expect something possible is always to understand it and 'have' it with regard to

[21] As has been observed on multiple islands, the elders gather at sunset and pray to the sun, which is believed to be devoured by a whale or 'big fish', as also found in the Jonah narrative (Steffen 1963:31). This is due to the sun's disappearance at the horizon. Yet the same sun must be regurgitated by the *Ungeheuer*, since it rises again every morning. This notion of archetypal recurrence is evident in the idea of the sun being devoured by a dragon or sea monster (Figure 21) (Steffen 1963:34).

[22] The red glow of the sun is attributed to its rebirth into the world (Steffen 1963:31). This recurring symbolism of water and the sun also bear reference to contemporary Baptism and Christening. The notion of being reborn, cleansed and given a new life is depicted in the emblematic use of water.

[23] Nut embodies both the day and night heaven, and is connected to the waters underneath the earth (Steffen 1963:34). The symbol of the sun is represented three times throughout Nut's body (Gahlin 2001:38).This Creation myth of Heliopolis supports notions of the cyclical changes of nature, as understood in early Pagan mythology

[24] The resurrection of the sun shown by its journey through the goddess Nut is not the only sun myth that early Egyptians fostered. The netherworld books *Amduat* and the *Pfortenbuch* , (ca 1500 BC) provide descriptions of the twelve hour journey that the sun god Re undertakes at night, once he has finished his twelve hour observance of the earth during the day (Gahlin 2001:74; Hornung 2001:7). The authors of these books are unknown and have no exact date, yet this journey can be explored in Hornung's book *Die Nachtfahrt der Sonne* (1991), where an in-detail description of each hour is given. Re comes into conflict with his greatest enemy, the snake demon, Apophis, whom he has to overcome (Hornung 2001:111). This fight with the demon can also be identified as an archetype describing Re's fight with an *Ungeheuer*. Not only is Re a god, he is a hero. This event, similar to the event of the creation, repeats itself every day (Hornung 1991:186), thus intertextualising the pagan myths of cyclical nature. The Egyptians believed that the deceased would join the sun god Re on his journey through the netherworld, and similar to Re be resurrected at the end of the journey. For the purpose of this study it is sufficient to say that in early Egyptian societies the journey through the netherworld was believed to be dangerous and unpredictable.

© University of Pretoria

whether and when and how it will be actually present-at-hand". It is thus possible to conclude that the artists, through their work, "[wait] for that actualization" (Heidegger 1962:306).

The above described narratives depicted as a symbolic representation of the resurrection myth can be further explored in the shadow works by Boltanski, such as his *Theatre d'Ómbres,* 1984 (Figure 20), which have very strong theatrical and macabre connotations. Boltanski uses death as a theme, represented through figures resonating the Grim reaper, hanged men and death masks to evoke war-related moods. The reference of his childhood during war is evident, and it can be questioned whether he problematizes his survival, amongst so much death. By using shadows and the movement of light, various elements disappear and re-surface, giving new meaning with each new movement or shadow. Reference to light, fire, ephemerality and temporality is made. The archetypal myth of resurrection is reflected in *Theatre d'Ómbres* in the way that a shadow moves and changes constantly, but the *Sache selbst*, as described by Heidegger (1962:50), remains the same. Likewise, the core belief in the resurrection has remained constant throughout history. The incorporation of shadows, together with site-specific spaces thus conjures new meanings within each viewer and is in itself evocative of a re-birth or renewal of its archaic origins.

Following Kristeva's notion of intertextality and Genette's palimpsest, it is notable, how the ancient Greeks had a similar belief, taking the Egyptian sun myths as a pre-text for their description of the journey of the deceased. The Greeks would place a coin on the eyes of the dead (Figure 23), in order to pay the boatsman, Charon, to take the soul to the other side of the shore (Figure 10), thus permitting a resurrection and eternal life of the soul (Forstner 1961:594). This notion of the boat as transport from one life to another can be traced throughout most ancient belief systems. Examples can be seen on early Christian sarcophagi (Figures 2 and 3) or in the sculptures of boats that were found in the tombs of ancient Egyptians (Figures 24).

Figure 23:
Skull of young athlete found with silver coin slipping from his eyes, first century CE. HagiosNikolaos on Crete.
(Buxton 2004:211).

Figure 24:
Model of boat with the sun god Re on its journey through the netherworld,12th dynasty, 1938-1759 BC. Wooden sculpture found in grave, size unknown.
(Littleton 2003:27).

© University of Pretoria

The symbolism and iconographical representations of the boat as vessel to transport the dead from one shore to the other, continues into contemporary society, and can be found in the artworks of South African artists, Deborah Bell's [25] *Long Journey Home*, 1999/2000 and *Crossing* 2005 and Victor's *Lifeboat*, 1986 (Figure 25), also known as *The Boat of Charon*, *Scavenger* (Figure 5) and *Sleep No More,* 2012 (Figure 6).

Figure 25:
Diane Victor, *Lifeboat,* 1986.
Etching and aquatint,
size unknown.
(Rankin 2008:2-3).

Looking at these works from a formalistic perspective, the subject matter represents the shape of a boat. Relating these visuals to Kristeva's notion of intertextuality and Genette's notion of palimpsest, it is evident that the artists refers back to the ancient Greek narrative of the boatsman or a soul travelling to the other side of the shore, i.e. the next life. The symbolism becomes significant, when understanding that Victor attempts to make meaning of the death of her father in *Lifeboat*. Victor's father passed away, while Victor was in Europe. She could thus not attend his funeral or create closure of this unexpected event (Victor 2014; Victor 2015). Through the creation of art and employing certain symbolism, it can be interpreted that she therefore attempts to understand the purpose of death.

Considering the subject matter portrayed in the three works by Victor mentioned above, the titles suggest that Charon's journey is not a quick or even comfortable, but rather a journey in which the soul undergoes certain trials before reaching its destination. This notion bears reference to Campbell's monomyth, during which the hero survives various trials and tribulations before reaching a transcendental state of understanding. On the other hand, the works might suggest that the figures (or even the artist herself) are eager to reach the destination, which is life everlasting.

2.4 Synthesis: Pre-historic and Early Christian resurrection symbols and iconography

After examining various heroes' journeys, it is possible to conclude that the notion of the 'journey of the hero', as described by Campbell, can be traced throughout centuries, and found in many

[25] Deborah Bell, South African installation artist, mainly focuses on the 'self' and the journey of the soul. Her beliefs reflect the teachings of Gnosticism (Stein 2004:7). Through her art, she attempts to penetrate the material world as deeply as she can, "in order to grasp the invisible path which is taking her on what she calls 'the journey home (Stein 2004:7)". Reference is made to Bell, in order to draw attention to her current exhibition at the Everard Read gallery in Johannesburg (7 May – 27 June 2015) titled *Dreams of Immortality*. This postulation draws attention to the contemporary relevance of the archetype of the resurrection myth in South African context.

© University of Pretoria

belief systems. Not only is this archetype present in the bible, where both Jesus Christ and Jonah are devoured by death and then resurrected after three days, it is also depicted throughout many pre-Christian narratives that explore the life, death and resurrection of not only a hero, but very often a god.

These 'gods' are mostly represented by nature, as the sun, described in the sun myths of ancient Egypt, or as a deity providing light in the darkness, described in the moon myths. As seen throughout the examples provided, the subject matter is "filled with silence, at most with a quite susurration such as you might hear as a candle is extinguished or a fire quietly collapses into embers. In some ways, the *technique* of these [works] ... [are] ... symbolic – fire, ash, and smoke are filled with ancient meanings, with mythological and historical reverberations – but, paradoxically, ... most silent in relation to content and subject" (Law-Viljoen 2012:99). It is therefore possible to infer that the symbol of light signifies a hero or a god. It is even possible to equate the hero to a god. Evidently, it can be concluded that the light source is the archetype of the transcendent deity, the unreachable entity that humans wish to attain.

© University of Pretoria

CHAPTER THREE: INTERPRETING THE ARCHETYPE OF THE RESURRECTION MYTH IN CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART

3.1 A critical analysis of a contemporary representation of the archetype of the resurrection myth in the work of Christian Boltanski and Diane Victor

What follows is a critical analysis and comparison of the work by the two selected artists. Due to the structure of this study, some repetition and cross-referencing is unavoidable. This chapter focuses on the interpretation of the archetype of the resurrection myth as found in selected contemporary visual artworks.

Gadamer (1989:61) elucidates that in order to reach a fusion of horizons, and thus understanding an artwork, one has to take into consideration the *Erlebnis* (personal experience) of both the artist and the viewer. When interpreting an artwork, it is therefore essential to grasp the differentiation between the artist's *Sitz-im-Leben* and the viewer's *Being-in-the-world*. Heidegger's *Being-in-the-world,* however, cannot pretend to ever grasp *Dasein* to its full extend, since death has "a biological signification...that is existential-ontological" (Heidegger 1962:280). By reaching its wholeness in death, *Dasein* therefore loses its *Being-in-the-world* (Heidegger 1962:281). In addition, Ricoeur (1981:106) infers that *Being-in-the-world* "expresses better the primacy of care over gaze, and the horizontal character of that to which we are bound". This means that our experience of an artwork happens immediately within our own understanding of the world, and "what is experienced is always what one has experienced oneself", in that moment of time (Gadamer 1989:61). This notion of "*Erfarhrung* signifies that phenomenology is not situated elsewhere, in another world, but rather is concerned with natural experience itself" (Ricoeur 1981:103). This notion is understood in contrast to Eliade (1954:9-10), who, as described in chapter 2.3, claims that every event we as humans experience on this earth has a celestial origin.

It is vital to understand that this paper refers to Eliade in order to understand the role, origin and re-occurrence of the archetype of the resurrection myth in a contemporary context. However, how a viewer experiences an artwork, is individual to each viewer, depending on his own *Lebenswelt.* As Gadamer (1981:61) infers, *Erlebnis* "makes a special impression that gives it lasting importance". In this chapter I argue that this is particularly evident in the work of Victor and Boltanski.

In essence it can therefore be understood that "*Erleben* means primarily 'to be still alive when something happens'. Thus the word suggests the immediacy with which something real is grasped – unlike something which one presumes to know but which is unattested by one's own experience" (Gadamer 1989:61). As mentioned in the introduction of this study, this becomes problematic when analysing the work of the selected artists. Even though both artists are still alive, their backgrounds, i.e. their *Sitz-im-Leben* and *Being-in-the-world* are elusive and unclear.

© University of Pretoria

The problem thus arises not in establishing the viewers' situatedness, but that of the artists. In order to understand the artists' horizons in the interpretation of their works, the following section briefly discusses the *Dasein* of the two artists.

3.2 Artists' historical *Dasein* and *Being-in-the-world* in a contemporary society

Throughout his life, Boltanski has told, re-told, created and fabricated stories about his childhood (Grenier 2010:9-46). By telling and re-telling, Boltanski has created certain assumed truths, creating a horizon, which allows viewers to create meaning. In his work *Research and Presentation of All that Remains of My Childhood, 1944-1950*, (1969) Boltanski created an artist's book containing photographs, objects and anecdotes from his childhood. This form of documentation is visible throughout Boltanski's work. However, contradictory to what the titles suggest, the works contain photographs and images not only of himself, family members and friends, but mostly strangers (Grenier 2010:6, Gumpert 1994:23-24). It becomes unclear which elements of his childhood are factual and real, and which components Boltanski has borrowed and created from the lives of others. This is further emphasized when considering his *Ten photographic Portraits of Christian Boltanski, 1946 – 1964,* 1979 (Figure 26) which solely consists of photographs of unknown children all taken on the same day, or *Attempts to Reconstruct the Objects Belonging to Christian Boltanski between 1948 and 1952,* consisting of objects produced from modelling clay.

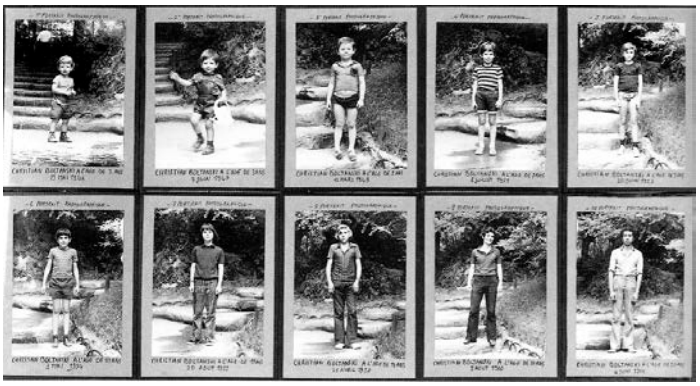

Figure 26:
Christian Boltanski, *Ten photographic Portraits of Christian Boltanski, 1946-1964,* 1979.
Photographs of unknown children, ca 30 x 20 cm each.
(Thijsen 2014:1).

What we encounter in these works of Boltanski are representations of a fictitious childhood that might have belonged to Boltanski. They represent memories, which Boltanski portrays as memoires of his own childhood. Gadamer (1989:148) believes that the "picture is not just an image and certainly not just a copy; it belongs to the present or to the present memory of the man represented". However, these memories represented in Boltanski's work could be described as universal. As humans we tend to forget specific events of our past, but are reminded of these through shared universal experiences, i.e. we all were individual children once, but certain events, such as the first day of school or a birthday celebration, are common in most humans.

Boltanski relies on the human condition of forgetting and hence the possibility of total renewal, by incorporating images of children in his work. Gumpert (1994:12) explains that this obsession is not only with images of children, but of childhood itself. It might be that the artist wishes the

© University of Pretoria

viewers to reflect upon their own childhood, as this is an experience shared by each human being. It could however, also allude to Boltanski's childhood, or perhaps the lack thereof in a conventional sense, as he grew up in uncertain times during war. This clarifies his notion that childhood is not only a passage moving towards adulthood, but is instead the first part within each of us to die and therefore is leading us closer towards death (Boltanski in Gumpert 1994:12). By facing the thread of forgetting and of being forgotten, Boltanski aims to revert the viewer back to the "primordial experiences of childhood" (Grenier 2010:65), as is repeatedly seen in his work. Boltanski, however, in later works, admits that creating these works serve as an "antidote to despair" and that "the belief based on personal experience that despite everything, above and beyond forgetfulness, transmission is indeed possible" (Grenier 2010:79-80). In other words, the death of our childhood is only a stepping stone towards reaching a transcendental deity. These notions are further explored in Boltanski's more recent work exhibited at the Venice biennale in 2011 titled *Chance.* In this work Boltanski exhibited photographs of the faces of babies shortly after birth. Interestingly, these babies are not (knowingly) dead (Kurcfeld 2011:1). Instead this work moves these photographs at high speed across the room and by chance stops and focuses on the face of a single baby. This is indicative of transience when the first phase of a human's life fades away and is not remembered. This work also questions the individuality of every human. Through Boltanski's work we thus experience a universal truth about our own transcendental development. Gadamer (1989:xxii-xxiii) elucidates that "the fact that through a work of art a truth is experienced that we cannot attain in any other way constitutes the philosophical importance of art".

This notion is also endorsed by the French philosopher Jean Francois Lyotard who, in his publication *What is Postmodernism*? (1984), views the Kantian sublime as legitimating the *Avant-Garde* as way of extending the critical enterprise to the arts. He (Lyotard in Harrison & Wood 1992:1014) describes the conundrum of contemporary signification in the following manner:

> Presenting the unpresentable; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations; not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable.

Both Boltanski and Victor frequently use their artworks as a device to engage liberties and social commentary that would perhaps be unpalatable in any other form. For example Boltanski relies on the bond within a family, which reflects the momentary period of togetherness. At the Documenta in Kassel in 1972 Boltanski exhibited *Photo Album of the Family D.,* 1971 (Figure 27) and *Reference Vitrines*, 1971 *(*Dirié 2010:190*).* However, in these works, Boltanski utilizes photographs of the lives and faces of the nameless. Boltanski attempts to take an ordinary family and represent them in such a way, that it could have been family members of any of the viewers (Boltanski in Mendelsohn 2010:154).

© University of Pretoria

Figure 27:
Christian Boltanski, *Photo Album of Family D.,* 1971.
Photographs and handwritten text, ca 30 x 20 cm each.
(Christian Boltanski 2009:1).

Incorporating black and white photography as his main medium, he enforces notions of how fleeting life and any given moment can be. The artist thus attempts to showcase that the narratives of his life, could have in fact belonged to anyone. Boltanski refers to this action of gathering and restructuring fragments of memories as *essays de reconstitutions* (attempts at reconstruction) (Dirié 2010:189-190; Grenier 2010:6). It can therefore be interpreted that Boltanski attempts to show that the only way to truly capture a moment is through memory, which in turn can only be resurrected through storytelling. Ruth Rosengarten (2014), who writes on the relationship between loss and memory within the photographic practice, explains that memory is a cultural value, which constitutes the combination of loss and death. She explicates that generally photography is seen as means of truth telling, since what a photograph captures is both true and accurate. Yet within Boltanski's work, this notion is obviously questioned. His works bring both the past and present together (fusing various horizons), and therefore the boundary between reality and fiction is blurred.

In support of the above, reference is made to South African academic Bronwyn Law-Viljoen (2012:99), who quotes Barthes in stating that "an image is death". She (Law-Viljoen 2012:99) infers that "it is always something in the past, an image in which we see our own demise, in which we look into loss, absence, the barely perceptible changes that time causes in our faces

© University of Pretoria

and bodies". This notion supports Heidegger's (1962:299) *Being-towards-the-end*. It is a fact that all humans will die. According to Heidegger (1962:297) "death is encountered as a well-known event occurring within-the-world", and can only ever be truly experienced by ourselves. The death of others is not a true experience, even though our *Being* experiences it alongside the dying person. In fact, through the act of dying, our *Being* is confronted with the "absolute impossibility of existence" (Heidegger 1962:299).

However, one may find hope for a new and resurrected life within Boltanski's photographs. Boltanski (in Mendelsohn 2010:146) explicates that every time a story is told, not only is the person of whom the story is about remembered, but that story becomes a part of the storyteller, as well as the listener (viewer), i.e. once again a simultaneous fusing of horizons occur. Boltanski (Mendelsohn 2010:147) explains that "the artist brings something out that each of us knows, but which until then remains hidden". This notions is affirmed by Gadamer (1989:16), who states that a "memory must be formed". Gadamer (1989:16) further postulates that "one has memory for some things and not for others". Through experiencing this in an artwork, it can relate to the lives of all its viewers: old memories are resurrected and new memories are born. This process thus merges the outlook of the artist, viewer and the society from which the artwork emanates. A hermeneutic spiral is observed and with each viewer's own horizon contributing to the interpretation of the work, a new meaning and understanding occurs, where the artist acts as an intermediator. This also confirms the role of art in 'presenting the unpresentable' in a more agreeable configuration as postulated by Gadamer (1989:xxii-xxiii) and Lyotard (in Harrison & Wood 1992:1014) above.

Boltanski's work creates universal memories, i.e. the viewers might forget the specifics of their own memories, but they can identify with the situation created by Boltanski. The experience of the one (of whom the anecdote is about), therefore is not a pure representation or factual truth, but instead only traces of the truth. Gadamer (1989:16) explains this process by stating that "only by forgetting does the mind have the possibility of total renewal, the capacity to see everything with fresh eyes, so that what is long familiar fuses with the new into a many levelled unity". It occurs when an artist is able to make the viewer suspend his/her disbelief. Von Veh (2012:6) echoes that "history depends on memory and memory is fragile". Transporting the viewer to such a 'hermeneutic space' is facilitated in the work of both Victor and Boltanski, as discussed in chapter two and further elaborated in sections to follow.

The influences of memory and forgetfulness, intertexuality and palimpsest qualities, as well as reference to various horizons in the creation of meaning and understanding are compared to the works of Victor. As discussed in chapter one, Victor was raised as an only child (even though she has a sister twenty years her senior) during Apartheid South Africa. Using the socio-political influences in her immediate society, Victor has a way of immortalising everyday personalities by employing their characteristics in a satirical and humorous, yet brutally honest manner. In *Adoration of St Eugene*, 1988 (Figure 28) the leader of the "radical right winged group, the

© University of Pretoria

Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging", Eugene Terreblanche is both uplifted and ridiculed in a contemporary-medieval-esque style. Von Veh (2008:50) explains that "...through intensely laboured, visceral details and shocking use of displacement and parody" Victor employs religious iconography as a "mode of alienation" and the "subversion of religious authority" (von Veh 2008:50, 66). This notion bears reference to chapter two, where it is observable in Victor's work how she uses the memory and meaning of certain Christian iconography and symbols created through the ages, to infer a certain message and interpretation to the viewers. Victor thus creates a horizon on behalf of the viewer from which he/she should view her works.

Figure 28:
Diane Victor, *Adoration of St Eugene,*1988.
Etching and aquatint, ed of 25, 70 x 40 cm.
(Rankin 2008:7).

Figure 29:
Diane Victor, *101 uses of Electrical Current,*1989.
Etching and aquatint, ed of 25, 10 x 10 cm.
(Rankin 2008:7).

This embodiment of Western influences became first prominent in her work, after visiting European galleries and museums in the late 1980s. Her work markedly resembles the dramatic elements found in the work of Goya, as is apparent in drawings and etchings in the on-going series *Disaster's of Peace*, which is derived from Goya's *Disaster's of war* series. The strong light and shadowy contrasts in Rembrandt's paintings and the skilful technical approach characteristic of Dürer are evident in her *101 uses of Electrical Current*, 1989 (Figure 29), resembling the dimly lit and sinister spaces as found in Rembrandt's work and *Inglorious Bastards: study of the four riders- after Dürer*, 2010 (Figure 30), conceptually referring to Dürer's four horsemen of the apocalypse.

Figure 30:
Diane Victor, *Inglorious Bastards: study of the four riders- after Dürer*, 2010.
Pencil on found pages, 49 x 56 cm.
Goodman gallery, Johannesburg.
(Goodman gallery 2012:1).

© University of Pretoria

Rankin (2008:4) points out that already in her early work Victor made use of iconographies, taking historical events and adapting them with a "personal twist". As Gadamer (1989:xxi) explains, "in understanding tradition not only are texts understood, but insights are acquired and truths known". Ricoeur (1981:106-107) extends this notion by stating that "...if interpretation were only an historic-hermeneutical concept, it would remain as regional as the human sciences themselves... [instead it] is only the anchoring point for a universal concept of interpretation which has the same extension as that of understanding and, in the end, as that of belonging". This is precisely the reason for the selection of the two artists under discussion. Their *Lebenswelt* and fields of reference are worlds apart yet there is some communal significance in their artworks.

The horizon of historical understanding and insight, and a sense of belonging because of this universal understanding, can be experienced in the works of both artists. A key element to this is the reference to death, finitude and resurrection in their work. As discussed above, Boltanski relies on childhood, memories and human condition of forgetfulness to give new and resurrected meaning in his work. Victor, who as discussed in section 2.1.1, has possibly in recent years focused (unconsciously) on her own experience of *Being-towards-the-end* to create understanding of life and death (for herself as artist, as well as giving society a glimpse of the effect that mortality has on an individual).[1]

Victor (2015) explains that even prior to her own diagnosis of Polysystic Kidney Disease (PKD), she paid little attention and was not consciously aware of the possibility that she, like her father, might die due to this disease. Her work has always responded to aggression and violence in a socio-cultural context. However, after her diagnosis in 2008, her work has adapted a conscious and serious reference to the fleetingness of time (Victor 2015). Through the use of ephemeral materials and subject matter, depicting the fragility of the human condition, it can be interpreted that Victor embraces the archetype of the resurrection myth to depict the possibilities of life hereafter, as well as make an attempt to understand what will remain i.e. what continues to happen on earth after the artist dies.

Figure 31:
Diane Victor, *Transcend VI,* 2010.
Ash and charcoal dust drawing, 151 x 100 cm.
Goodman gallery, Johannesburg.
(Goodman gallery 2012:1).

[1] Please note that this is the author's interpretation and not Victor's intention (Victor 2015).

© University of Pretoria

An example hereof can be seen in the series titled *Transcend*, 2010 (Figure 31). Victor created series of ash portraits of old age pensioners in Johannesburg, using the ashes of books that had an impact on their lives. Allara (2012:2) explains that "rather than offering the 'certain hope of…eternal life,' the portraits ask us to reflect on the 'ephemeral and transient aspects of human mortality' ". Von Veh (2012:14) interprets this series by explaining that the "figures appear to have lost their identity as people and are now defined by the collective mass of their responsibilities, problems or beliefs". The figures seem lonely and ghostly, almost as if they are hovering in limbo. They are neither here (amongst the living) nor there (death) and imply the temporality that accompanies human decay. As seen in Figure 31, the body is almost floating in mid-air, barely touching the floor. Parts of the body are wrapped in linen (the feet and knees) or hospital garments (the flimsy and loose underpants), as if the figure is wrapped up in preparation for burial (Allara 2012:2).

Victor's work compels the viewer to confront the process of dying, and through her drawings and medium comments on how society attempts to hide and store away the elderly, in an attempt to disregard the inevitable demise of each society. Heidegger (1962:296) refers to death as "a known mishap". Julia Twigg (cited in Allara 2012:2) further elucidates that "culture provides us with almost no images of the aging body unclothed, so when we do encounter the reality of such, it comes as a visual shock…Older people thus experience their bodies in the context of a profound cultural silence". This is further experienced when the living attempt to 'convince' the dying person experiencing *Being-towards-the-end,* that he will "soon return to the tranquillized everydayness of the world" (Heidegger 1962:297).

Similar to the way society hides away all signs of death and dying, through cosmetic surgeries, anti-aging creams, health spas and gym memberships, they attempt to do the same by 'concealing' the elderly in old age homes. It is simply easier to pretend that death and dying does not affect us, than to deal with reality. In fact, Heidegger (1962:298) postulates that death is considered a "social inconvenience, if not even a downright tactlessness". Mendelsohn (2010:158) too defends the cultural practise of denying death, as it represents the unknown and that dying is often seen as a mistake or sign of weakness, and should thus be avoided. Boltanski (in Mendelsohn 2010:158) similarly to Heidegger and Victor, explains that "Death has become a thing to be ashamed of". Yet, in contrast to the above, he recognizes that death is something completely natural and that as soon as we are born, we are destined to die. Boltanski explains that even in contemporary societies, it is still acceptable to see our grandparents die in their homes (Mendelsohn 2010:158). Dr Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, an American psychiatrist and a pioneer in near-death studies, Loy (1996:69) cited previously and Koestenbaum (1971:26) believes that "when we recognize the reality of the *death of myself*, we experience anxiety. … after the anxiety of death has been faced, the anticipation of death leads to courage, integrity, and individuality".

© University of Pretoria

As confirmed by the above theorists various experiences of death and finitude differ for each viewer of an artwork, and therefore the meaning and understanding of these works are interpreted in diverse ways. It is nonetheless, possible to conclude that the artists lead the viewers in a definite direction (providing a platform for the viewer's horizon) when interpreting their work. As Ricoeur (1981:104) points out, "for the phenomenological 'field of experience' has a structural analogy with non-reduced experience; the reason for this isomorphism lies in the very nature of intentionality". This belief of the artists' experience of finitude and their intentionality as determining factors in creating meaning, are therefore questioned. In the following section this study emphasizes the artists' intentionality through their choice of medium, subject matter and space.

3.3 Fusion of horizons

3.3.1 *Intentionality of the artist*

By incorporating symbols and iconography from various historical time periods, Victor allows the viewer to rely on his/her own 'lived experience' to create meaning of "the historical connection, particular mediated by the transmission of written documents, works, institutions and monuments which render present the historical past" (Ricoeur 1981:116). Hermeneutics is therefore here not only defined as "an inquiry into the psychological intentions [of the artist] which are hidden beneath the text, but rather as the explication of the 'being-in-the-world' displayed by the text [artwork]" (Ricoeur 1981:112). Thus, the intention of the artist, who purposefully referred to the incorporated symbols and iconographies, is vital in the interpretation of an artwork. As Gadamer (1976:184) explains, the "...intentions within the life-world horizon [of the artist] also represent idealizations and therefore contain intentional acts that participate in its building-up" and creation of meaning.

Meaning and understanding are therefore achieved by a subtle interplay of the two components described above. On the one hand the artist leads the viewer in a certain direction by incorporating specific elements into the work. On the other hand, the viewer should find meaning within the work that is relevant to his own *Sitz-im-Leben.* Gadamer (1991:19) elucidates that through "life discussions the fusion of horizons is achieved, by questioning and searching and finding our own way in our own world".

This notion is applicable to the work of both artists, who are very illusive when asked what the meaning of their work is. Victor (2013b; 2015) explains that she has a clear point of departure (emotive response) in mind, when creating a new work. Yet the meaning thereof is unconsciously developed and to a large extend relies on the viewer's horizon i.e. understanding of the work and the symbols and iconography found within. Victor (2013b) therefore suggests that the significance of a work of art should lie within the viewer's interpretation thereof. In works such as, *Scavenger*, *Sleep No More* and *Lifeboat* (Figures 5, 6 and 27), which have a clear link to the pagan myths of the resurrection archetype found in chapter two, Victor's subject matter

© University of Pretoria

originates from a person or an event that has had an impact on her, and is not necessarily pre-conceptualised (Victor 2014). Victor (2013b) has admitted in my interviews with her that her acutely developed visual memory, lends her to draw on her recollections at any point of her art making processes. The artist works intuitively, rarely making detailed pre-sketches, as she believes that a pre-conceived idea of a drawing is merely an illustration thereof, and "kills the work even before you start" (Victor 2013b). Victor (2015) furthermore describes that it is almost as if she sees the work in the corners of her eyes, once she starts to work on the paper.

In contrast to Victor's intuitive creations, Boltanski reverts back to storytelling and provides indirect answers that are set in an imaginary world that can be understood by both the artist and the viewer (Dirié 2010:189; Grenier 2010:5). Even though Boltanski's work generally deals with memories, the transmission of information, human relationships, loss and death, his work is produced from the premise that memory can only survive and live through the telling and retelling of stories (Grenier 2010:5).

Grenier (2010:5) explains that all Boltanski's stories speak of lies and truths interchangeably, "because in art a lie is constitutive of truth and the truth attainable only through lying". This notion is also represented in the form of myths. As discussed in chapters one and two, myths clearly constitute of both fiction and truth. The narratives and stories created by Boltanski (verbally and through his art) are not meant to be factual truths, but instead serve as "vehicles... that the viewer has to recompose and interpret" and are thus accessible by the general public, as most people can relate to the universal stories he attempts to transmit (Grenier 2010:5). The fundamental nature of his work is therefore not about the narrative or any autobiographical truths, but focuses on the aforementioned arcane and enigmatic within most humans, which is re-awakened and brought to the forefront when confronted with his sculptural installations. Furthermore, Grenier (2010:75) states that:

> The intention of the artist was to create foci of physical and psychological intensity. Using pre-existing works – often reconstructed and reorganised – or else elements specifically deployed for the circumstance, he becomes the "director' of a contextualised system that takes into account all the angles from which a piece might be perceived by the public: the character of the building, the route to be followed, the temperature, the lighting, and the dramatic progression of the themes. All these elements are selected to predispose visitors to follow a path that culminates in a process of recollection.

Then however, in contrast to the conclusion above, it now becomes evident that in fact very little is left to the viewers' situatedness, but is much more focused on the artist's intention. Even though the horizon of both the artist and the viewers is likely to be similar, as both are situated in the same historical time period, the artist attempts to make the viewer see, feel and experience the work as he (the artist) intents to. The memories and emotions awakened and resurrected might differ slightly from viewer to viewer, but in general, the perception of life and death is to be understood and interpreted in similar ways. Even Grenier (2010:79) agrees that as

© University of Pretoria

aforementioned the experiences (personal and exterior) of the artist and the viewer "advance as one, with all the threads of remembrance woven into a single strand..."

3.3.2 *Meaning created through medium*

Considering the visual symbolism, the sites (burial sites, catacombs and sarcophagi), together with the natural mediums, such as stone and bone, used to represent the myth of resurrection in pre-historic and early Christian history, as described in chapter two and four, it is clear that there are various elements which contribute to the creation of the works that are now believed to interpret historical societies' faith in the resurrection myth. This is also true for contemporary artists, as well as my own work, which incorporates specific media and particular sites with the symbolism of the subject matter to create meaning in present-day works.

Works created in the twenty first century are not always meant to last for longer periods of time, due to the use of meaningful, but sometimes ethereal disposable media. Experimentation with materials is not unique to modern and post-modern societies (Coddington 1999:20). Pre-historic artists relied on natural mediums such as clay, stone and bone, whereas contemporary artists mostly use manufactured elements in their work, such as oil and acrylic paints, pencils and pastels. The selected artists discussed in this research however, incorporate both natural and manufactured elements. This is evident in Victor's use of smoke, stain and ash-drawings (Figures 6,8,11,19 and 31) and Boltanski's use of disposable objects, light and shadows (Figure 7,18 and 20). My own body of work, as discussed in chapter four, also incorporates both natural and manufactured elements and processes.

Even though her early work has become very recognisable, using expressive qualities of line and form, Victor, as mentioned in chapter one, employs in her more recent work the use of smoke, ash and charcoal powder. Von Veh (2012:10) elucidates that "meaning is ... enhanced by employing a medium that evokes the emotional or physical vulnerability of [her] subjects". Thus, the use of ash and smoke, together with charcoal, as a medium, emphasises the fragility, ephemerality and impermanence of the human condition. In a way Victor is "relinquishing control over her medium" (Law-Viljoen 2012:97). By not being in control of where the smoke, ashes or stains may stick to the page (or glass), Victor (2015) admits that she accepts the lack of power we as humans have over the mortality and frailty of the flesh and the impending death that we as humans face. Only when we accept this lack of power, we will truly experience what Heidegger (1962:311) expresses as "freedom towards death", which relates to arguments concerning death in the research of Kübler-Ross, Koestenbaum and Loy mentioned in section 3.2 of this chapter.

This can be observed in Victor's work *No Country for Old Women,* 2013 (Figure 11), [2] created for the annual Absa KKNK art festival held in Oudtshoorn, South Africa. Victor exhibited a triptych,

[2] *No Country for Old Women* was inspired by Victor's abhorrence and disgust of the manner in which the murder of her elderly aunt, Angela Reardon, was handled by the South African police and the insensitivity shown by both the killers and the community. Reardon worked at her local church and was murdered and buried in her own

© University of Pretoria

which is a large glass, steel and wood altarpiece installation, in a local church hall. Through the use of candle smoke on glass panels, Victor emphasises the fragility and vulnerability of the lives of women and children living in a contemporary South African context. The viewer becomes completely engulfed by the work, which is over four meters high. The Victoria Memorial Hall in Oudtshoorn, in which the work was exhibited, became a sacred space. Due to the religious function of the church, the viewer entered the space with preconceived connotations attached to the interpretation of the work (elaboration on this in section 3.3.3, as well as chapter four).

Victor uses carbon deposit – a natural element, as a new drawing medium, which has come to symbolise the ephemeral and temporary nature of the lives depicted. By employing candle smoke as her main medium, the artist draws a synthesis between her life and the legacy she will leave behind. Candle smoke is hardly a medium that can be preserved for longer periods of time. The glass panels, on which the smoke appears, are used to protect the work from disintegrating, thus extending its life for some time (Human 2013:10-11). However, the works are not immortal, and even if the soot will not fade (as it is protected by the glass), it is encapsulated by a fragile medium that is susceptible to damage and destruction much like the human body. As described before, the inevitability of human death is something we all wish to ignore. On multiple levels however, *No Country for Old Women* draws the attention back to the harsh reality of human mortality. Victor embraces the challenge of consecrating the forgotten. Realising how fragile and vulnerable life is, the artist has found a way to capture the ephemeral in a poignant way.

Perhaps through the medium Victor attempts to accept her own mortality, as described in sections 2.1.1 and 3.2 above. Victor's *Dasein* and *Sitz-im-Leben* is evident and the knowledge of her finitude and impending death has influenced the way she approaches her art making processes. Even though Victor has received a transplant in December 2014, and the immediate danger of her impending death has been lifted, Victor has been made aware of the pressing nature of human mortality. For Victor there is no difference between her artistic and personal life and in both the insecurity of her mortality has pushed to the foreground. Her work is a form of therapy, which she uses to deal with upsetting subject matter, people or conversations that have disturbed and appalled her (von Veh 2008:68; Victor 2013a; Victor 2015).

The glass panels are dedicated to and representative of the murder of Angela Reardon; the rape, murder and disembowelment of Anene Booyens; the stoning of 'witches'; the "therapeutic rape" of lesbians; the abuse and rape of children, as well as the eminent danger women, as mothers, face when raising their children (Victor 2013a). These images are all representative of recent and current events in the South African context.[3] When placed in an altar piece, the images of these figures become bodies placed on coffin-shaped glass panels. The framework becomes a

vegetable garden. The way in which the body was disposed of showed the killers' disregard for and ignorance towards the role and importance of an elderly woman in contemporary society (Human 2013:10-11; Victor 2013a).

[3] They also relate to "an ideology that identifies woman's sexuality as sinful and abnormal" (von Veh 2005:49).

© University of Pretoria

restriction, elevating the women on the one hand, while not allowing them to be completely free of the stigma imposed on them by society on the other. The manner in which Victor stores and transports these panels, namely in wooden coffin shaped crates, adds to the conceptual foundation of the works.

Victor (2013b) explains that "the work makes reference to the tradition of the stained glass windows, which often commemorated the martyrs of a faith". These glass panels are thus not only used to capture the ghosts of various women, who serve as icons, and keep a part of them alive, but also to bring honour and consecrate them, elevating them to the status of saints, where they are regarded as holy and divine (Human 2013:10-11). This notion is undoubtedly linked to the role of the hero, as described in chapter 2.1.1. Once again, the archetype of the resurrection myth is observed in Victor's work. The actions of the (female) figures, as humans, become transcendent and their lives sacred. This notion can be repeatedly seen in Victor's works, such as *Minder, Mater, Martyr*, 2004 (Figure 32) and *The Eight Marys*, 2004 (Figure 33), in which women from various age groups are portrayed as religious icons, who capture the fragility and impermanence of physical life. It can be interpreted that the relevance of the resurrection myth is here explored in a contemporary manner, through which the artist allows her subjects to reach a transcendental state of *Being*. It is possible to presume that through the use of medium and space, Victor entices the viewers to also reach an altered state of *Dasein*, and thus subconsciously attempts to create a departure-horizon for the viewer.

Figure 32:
Diane Victor, *Minder, Mater, Martyr*, 2004.
Etching, aquatint, mezzotint and embossing,
ed of 10, 200 x 100 cm each.
(Rankin 2008:38-41).

© University of Pretoria

Figure 33:
Diane Victor, *The Eight Marys*, 2004.
Charcoal and pastel drawings, 170 x 51 cm each.
Installation, Cathedral of St John the Divine, New York.
(Rankin 2008:61).

Victor's own *Dasein* is clearly immersed in the societal and cultural happenings of her time (seen through her portrayal of subject matter). An important aspect to consider with regards to Gadamer's *fusion of horizons*, is that her (as well as Boltanski's) horizon and that of the viewer are likely to be the same (because of their *Sitz-im-Leben)*. Furthermore, she does not give a definitive meaning, but instead by employing various symbols, from various time-periods, such as those found in the early Christian and Byzantine period, leaves the final interpretation of the work up to the viewer (even though, as seen above, she directs the viewer). Each culture and society will interpret the same work in various ways, as meaning is socially created (Sturken & Cartwright 2001:12). The horizon for understanding is therefore problematic here. It is neither solely the artists' nor the viewers' horizon we are questioning, but instead a communal horizon, where an overlapping occurs. Aspects included to create meaning and understanding thus involve the artists', viewers' and society's phenomenological *Dasein* and cannot simply be evaluated based on the mythical meanings of the subject matter representing the chosen archetype.

Heidegger (1927:151) notes that meaning is created by the structures of "fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception", and that these establish the horizon in which understanding occur. Therefore, "the field of interpretation is as vast as that of understanding, which covers all projection of meaning in a situation" (Ricoeur 1981:107). In other words, intention, situation and original addressee constitute *Sitz-im-Leben* of the artwork. The possibility of multiple interpretations, i.e. a hermeneutic circle, is opened up by cultural texts, which is freed from *Sits-im-Leben* (Ricoeur 1981:108), as we can see in the works of the two artists.

A duality in the implementation of the resurrection myth archetype is evident in the work of both artists. On the one hand their subject matter reflects the notions of death, finitude and resurrected lives. The figures are portrayed as subjects that may obtain a second life through immortalising qualities in the artists' works. On the other hand, the artists incorporate various mediums and materials that are inherently representative of resurrected and renewed intrinsic

© University of Pretoria

worth. Furthermore, the artists draw parallels between their own mortality, as well as the longevity of their artworks. It is possible to assume, that many of the works created by these two artists (as well as most other contemporary artists) will outlive the artists.

These dualities are observable in Boltanski's *Dispersals of Clothing*, 1995 and *No Man's Land*, 2010 (Figure 34) in which the artist sells bagged second hand clothing, which he obtained from flea markets. The resurrection theme becomes apparent when considering the duality, which is visible in the fact that the buyers of these bags could either wear these clothes they purchased, and give them new purpose and meaning, or they could leave the clothes in the bags, with the artists signature on it, as artworks, and thus memories associated with the artist himself or the persons who wore the clothes. Boltanski's own future death and his awareness thereof confirm what Heidegger explains as "the truth of self-manifestation" (Heidegger 1962:69-71; Moran 2000:230).

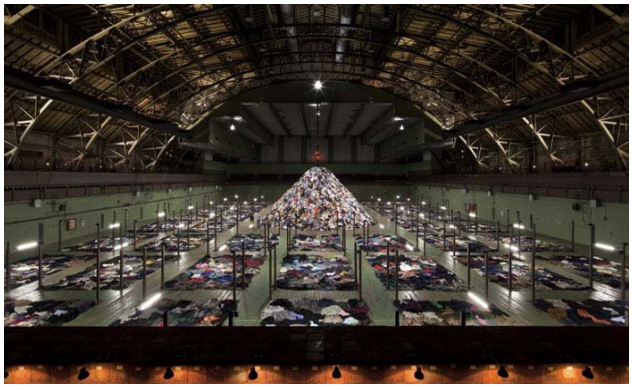

Figure 34:
Christian Boltanski, *No Man's Land,* 2010.
Installation, Paris.
Photo by James Ewing, Courtesy of Park Avenue Armory.
(Rosenbaum-Kranson 2010:1).

In essence, Boltanski gives a renewed life to the objects (clothing), as well as the people to whom the clothing belonged. By recognising that somebody had once worn these clothes, Boltanski thus resurrects the memory of the owner of the clothing (even though they remain nameless). Mendelsohn (2010:144) proposes that by naming something or representing it in one way or another, Boltanski already makes this something live (again). In other words, even if we cannot make a deceased person alive again, we can resurrect the memory of them and say that 'there was'. This notion of the resurrection myth, with reference to finitude is also represented by Boltanski's work *The Library of Hearts,* 2010 (Figure 35). After collecting vast amounts of recordings of actual heart beats, Boltanski created a permanent exhibition on a Japanese island, where the beating hearts can be heard. This library of beating hearts will remind the viewer of the sound of life, of each of the participants, long after they are deceased. Boltanski thus overcomes the fear, and compels the viewer to face their own anxiety, that he too will die someday, even if that is not today (Heidegger 1962:299, 303). His phenomenological *Dasein* is thus consciously confronted with its own mortality, but with the possibility of resurrection. As Heidegger (1962:282) explicates, even after our physical demise, our *Being* can still be part of this world, i.e. through memories and physical reminders.

© University of Pretoria

Figure 35:
Christian Boltanski, *The Library of Hearts*, 2010.
Installation, Japanese island.
(Designboom 2015:1).

Figure 36:
Christian Boltanski, *Lessons of Darkness,* 1986.
Installation.
(Guggenheim 2015:1).

Even though it is a fact that one cannot bring the dead back to life, Boltanski describes in his work a desire "to represent an absence by a presence" (Mendelsohn 2010:159). These concepts are further explored in *Lessons of Darkness*, 1986, (Figure 36) by Boltanski, in section 3.3.3. Not only is this work placed in a religious dimension and transcends human existence, but it also questions death, mourning, remembrance, the persistence of memory and the inescapability of these elements. It almost seems as if the focus is no longer simply on memory, but instead has shifted to the act of forgetting; of being forgotten; of disappearing into oblivion (Grenier 2010:59, 60). The concepts and fears of being forgotten after our death are applicable to each of us (artist and viewer). This notion draws strong parallels to the work of Victor, described above.

Like Victor, Boltanksi's works do not only portray recollections and representations, thus creating simulacrums, but instead commemorates, brings honour and consecrates those who could have been any one of us. Gadamer (1989:137-138) explains that even a copy of a copy has a *Being* independent of its original. Even though there will always be a relation between the original and copy, the image will "ontologically [remain] inferior to what it represents". It is almost as if Boltanski attempts to "restore individuality to the 'disappeared'" (Mendelsohn 2010:143). Added to this, Boltanski reminds the viewer of his humanity, and the fact that he too will die. Behind every photograph lies another duality: the dead all were alive once and all living soon will die (Grenier 2010:65). Susan Sontag (1977:15) explains that all forms of photographs serve as "memento mori", i.e. reminders of death and therefore represent the temporality of any given moment. They only capture a slice of life, i.e. a moment frozen in time, which is gone, as soon as it has happened. This captured moment will last for a long period after the death of the subject, and therefore serves as a reminder of the impending death of all humanity. However, it can be argued, that at the same time, these photographs serve as *memento vitae*, i.e. reminders of life, and that one should embrace every given moment.

© University of Pretoria

With reference to the element of the loss of time and the loss of individuality after death described above, an important aspect which comes to the foreground in the work of both the selected artists is the loss of knowledge, literally, as well as symbolically. "It is the relation of belonging which is subsequently apprehended as the finitude of knowledge. The negative nuance conveyed by the very word 'finitude' is introduced into the totally positive relation of belonging – *which is the hermeneutical experience itself* ", explains Ricoeur (1981:106). Not only the obvious loss of the books which Victor burned, seen in her *Transcend* series described in section 3.2, in order to create the ash-drawings, or the physical photographs of the clearly diseased in Boltanski's work, but also the "loss of a lifetime's accumulated wisdom, understanding, and knowledge" is emphasised (von Veh 2012:34). The *Being* of the sitters[4] in Victors work and subjects in Boltanski's, each have a unique story, which will simply be lost, together with their lives (Allara 2012:3). As Victor's medium suggests, they will simply return to ashes, but are afforded a measure of resurrection in the artworks.

This notion is further enhanced through the title of Victor's 2012 exhibition *Ashes to ashes and Smoke to dust* at the University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, which alludes to a well-known phrase 'Ashes to ashes', with a slight twist of the addition 'smoke to dust'.[5] This exhibition, which was presented in two parts, focused on the one hand on smoke portraits, which according to von Veh (2012:36) symbolised life and the burdens carried by the figures using the process of burning, and on the other hand the ash drawings, which symbolised "death or the afterlife, the remains of the burning process... [which] define the length of a person's life, as the starting point". Von Veh (2008:50) explains that Victor's work is "densely intertextual, interweaving signs and symbols that reach back into art history but also reverberate throughout Victor's own ouvre. This makes analysis a complex procedure since Victor's images are replete with meaning and reference", which links to the premise of dissertation concerning the fusion of horizons.

3.3.3 *Religious symbolism and exhibition space*

Because religious, especially Christian, iconography is a universal tool, accessible globally, preconceived meanings have attached themselves to certain signs and symbols, and hence predicate the interpretation of these visual representations. This is seen throughout the works of Boltanski and Victor. These artists do not only rely on their personal experiences and influences,

[4] It is interesting to note that all the sitters are European, and mainly male. Due to limited space in this research paper, it suffices to say that the works also strongly allude to the vanishing status of previously dominant and privileged groups in South African society. This can be seen in the series title *Lost Words,* 2010, which depicts four portraits of white male Afrikaans literary leaders. The ashes used to create the works, are books written by, or have had a profound impact on, these men. Victor therefore on a much more personal level burns away the knowledge and history of the Afrikaans speaking male. These works emphasise "their current loss of relevance, loss of importance, and the failing of white male hegemony in the post-apartheid corporate milieu" (von Veh 2012:31).

[5] The phrase originates from the biblical text in Genesis 3:19, which reads "In the sweat of thy face shalt though eat bread, till though return unto the ground; for out of it was' t though taken; for dust though art, and unto dust though shalt return". It was further adapted as part of a burial service by the Angelican Church, as found in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer stating that "...we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life..." The link to the archetype of the resurrection myth is undeniable.

© University of Pretoria

or implement pre-selected symbols and signs to emphasise the meaning of their work. They also rely on certain media, and moods created through the use of space and sense of place, to accentuate the importance of the relationship between medium and subject matter in their representation of the resurrection myth.

Von Veh (2005:50,59) elucidates that "with the lack of recent religious art being made and the weakening demands of religion and state in our increasingly individualised millennium society, one might imagine that religious iconography has diminished in its capacity to make a strong and disruptive statement". Victor (2013b; Victor 2015) explains that biblical narratives are a useful source for the departure of the art-making process, as discussed in chapter two of this study. They are universal and because they form such a vital part in the upbringing and educating of young generations, are made public, accessible and understood by most societies.

Victor employs these symbols and incorporates them with fleeting earthly embodiments of power, both mortal and divine. As seen in Figures 11, 28, 32 and 33, Victor "employ[s] elements of shock through the subversive re-presentation of familiar icons. [These icons] generate a sense of distance by which viewers can re-evaluate over familiar imagery and its unconsciously accepted meanings" (von Veh 2008:66). Through subject matter, medium and even space, Victor questions the human condition and therefore the impermanence of any given situation. This can also be seen in for example *Stained Gods*, 2004, a series of full body portraits of God (the father), the son and the Virgin Mary (the mother) "conforming to traditional religious iconography; but they represent a support system that has failed and are therefore stained and smudged with charcoal and water" (von Veh 2008:66).[6]

Keeping with religious iconography, *The Eight Marys* (Figure 33) were exhibited in the Cathedral of St John the Divine, "a setting that allowed Victor to demythologise a religious icon from within the institutional framework that maintains such myths" (von Veh 2008:59). In this work Victor incarnates herself as the religious Mary icon and "makes these decidedly irreverent images truly subversive" (von Veh 2005:60). Mary is represented as being sexually aware, in various stages of life – young, as well as aging, as being rebellious and definitely not as a "submissive virgin" (von Veh 2005:60). This may cause any viewer who deems the space and the icon as holy and divine, to be shocked, filled with anger and even anxiety. It can be said that "religious imagery found in Western Christianity has ... been largely responsible for reinforcing an image of women that is subservient to the dominant patriarchal hegemony in church politics. Woman's ability to attain this ideal renders her forever unworthy" (von Veh 2005:48). It may therefore be inferred that Victor crosses a line here. To some viewers her work might even be interpreted as blasphemous. She does not aim to please the viewers, make them feel comfortable and at peace, as the space by social definition is meant to do, but instead creates a mood that forces any viewer to become introspective and question their own standing in society as being fragile

[6] Note the reference to water, as discussed in chapter two.

© University of Pretoria

and impermanent. A form of rebirth in traditional values is experienced here: by altering the viewer's horizon, new understanding and empowerment is established and the viewer is symbolically reborn. It is argued that the viewer could even reach a transcendental state of *Being*, and his *Dasein* is forever altered. Von Veh (2005:65) aptly describes this phenomenon by stating that:

> ...the representation of religious icons in a subversive context can function as a 'distanciation' technique. They disturb complacent viewing and encourage viewers to re-evaluate their preconceptions to produce what Foucault... has termed an 'ontology of the present',[7] which requires an understanding of the historical beliefs and values that underpin our society today.

As seen above and in the discussion to follow, this use of symbolic venues and the preconceived ideologies and meanings that accompany these site-specific spaces play a large part in understanding and interpreting the work by Victor and Boltanski.[8] This becomes even more visible when investigating for example Victor's series *Brief Lives* created in 2011 for the *Innibos* Festival or her more recent *No Country for Old Women*, 2013 and Boltanski's *Monuments: The Children of Dijon*, 1985 and *Lessons of Darkness,* 1986.

In 2011 Victor made use of an abandoned abattoir to display smoke drawings of domesticated animals used as livestock on large panels of glass. The setting created an atmosphere reminiscent to that of a concentration camp, even though these were images about animals. The feeling of death, loss, abandonment and pain became very evident in the large cold empty space. The smoke drawings are read as "ethereal and atmospheric image[s] that [become] integrated with [their] background" (von Veh 2012:21). Because there is no frame that holds the sheets of glass in place, the panels are allowed to (dis)integrate into the background, allowing the smoke image to appear and disappear, as the sun's rays influence the transient nature in which the images are read. These images could therefore be interpreted in an ethereal manner, as the images vanish and re-appear; die and are reborn. Therefore, the effect created by the space and the mood evoked by the viewer plays an integral part in the interpretation of the work. A similar mood was created when a series of animal smoke drawings were exhibited in a butchery at the 2011 KKNK art festival. Site-specific works have the ability to create a preconceived mood, and hence a predetermined horizon from which the viewer interprets the work.

Similar to Victor, Boltanski uses universally known religious symbolism as a departure point to induce moods of commemoration, lamentation and remembrance (Grenier 2010:52) within each viewer. He thus arouses pre-conceived notions and emotions that specific places create, to portray the sombre, sorrowful and melancholic truths of finitude within us all. As seen in *Theatre*

[7] According to Ricoeur (1981:105) the ontological condition of understanding "can be expressed as finitude".
[8] Due to limited space this study cannot discuss the symbolic importance of space and place in depth. The reader should note that contemporary universal discourses are circulating regarding the importance of exhibition space and site. Two seminal sources to consult in this regard include *Sacred Time, Sacred Space* (2002) by Barry M. Gittlen and *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East* (2001) by Nicolas Wyatt.

© University of Pretoria

d'Ómbres (Figure 20) in chapter two and *Monuments: The Children of Dijon* (Figures 7 and 18) site-specific spaces conjure specific feelings and individual interpretations within each viewer.

Boltanski's *Monuments: The Children of Dijon* (continuous developing series of works), depicts triangular shapes of pyramids, shrines and altars and candles in dimly lit spaces to undoubtedly allude to preconceived religious connotations. As aforementioned, from the mid-1980's onwards, shortly after the death of Boltanski's father (akin to Victor), death became a prominent feature in his works (Dirié 2010:193). Integrating his recent grief and the symbolic and iconographic character of a hospital chapel, the artist established a new platform from which his works are to be interpreted and understood.[9] Grenier (2010:55) elucidates that from this point forward, Boltanski's focus was "the celebration of memory, space conceived as total theatre, the liturgical structure of the visitor's itinerary, and, finally, a predilection for non-museum spaces, for places – often ecclesiastical-laden with history, which place the viewer in a state of heightened receptivity to emotion, rather than to aesthetic pleasure or intellectual curiosity". Thus, location has become an integral part of Boltanski's artworks, comparable to that of Victor. Boltanski believes in the idea of "an exhibition as a single installation" (Dirié 2010:194).

The fusion of horizons, when interpreting the archetype of the resurrection myth within visual art, is most manifest in Boltanski's *Lesson's of Darkness* (Figure 36). Mundane and monotonous biscuit tins are placed underneath the photographs of children's faces. Apart from being reminiscent of portraits of missing children on milk cartons in America and Britain in the 1980s, these refer to boxes and containers used to store, accumulate and treasure childhood memories that are unique and universal simultaneously (National Child Safety Council 2010:1). An interesting element is that we, as viewers, will never know what those tin boxes contain. The fact that there are some things that we will never know, nor understand, is conveyed through this work. The long frail wires used to join the various tins, lightbulbs and photographs could reference connections between the: strong and weak, new and old, meaningful and insignificant, past, present and future, life and death, memories and the forgotten.

The *Lessons of Darkness* formed part of a travelling exhibition through the USA. The horizon of interpretation and understanding of the work thus constantly shifted. As each space has pre-determined meanings attributed to it, each space constitute independent moods. This horizon of understanding also largely relies on the society and culture of the viewers within that area. As this work strongly depends on the space in which it is exhibited, the ultimate meaning and understanding of the work becomes problematic. Gadamer (1989:155) claims that even though a work might move "the trace of their original purpose cannot be effaced. It is part of their being because their being is presentation". This alludes to the *Being* of the objects of art themselves and their inherent meaning attributed to them by the artist (originally). There is thus a significant shift not only in the situatedness of the work (specific space and location), but also the intention

[9] This notion is also applicable to the death of Victor's father, as well as the death of her aunt.

© University of Pretoria

of the artist (should the artist agree to re-locate/re-exhibit the work). Even though the same objects were utilized in each exhibition space, the artist had to "re-organise and reconfigure" the work to suit the various locations (Dirié 2010:194). Additionally, in each new setting, there are new viewers, with different *Sitz-im-Leben*. Again, various references are made here to the hermeneutic circle and resurrection analogies.

Many of the objects in *Lessons of Darkness* are exhibited in ways one would usually find in museums. As Grenier (2010:19) explains, "slices of life are ... removed from their context and treated objectively, with each image or object annotated". The manner in which Boltanski removes the context from his works, makes the interpretation and understanding thereof much more complex. Every object is unique; as is every life. Yet, the circumstances and events of that object could have been the same for any other such object, as is the case with a human life. Strong reference to Eliade's myth of the eternal return is found here. As explained in chapters 1.6 and 2.3, no archetypal narrative is truly unique. By reconstructing the purpose of the objects, Boltanski systematically reconstructs his own life. Likewise, since no framework is given to the viewer, together with the nameless photographs and voiceless objects, the artist leaves it up to the viewer to give meaning to the work, as is in line with only the viewer's *Sitz-im-Leben*. Grenier (2010:29) elucidates this fusion of horizons as follows:

> The story that Christian Boltanski strives to tell us through his works is our own, the story of each viewer who recognizes her-or himself in this generic portrait of life, of the family, of everyday existence. The generic character of this portrait, however, is never due to stylization or abstraction: it is always embedded in the particular, of the individual tracked by her or his essential contingency, and it is through this that the artist confronts us with the universal.

Even though the figures discussed throughout examples of Boltanski's work are not directly linked to specific events or horrors (besides death), his *Archives series* specifically focuses on victims of the Holocaust. This of course has a very obvious link to his childhood, growing up during the war. Despite the fact that Boltanski's father was a Jew, his mother was Christian, and Boltanski was brought up in the Catholic faith (Grenier 2010:xx, 66). Works from this series are generally exhibited in large exiguous spaces, consisting of storage rails, archival cabinets and shelves with continuous rows of enlarged photographic faces (Grenier 2010:66). These images were taken from Swiss newspapers and constitute of nameless, yet still living (when the photographs were taken) faces and are thus removed from a historical horizon. Instead it relies on the viewer's prejudices, beliefs, and knowledge of history to create meaning and understanding.

Boltanski's effective use of space, especially religious spaces, to create meaning, are therefore encountered throughout his discussed works. This phenomenon is also true for the work of Victor. A similar situation as described above was observable, when Victor for example re-exhibited *No Country for Old Women* in 2014 at the University of Johannesburg Art Gallery. The

© University of Pretoria

works in essence, therefore undergo a form of rebirth. They adopt new meanings and are understood differently by the various communities.

3.4 Eschatology

Neither Victor, nor Boltanski (Grenier 2010:129; Victor 2014) are intensely concerned with literary or philosophical readings. Yet, both artists rely on folklore, myths and historical events to create meaning within the interpretation of their work. The most influential sources for both artists are probably the bible and early Christian oral transmissions of myth and belief systems, as discussed throughout chapter two. The "misery of the human condition and the burden of moral responsibility" (Grenier 2010:130), which draws parallels to biblical tales, are manifest throughout the work by both artists. Both could almost be described as representing 'clerics', who spread the realities of the human condition and their fate, by implementing images and morals of certain figures, by consecrating and re-telling their stories.

Considering the works of both artists, semiology of the resurrection myth becomes evident in their subject matter, as discussed in chapter two. This is evident in how both Boltanski and Victor have become (both consciously and unconsciously) obsessed with the notion of death as subject matter, after the death of their fathers. Both artists have clearly incorporated their situatedness and their *Being-in-the-world* in the creation of their works. Victor (2014) admits that this was conscious decision. The *Erlebnis* of a parental death creates a communal horizon for these artists. Any viewer who has lost a parent (or a loved one), could relate to the artists' horizons. Because the viewer has experienced a similar situation in their own *Lebenswelt*, the fusion of the artist's and the viewer's horizons are simplified and a new mode of understanding is taking place. However, for a viewer, who has not experienced this form of finitude, the understanding of the work will take place on a very different horizon. It is therefore possible to say that "the key concept in this respect is that of an *Erfahrungsfeld* (field of experience). The strangeness of phenomenology lies entirely therein: from the outset, the principle is a 'field' and the first truth an 'experience'" (Ricoeur 1981:103). In addition the American academic, Shaun Gallagher (1992:5), explains that we find ourselves always in a hermeneutical circle in which "contexts conditions perspectives and perspectives condition contexts". Every interpretation, every perceptual experience operates within this circular structure.

Victor's *Lifeboat* (Figure 25) and *Sleep No More* (Figure 6), have clear reference to Greek mythologies of Charon carrying the dead across the river on his boat (Rankin 2008:4), as discussed in chapter two. *Sleep No More* was one of the works Victor created for the exhibition entitled *Ashes to Ashes and Smoke to Dust,* 2012. This work is a product of subconscious images coming to the forefront, with no planning or pre-conceived concepts (Victor 2013b). Victor rolled up a sheet of paper, pouring in ash at the one end and unrolling the sheet as the ash distributed throughout. As soon as the artist saw the page filled with ash, her initial intention was to create the Johannesburg skyline. The notion of heaven and hell is enhanced within this clear

© University of Pretoria

divide of above and below, and hence strong reference is made to the Christian notion of Eschatology.

This notion of Eschatology is further enhanced by considering Gadamer (1989:28) explanation that "the divine mystery of life is its simplicity – even if man has lost it through the fall, he can still find his way back, through the grace of God, to unity and simplicity: 'the activity of the logos, that is, the presence of God integrates diversity into unity'. The presence of God consists precisely in life itself, in this 'communal sense' that distinguishes all living things from dead...". Both Victor's and Boltanski's distinct reference to the dead in contrast to the living throughout their work can be understood in relation to Christian Eschatology and Gadamer's explanation thereof.

In addition to Victor's exhibition *Ashes to Ashes*, these notions are evident in Boltanski's *Monumenta*, 2010, where there is clear reference to the Last Judgement. Good and evil is placed next to each other, through the use of photographs of both victims and perpetrators, and the artist makes the viewer aware of the existence of both within all of humanity (also comparable to Victor's works described above). Being a victim and being a perpetrator lies within each human being as is depicted in the work of the two artists described. The viewer is abruptly faced with the final sentence to be delivered on the Last Judgement, which through the work creates an "interrogation of human nature" (Grenier 2010:135). Neither one of the two artists pretends to be the judge of the viewer, confronted with the situation of the human dilemma, but instead they attempt to make the viewers aware of the eschatological perspective of the meaning of human existence.

Additionally to the eschatological references, Victor included images and symbols of the dead, predator and scavenger animals (lions and hyena), which embody implied political satires, religious figureheads (Archbishop Desmond Tutu), and various figures resembling self-portraits in *Sleep No More*. The myth of the Angel of History, who turns around to look at times gone by, yet cannot change anything or save anyone, is a reminder to the viewer that he/she should be aware of what is happening around them (Victor 2013b) and that we all will be penalised for our sins during the Last Judgement. The boat travelling with the deceased from one end of the page to the other, on what resembles a river is a distinct visual reference to the resurrection myth, as discussed in chapter two, and draws strong parallels to her much earlier work *Lifeboat* (Figure 25). Additionally the use of ash, charcoal and erasure enhances the concept of reviving an element that was once dead and giving it a renewed purpose and second life. The medium in itself reveals a meaning that can be understood universally, irrespective of the subject matter.

Besides the medium that is understood universally, the use of a human figure is a universal phenomenon. As mentioned previously, both artists rely on the human figure in their works to portray their interpretation of archetype of the resurrection myth. This is seen in Victor's

© University of Pretoria

reference to her own body and Boltanski's use of photographs of the deceased throughout his works.[10]

Simulacrums are created by re-using photographs of the already existing photographs. Kristeva's notion of intertextuality and Genette's palimpsest are enforced by the act of re-photographing the photographs, creating images that seem unaltered, yet show hints of individuality and even originality. Similarly it could be interpreted that each human, dead or alive, is individual. But Boltanski questions whether they will be remembered as such, specifically with reference to the Shoah. The human (*Menschliches)* factor becomes important here. Mendelsohn (2010:142) explains this type of dilemma created by Boltanski as follows: "The real question is then how to link the uniqueness of each being – everyone is unique and, for this reason, really important – with their extreme fragility. Memory disappears so quickly and nobody is able to stop it". This notion is comparable to the works dealing with frailty, fragility, forgetfulness and ephemerality by Victor described above.

Yet, as Grenier (2010:37) points out, "the crucial question is not [only] individual difference but belonging – be it to a culture, a community, or a historical period". This indicates that Boltanski is more concerned with the existential, than with the historical, political, social or even aesthetic. Ricoeur (1981:110) notes that "...'belonging', which means no longer belonging to the world but belonging to oneself ... is necessary to [find] the objectivity of nature and the objectivity of historical communities on intersubjectivity and not on an impersonal subject". This can be related to Victor's use of herself as model. Similar to Victor, the manner in which many of Boltanski's works are portrayed, places emphasis on the figures as victims: whether they are victims of war, catastrophes or simply a victim of being human, punishment remains the same: inescapable death. In many of Boltanski's later works the human figure, as well as photographic portraits disappear and are abandoned (Grenier 2010:95). They are substituted with objects, such as discarded clothing, seen in *No Man's Land* (Figure 34).

This act of omitting the human figure emphasises the loss, transience, fragility and frailty of life even more powerfully and thus questions humanity. The clothes (Figure 34) represent remnants of something that once was alive. Each viewer ultimately should thus question what will be left behind or remembered of himself/herself. This act of interacting with the belongings of a deceased person "revives... an art that affects the beholder...which deploys its power of suggestion and emotionality to touch a viewer's innermost being" (Grenier 2010:75).

[10] Victor uses her own body as visual reference repeatedly in her work. She (Victor 2014) explains that as a student she was taught to use herself as a model. Even though she is a very shy person, who does not like to draw attention to herself, through the use of mirrors, Victor allows herself to become whoever she wants to be. Whether she intends her figures to be male or female, young or old, she relies on her own anatomy and through performative actions, captures the elements she wishes to enhance. Boltanski in contrast relies mainly on photography, and often re-uses the same photographs repeatedly in a single work, or will make use of the same photographs in various works.

© University of Pretoria

3.5 Synthesis and conclusion

In conclusion to this chapter, it is possible to say that both Diane Victor and Christian Boltanski use their individual art making processes to deal with death (their own or that of others). As Boltanski (cited in Mendelsohn 2010:142) explains, “to be an artist is precisely to try to live with the dead, to make them live again. All the while being quite aware that one can is an illusion”. He further explicates that “to be an artist is perhaps to try to capture life, life that has gone, or life as it exists. Such an attempt is inevitably bound up with the concept of failure...we can save nothing, we can make nothing live again. The battle is a complete lost one” (Mendelsohn 2010:142).

The next chapter contains a discussion about my own body of work and the practice-led research approach followed. My own art practice draws parallels between these two artists, and is influenced by the way their subject matter and medium relate to each other. However, their use of figures is not reflected in my work. Instead, I intentionally omit figures, in order to show that the interpretation and understanding of a contemporary visual artwork, does not solely rely on a material reading, i.e. *what* is presented, but rather on the medium and how it is presented, and on what viewers contribute in terms of their phenomenological *Dasein* and *Sitz-im-Leben.*

© University of Pretoria

CHAPTER FOUR: ENDBORN

4.1 Practice-led research

This study is based on my previous body of work, created for my BA (FA) degree in 2010 (Figures 37). For this MA (FA) study, I further developed my technical expertise in sculpture, by completing additional educational courses. My current installation work takes into careful consideration the medium (bone, concrete and glass) and the manner in which the work is executed and exhibited (such as lighting/shadows, as well as use of exhibition space). I have specifically chosen these ancient, yet contemporary materials because they can be recycled and 'resurrected' to convey the inherent symbolism of life after death, as discussed below.

Figure 37:
Deléne Human, *swallow*, 2010.
Installation: Mixed media, 300 x 1200 x 400 cm.
Photograph by author.

By investigating the relationship between the symbols and materials used, I created a body of work that represents my own interpretation of the archetype of the resurrection myth within a contemporary South African context. This process is discussed below with reference to pre-historic and early Christian semiology and iconography. Furthermore, a continued analysis is provided, comparing my work to that of Diane Victor and Christian Boltanski.

The title *Endborn* refers to the cycle of continued life. At the end of a mythic cycle, there is always a new beginning: life-death-resurrection. The significance of the exhibition title can be understood through a passage by Peter Brook, a British *Avant Garde* theatre director (cited Stein 2004:34) who infers that:

> At any moment we can find a new beginning. A beginning has the purity of innocence and the unqualified freedom of the beginner's mind. But it is only through ending and letting go that we experience the true taste of freedom. Then the end becomes a new beginning once more, and life has the last word.

The above quote supports Heidegger's (1962:311) belief that through accepting our mortality, we will experience complete "freedom-towards-death". Since pre-historic and pagan times, (as has been considered in chapters two and three of this study), this notion has been depicted in the

© University of Pretoria

archetype of the resurrection myth. These myths describe and explain the cyclical changes in nature, the resurrection of a hero or god, rationalize the understanding of death and finally contribute towards humans experiencing a meaningful life. This notion further becomes evident in the installation work also titled *Endborn*, which is discussed below.

4.2 Process

As mentioned in chapter one and section 4.1 above, this study follows a practice-led research approach. It is acknowledged that the body of work, as well as the understanding thereof, developed and changed as the process of sculpting it continued.

A seminal influence on the emotional and mental development of my work can be experienced through interpreting my own phenomenological *Dasein* and *Being-in-the-world.* The hermeneutical circle, as elucidated throughout this study and seen in the interpretation of the work by Victor and Boltanski, is also applicable to my own body of work. The understanding of the meaning of my work is achieved through a fusion of horizons, by the viewers, the subject matter, medium and site-specific space in which the works are viewed. While preparing for this exhibition my intentions, individual and personal situations, as well as my research findings have made me aware of my *Being-towards*-death and have facilitated in the discovery of a future state of *freedom-towards-death*.

A professional relationship with Victor has sensitised me towards the human condition of mortality. However, the awareness of attempting to accept and understand death and life after death, has been intensified in recent months. A close family member, Koos Weyers, was diagnosed with bone marrow cancer approximately at the time of the commencement of my research for this study in 2012. As Weyers received various treatments and went through different stages of accepting his situation, I was immensely influenced by his growth towards a transcendental state of *Being*, and in response went through inherently different, yet similar phases in my understanding of his experiences. Some of these experiences include notions of denial.[1] Heidegger (1962:297) comments on this situation by stating that the living will attempt to convince the dying person that he soon will return to 'normal' and his everydayness. This has been true for the situation in my own family. My acceptance of the situation can be interpreted in the works created by me for this study.

The phenomenological development of the process of creating the body of works could be divided into three stages. Similar to the three stages of a hero's journey, as researched in chapter two, the three stages through which I progressed created self awareness and a development towards a transcendental *Dasein*. I have also come to better understand my own *Being-towards-death*, due to the aforementioned family crisis and the perpetual presence of narratives of violence in South African society.

[1] Denial is regarded as one of the seven stages of grief, as identified by Kübler-Ross (1969; 1975) in her writings about death.

© University of Pretoria

However, I am not faced with immediate and tangible danger towards my mortality, hence have not yet been challenged to fully accept my *Being-towards-the-end.*

Figure 38:
Deléne Human, *Alles ist lebend tot III*, 2015.
Installation: Concrete, steel, epoxy,
ca. 60 x 70 x 40 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

Figure 39:
Deléne Human, *Alles ist lebend tot I*, 2015.
Installation: Concrete, steel, epoxy,
54.5 x 70 x 52 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

During the initial stages of my practice-led research, I have focused on the process of my medium and the manner in which I created the works. The concrete ossuaries, *Alles ist lebend tot I* and *III* (Figures 38 and 39), as discussed below, were created by using an elementary process of creating animal bone impressions in clay-moulds (Figures 40 and 41). Likewise, for the creation of the glass bones, impressions in clay were used and then fired in a kiln to create ceramic moulds (Figure 42 and 43). Similar to what Heidegger and Gadamer vocate, I aimed to return to the essentiality of matters (*die Sachen selbst)*, i.e. the inherent qualities and meaning of my materials. Clay is evocative of earth and reminds of the creation in Genesis, which simultaneously alludes to the notion of dust returning to dust.

Figure 40:
Bone used in impressions for clay moulds, 2015.
Bone and clay, size varies.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

Figure 41:
Bone impressions in clay moulds, 2015.
Bone and clay, size varies.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

© University of Pretoria

Figure 42:
Bone impressions in ceramic clay moulds, 2015.
Bone and clay, size varies.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

Figure 43:
Slumped glass impressions, 2015.
Bone, glass and clay, size varies.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

By focusing on the malleability and recycling, hence resurrective qualities of clay, I developed a process through which only natural and handmade objects were used and re-used. Hours were spent wedging clay, creating impressions with bone, firing them in pottery and glass kilns, casting, de-moulding and cleaning the casts (Figures 44 and 45). In undergoing this process as the artist, the aim was to literally spend my time creating work through a process that nobody else will see or experience. My focus was to question what will eventually be left behind of “me”, as the artist and an individual, after my own death. All the ‘invisible’ hours of my labour will eventually allude to ‘nothingness’ and simply be lost, similar to the identities of the figures portrayed in Victor and Boltanski’s works (Figures 7, 11, 18, 20, 26, 27, 31, 34, 35, 36), as described in chapters two and three.

Figure 44:
Concrete cast in clay moulds, 2015.
Concrete and clay, size varies.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

Figure 45:
Concrete cast in the process of being cleaned, 2015.
Concrete and water, size varies.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

© University of Pretoria

The implementation of impression moulds is important. Similar to structures and myths created throughout human history, I created impressions of the actual bones, leaving an essential trace of their appearance and shape behind. As intertextuality and palimpsest emphasise the layering of texts and imprints from various societies, the process of my work also relies on the *Sache selbst* to create a lasting effect from which I could continue to develop the process.

This first stage created a lot of self-imposed frustration, as the tools needed to speed up the process, such as power drills and grinders, were available to me. But I consciously chose not to use them during this phase, as I wanted to experience the early Christian and pagan methods of creating various structures from natural components, which are referred to in this study. This phase could also describe my disbelief and the denial of an impending lapse of time.

The second stage of this process, in contrast, evoked a personal sense of acceptance and willingness in the approximation of 'the end'. Contemporary tools were used, indicating progression of human technological developments, as well as accepting that to an extend as Baudrillard (1995:126) explains, "little by little, the dead cease to exist". Once the process of creation has ceased, the 'artist's voice' will become vague and eventually dissipate irrespective of the tools used. Thereafter, in years to come (and after my death), my *Dasein* might no longer be recognised by the living and even my artworks will possibly cease to exist. This was followed by the realisation that I was essentially creating the works for myself and not the viewer. A process of self-actualisation was achieved in detaching from the 'last judgement'.

During this stage I still had to struggle with conflict, self-doubt and a lack of faith in questioning what will happen after death. Nonetheless, my struggle against the *Ungeheuer*, as explored in chapter two and discussed in the work by Victor, was evident. At the end of this phase, I came closer to accept the mortality of each human, and hence my own *Being-towards-death.* Through the production of my work and the process of this research study, as well as my personal family situation, a conscious awareness has been created that my time on earth is limited, and most actions following this realisation, have been directed towards addressing my own phenomenological *Dasein* and *Being-towards-death.* This notion of reaching a transcendental state of existence could be further understood in relation to Eliade's (1954:6-7) theory that all archetypes originate from a celestial world.

The third stage commenced during the finalizing and installation of this body of work and has not yet ended. After coming to terms with my own *Being-towards-death*, I have come to realize that life, death and life after death, are all equally beyond human control. The intense processes in the ceramic and glass kilns, spontaneous cracks, fissures and stains that appear unexpectedly in the sculptures provide a metaphoric language that seems appropriate to speak about this phase. Similarly, the interpretation of an artwork, and the fusion of horizons cannot be controlled by the intentionality of the artist, nor the horizon of the viewer alone. The hermeneutic circle persistently

© University of Pretoria

develops, and the *Dasein* of the artwork (not the artist) continues long after it leaves the hands and studio of the artist.

The following section investigates my horizon as artist, based on intentionality through the use of subject matter, medium and exhibition space. Even though this study has shown that the meaning described below will not necessarily correlate with the viewer's interpretation, it is essential to indicate my intentions in the work in order to eventually reach a hermeneutical fusion of horizons.

4.3 Intentionality, medium, exhibition space and subject matter

Cultural theorist and modern philosopher, Jean Baudrillard (1995:1272) defines death as "being simply the line of demarcation that separates the dead from the living". However, Koudounaris (2011:11), author of *The Empire of Death* (2011), believes that this line can be fluid. The idea and meaning of death varies from culture to culture, society to society and era to era. In many cultures death is not a boundary, and becomes part of life. This can for example be seen in various religious rituals such as the Famidihana (turning of bones)[2] held in contemporary Madagaskar.

Even though such tribal rituals might be popularly regarded as pagan and even 'uncivilized' by modern Christians, they have also been implemented in the early Christian tradition. This is evident in the use of charnel houses found on consecrated ground throughout Europe. For example, the highly decorated ossuaries found in the Fontanelle cemetery in Naples (Figure 46) or the Santa Maria della Concezione in Rome (Figure 47), serve as shrines and altars, which Christians, contemporary as well as 16th century, have visited to communicate with the dead (Koudounaris 2011:12). This is supportive of the premise of this study, indicating that the archetype of the resurrection myth is understood, lived and experienced in contemporary society, as well as ancient time periods. The ossuaries, *Alles ist lebend tot I, II* and *III,* created for this study are further explored below in chapter 4.3.3.1.

Figure 46:
Ossuaries found at the Fontanelle cemetery in Naples, ca 1647.
Human bones, size varies.
Fontanelle cemetery,Naples.
(Alberts 2010:1).

[2] This ritual allows family members to remove the bones of the deceased from its coffin or crypt and after wrapping it in a new shroud, dance with it to live music (Koudounaris 2011:11).

© University of Pretoria

Figure 47:
Capuchin crypt at the Santa Maria della Concezione, ca 1528.
Human bones, size varies.
Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome.
(Vadala 2013:1).

Koudounaris (2011:14) argues that in pre-modern times, the human body and soul were not considered separate entities, and thus the dead body would simply become another form of our individuality. This is explained by Heidegger (1962:36-51), who infers that *Being* is simply understood in relation to time. In other words, *Being* exists before and after death, however, their different states and modes of understanding depend on the time in which they are defined, including the individual's presence (alive) or absence (deceased).

However, because of our contemporary shift in thought, and our beliefs that the dead body (or remains thereof) should be stored away from human sight, as depicted in the work of both Victor and Boltanski, "our fundamental concept of individuality" is undermined (Koudounaris 2011:14) by society rendering dead and aging bodies invisible. This is evident in the way that the dead are portrayed as "natural" and "lively", especially in Boltanski's photographs, as they would appear while living, in order to give the illusion of their individuality still being intact. This however, creates a conundrum, as the known 'natural' state of a dying body is decay and putrefaction. Victor's work moves towards the latter description, as her medium (ash and smoke) indicate temporality, decay and loss, but are paradoxically implemented to give the people she is representing a 'renewed' individual visual presence.

As discussed in the following sections, my own body of work, *Endborn*, emphasises narratives of loss and decay, but also resurrection and life after death. In contrast to the selected artists and as mentioned above, I have consciously made the decision to create non-figurative work (omitting the human figure). This would imply a restriction in the understanding and interpretation of my work, as reference would be made to specific individuals. Instead I have created artworks, relying on the medium (the metaphoric use of bones and glass), subject matter, site-specific space and the individual viewer's horizons, to create meaning. Bochi (1994:58-59) infers that abstract symbolism (omitting the figurative) is representative of the divine realm or celestial world. This means that the symbols and icons used in my work are intended to speak of a transcendental state of *Being* and thus time before and after death, as described above by Heidegger (1962:36-51).

© University of Pretoria

4.3.1 *Medium*

4.3.1.1 Bone

By using found bone as my main medium and core subject matter, the fundamental understanding of the symbolism indicates loss and death. However, by combining the rawness of bone with the transparent nature of glass, a mood of transcendental freedom is envisioned.

Since pre-historic times, bone has been used as a robust material from which decorative, sharp, cutting or stabbing tools have been made. Bone has previously been used in piano keys, handles of cutlery and corkscrews and other decorative and useful tools. However, the use of bone in the common post-industrial household has waned and its association has become distasteful. Instead, materials that are not associated with death and loss are sought after. The use of concrete and glass casts with rough edged bones (clearly simulacrums) in my sculptures refers to the historical 'transfiguration' of bones in alternative materials. This is reminiscent of Boltanski's re-purposing of photographs. My work relies undoubtedly on palimpsest and simulacrum to create a fusion of horizons.

Found animal bones are clearly not human, but may be seen to refer to these. Due to moral and ethical reasons, I was unable to use human bone for my artworks. However, in essence it is inconsequential which type of bone has been used, as the understanding of the work relies on the essentiality of the materials used (whether human or animal). Similar to both Victor and Boltanski, who rely on pre-conceived notions created by Christian iconography and symbolism, as seen in chapters two and three, my work relies on the viewer's pre-understanding of the connotations attached to various materials, such as bone.

Bones in my work are used, with the intention to celebrate death and what happens to humans after death, emphasising the bare essence of what all living creatures are. The limited scope of this study precludes an in-depth discussion on the implication of animal rights and associated debates. This study acknowledges contemporary discourses appropriate to discussing the use of animal bone in artworks. In relation to this, the study recognizes that a conceptual reading with reference to the animal bones is possible. Similar to the work of Victor described in chapter one to three, where figures are trapped inside of animals (Figures 5, 12 and 13), the use of animal bones may imply that human character or individuality may be beastly despite differences of accomplishments, or species.

A further reading of the work may reference the pagan narratives of cyclical changes, as seen in chapter two. Like the cycles of nature, there is a cycle of life, also indicated in the title and main installation work of this exhibition, *Endborn.* In bone (human or animal) and from bone, new life is created. For example bone shavings are used in nature to encourage new growth of plants, and insects make their nests inside the bones of animals found in the veld and bone tissue cells can be replicated for medical purposes.

© University of Pretoria

There was also irony in only consciously realising close to the end of the research process that Weyers, who has had a profound influence on this particular research study, was diagnosed with *bone* marrow cancer. This was not a conscious result while choosing the medium. That, which essentially should provide Weyers with life, is causing his death. Koudounaris (2011:15) points out that in contemporary society, we have also become aware of unhygienic and bacterial associated with putrefying bodies and sites, and thus we have come to associate the dead (body) as unsanctified and as the living, should not associate ourselves with the spaces containing the dead.

Up until the 19th century the stigma surrounding human bones did not exist. Instead, charnel houses were build on consecrated ground and the human bones buried there were considered to be blessed. It is a fact (Koudounaris 2011:16), that human bones were symbols not only of mortality, but instead "the promise of resurrection". Symbols and signs of bones reminds viewers of "the passage of time [which] inevitably brings an end, but also that it brings a new beginning" (Koudounaris 2011:16).

These symbols are deities unambiguously associated with a resurrected life. Reference can also be made to the biblical text Ezekial (Ezek 37:1-15). This text speaks of a valley of dry and lifeless bones, which received a resurrected life and continued to live once more, through the grace of God. The breath of life is gifted to the bones, which represent the resurrection of Israel. Similarly, the use of bones in my artwork represents the possibility of life after death and the human realisation and acceptance of finitude and the fleetingness of life. It could even be argued that through the grace of a transcendental deity (God), limited time is granted to humans on earth.

4.3.1.2 Concrete

Religious reference and Christian iconography is visible throughout my work, similar to the works of Victor and Boltanski. For this, the exhibition's choice of materials, as well as exhibition space, distinctly refer to Gothic architecture and styles. Gothic aesthetic sensibilities have been "theorised as an instrumental genre, re-emerging cyclically, at periods of cultural stress to negotiate the anxieties that accompany social and epistemological transformations and crises" (Hurley 1997:5). Contemporary artists, (such as the ones selected for this study) and I, are at liberty to re-visit and re-image such historical sensory experiences. Therefore concrete is used in my work to emulate various structures found in society, literally and conceptually.

During the twelfth century, skilled masons were employed to carve accurately and uniformly (Johnson 2003:145). Apart from the other connotations, discussed earlier in this research, the concrete ossuaries in this exhibition are reminiscent of stone traceries (decorative ribs and bars) found in Gothic church windows. During that era there was also a reliance on the importance of relics and shrines in not only churches, but also chapels. Artists and masons believed that God "was on their side" and hence the notion of rebirth was fostered during the creation of such structures (Johnson 2003:148, 149).

© University of Pretoria

Similarly to the use of rib bones in my structures, as discussed in section 4.3.3.1 below, Gothic architects created a skeleton of ribs for initial and internal support in churches (Johnson 2003:151). It is interesting to note that three ribs met at single point to uphold the structures (Johnson 2003:152). As mentioned in chapter two, the number three is of biblical importance, and is observable throughout my work. Pythagoras called this the number of completion. It has a beginning, middle and an end. Not only in Christian iconography, but throughout many religions, cultures and superstitions, is this number significant. In Christian symbolism, it suggests the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as well as the three days that Christ spent in the grave and Jonah in the belly of the fish. Furthermore, the number three is symbolic for the three parts of the cosmos: heaven, earth and netherworld (as signified in my installation) and a symbol for a higher power or holiness. Lastly, three could also be representative of time: past, present and future; life, death and resurrection (Bronswijk 1987:58; Ferguson1966:154; Forstner 1961:63; Stander 2000:198).

4.3.1.3 Glass

The notion of time and the archetype of the resurrection myth is further enhanced in my work by incorporating glass. Glass is one of the most durable building materials, yet at the same time it is extremely brittle (Button & Pye 1993:195; 211). It is also the one of the few natural substances that can be re-purposed indefinitely. Instead of negative connotations of loss and disappearance, it is anticipated that the transparency and the strenuous process of high temperatures the glass has withstood (to be slumped, blown and annealed) can evoke emotions of liberty and a lack of restriction. The inherent qualities of fragility, transparency fluidity and coagulation to transience could metaphorically represent the human experience of reaching a transcendental deity, and hence a complete *Being-towards-death* and an absolute *freedom-towards-death* (Heidegger 1962:311).

Furthermore, glass symbolizes ideals concerned with natural light and transparency. Button and Pye (1993:3) claim that “glass stands for the illumination of dark places of vernacular superstition by the pure light of rationality”. It is therefore possible to say that not only myself as artist has accepted the process of reaching a transcendental understanding of death (and therefore life), but that the viewer too, should to a certain extend rely on the given horizon to complete the hermeneutical circle of understanding. The words by Button and Pye (1993:12) to describe the use of glass for “interior light reflection and inter-reflection, to produce adequate illumination...” can thus be interpreted on two levels: literally and conceptually.

Gothic cathedrals were structures consisting of limited materials, allowing for a mood of illumination, open space and possibilities of spiritual freedom. During the medieval era of Gothic architecture natural *chiaroscuro* of the atmosphere was successfully implemented by incorporating stained glass windows (Johnson 2003:153). The use of glass distinctly refers to otherworldly and enigmatic moods. Reference is made to Abbot Denis Suger, who was a key

© University of Pretoria

figure during the creation of Gothic Cathedrals, especially concerning the use of light and glass to indicate a transcendental possibility of life. Suger brought metaphysical concepts into reality by using glass to appeal directly to the senses (Johnson 2003:155). He relied on light from the sun let through large glass windows to illuminate and provide a mystical appearance to the inner spaces of cathedrals, containing the bones of saints (Johnson 2003:154).

The incorporation of stone and glass, held together by rib bones to create various structures are explored in my work, as discussed below. Thus, by incorporating both new and recycled materials, I draw a synthesis between mediums used in ancient, historic and contemporary times to create frameworks and structures. The purpose is to draw attention to the use of both old and new structures that influence the shaping of contemporary relevant structures. These structures refer to the incorporation of ancient and contemporary myths, to create currently valid myths in society, such as the archetype of the resurrection myth. Barthes (1972:120) believes that there is "no fixity to mythical concepts: they can come into being, alter, disintegrate, disappear completely". This notion can be used to describe the understanding of my work.

4.3.2 *Exhibition space*

Existential debates concerning space and time have been part of religious debate for centuries (Wyatt 2001:1). Wyatt, reader in Religious studies at the University of Edinburgh, explicates that space and time are two entities that cannot be separated and they are "fundamental roots of human culture". Heidegger (1962:39) infers that *Being* can only be understood in relation to time and that "time needs to be explicated primordially as the horizon for the understanding of Being". Wyatt (2001:53) continues that human experience is largely based on awareness and memories, as was discovered in especially Boltanski's work in chapter three. Similar to Eliade (1954:32), as seen in chapters one and two, Wyatt (2001:53) infers that humans rely on narratives of gods to guide and validate human activity. I postulate that humans use symbols in order to understand the godly narratives and apply it to their own phenomenological *Dasein.*

Specific exhibition spaces are used by the two selected artists, as well as myself, to create a particular horizon for the viewer, as well as a phenomenological *Dasein* of the artworks. As seen in Victor's *No Country for Old Women*, and Boltanski's *Monuments: Children of Dijon*, churches and cathedrals create an identifiable mood and thus enhance the intention of the artist and horizon in which the artist wishes the work to be interpreted. As Wyatt (2001:187) implies, a horizon of understanding could also be referred to as "the point of intersection of spatial...difference, [i.e.] from profane to sacred". Gadamer (1989:150) similarly points out that "'the profane' is the place in front of the sanctuary. The concept of the profane and its cognate, profanation, always presuppose the sacred".

It could therefore be said that when entering the chapel in which my work is exhibited, I aim for the viewer to cross a metaphysical boundary. Wyatt (2001:183) explains that the metaphor of a specific space is vital, as it is largely responsible for "the person who transcended a

© University of Pretoria

boundary...moving from ordinary time into an extraordinary mode of time". This boundary is a transcendental state of understanding of the viewer's own phenomenological *Dasein*. Similarly, by creating the work, I have reached a transcendental state of *Being*, and by accepting my *Being-towards-death* acknowledge the possibility of a resurrected life.

Wyatt (2001:183) infers that "boundaries that require crossing, because they impose unwelcome limitations, such as death, on people, may be seen in terms of space or time, or a combination of them both". As seen in chapter two, pagan myths and narratives can be understood by reading time as being either human (finite) or divine (timeless). The temporal time on earth is contrasted with life everlasting, reached through death and rebirth in the afterlife. The issue of time is therefore essentially explored in relation to space (Bochi 1994:55). This combination of time and space is vital in the interpretation of my work, as was also seen in the interpretation of the work by the two selected artists. Intertextuality and palimpsest is observable when considering, that ancient Egyptians similarly believed that mortal life is seen as a phase preceding life everlasting. Through death, which is a necessary phenomenon, "transition into a new form of existence" is possible (Bochi 1994:55).

In contemporary South Africa, especially during a time of insecurity and violence, seen through xenophobic attacks, farm murders, political riots and historical statue demolition, the current society is in desperate need to believe in the possibility of new life, new opportunities and especially hope. The possibility of resurrection through hope and faith is explored in my work. Reference is made to my phenomenological upbringing in a Dutch Reformed Christian household. The chapel as exhibition space is intentional because the church can be seen as the "epitome of cosmology" (Johnson 2003:150).

The virtually indestructible stone used to build Gothic Cathedrals and early Christian ossuaries and my own interpretation of ossuaries, could imply eternity. It was also believed that the higher up the building, the closer humankind can be to God, thus signifying a release from earthly bound modalities. An 'escape' from earth to heaven was therefore achieved through the material and building style. This is seen in the installation work *Endborn*, where a distinct movement is created from the floor to the ceiling of the chapel. Gombrich (1995:189) infers that in Gothic architecture "we forget the weight of this pile of stone and the whole structure seems to rise up before us like a mirage". My work hopes to emanate a similar understanding.

Similarly to Gothic cathedrals, which relied on a *crypt* (a raised area with a columned room below at the high altar-end) to place treasures, my chosen exhibition space hosts three ossuaries, which could be equated to treasures, at the far end of the chapel (Johnson 2003:145). As Levine (in Gittlin 2002:126-127) explicates, sacred spaces of worship contain demarcation zones indicating "gradated sanctity", thus restricting human access to spaces allocated for the divine.

© University of Pretoria

The specific exhibition space, the chapel at the Drama department of the University of Pretoria, has thus been chosen to contribute to the hermeneutic circle of interpretation. Becker (2002:70) explains the situation as follows:

> Although all media deal with the experience and response, the fact exhibitions display the real thing allows for a different kind of reaction. The physical presence of the object, its scale technique, colour and tactility ...are present for the spectator to see and react to directly.

Gadamer's fusion of horizons is prominent here. The exhibition space therefore "not only recalls something whose meaning is already familiar, but it can also say something of its own, and thus it becomes independent of the prior knowledge it conveys" (Gadamer 1989:149).

Essentially, temples and other cult installations were conceived as divine residencies or as a visitation site of the gods (Levine in Gittlin 2002:125). However, contemporary readings indicate that "exhibitions are relationships between objects, curators and space woven together by concept and interpretation" (Becker 2002:70). Gadamer (1989:xxx) concurs by stating that "it is true that everyone who experiences a work of art incorporates this experience wholly within itself: that is, into the totality of his self-understanding".

Evidently, the interpretation of my body of work depends on the completion of the hermeneutic circle. The fusion of horizons occurs when the viewer acknowledges the exhibition space, together with the subject matter, medium and intentionality. The following section considers all of these aspects contributing to the artist's (my) horizon, as well as the phenomenological *Dasein* of the artworks.

4.3.3 *Artworks*

4.3.3.1 *Alles ist lebend tot I, II* and *III*

The concept for my bone boxes, *Alles ist lebend tot I, II* and *III* (Figure 48), derives from the early Christian ritual of osselegium. Ossilegium is a burial custom from around the first to third centuries AD, mostly practiced by Jews in Jerusalem. After a person had died, the deceased would be wrapped in linen and buried in a simple grave. For approximately a year the family would mourn the death of the loved one. However, the ritual predicated that after a year, the bones would be excavated (as the flesh would by now have been putrefied) and re-buried in an ossuary (Figure 49) made of stone, wood or clay (Aviam & Syon 2002:151; Fine 2001:1). This process is indicative of the early Christian belief that flesh binds a human to this earth, but that bones are a symbol of the possibility of a new, thus resurrected life and hence life everlasting.

Figure 48:
Deléne Human, *Alles ist lebend tot I*, *II and III,* 2015.
Installation: Concrete and bone, ca. 600 x 700 x 400 cm ea.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

© University of Pretoria

Figure 49:
Jerusalem ossuaries, dating ca.first century AD.
Clay and limestone, ca.30 x 46 x 61 cm.
Archeological collection of the State of Israel, Jerusalem.
(Fine 2001:1).

The use of concrete in two of my ossuaries (Figures 38 and 39) refers to Gothic architecture, as described above. Where the ancient and early Christian ossuaries were mostly constructed out of clay or lime stone, the concrete is a modern alternative. The flat and undetailed inner sides are similar to the exterior of early graves, sarcophagi and ossuaries, which were selectively decorated and indicated only the essential information of the deceased (Figures 46 and 49). This custom possibly signified the early Christian belief in life everlasting (Aviam & Syon 2002:152-153). The details of my ossuaries remain on the outside. In contrast to the early Christian ossuaries, which served as *memento mori* (reminders of death) (Koudounaris 2011:15), my ossuaries aim to serve as *memento vitae* (reminders of life) and especially life after death.

Clay ossuaries were produced, but little documentation exists explaining their significance (Aviam & Syon 2002:153-154). By using clay as a mould in the production process of *Alles ist lebend tot I, II* and *III* I accolade the original clay ossuaries. Further parallels are drawn to the early Christian ritual. Instead of placing bones inside the ossuaries, my bone boxes are constructed of bones (real bones and concrete casts) (Figure 50). Within this horizon, the lack of solid walls, floor and roof hopes to draw attention to the contained space and perhaps something more than just the bones, similar to the intentions of the medieval Abbot Suger.

Figure 50:
Deléne Human, *Alles ist lebend tot II*, 2015.
Detail: Installation: bone, 67 x 70 x 38 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

© University of Pretoria

Traditionally, the lids of ossuaries were flat, gabled or rounded (Fine 2001:2). Reference is made to this tradition in *Alles ist lebend tot*. The use of rib bones as the roof of the ossuaries (Figure 38 and 39) imply a shared purpose. On the one hand, ribs contain and protect important organs necessary for continued life. On the other hand, the concrete ribs protect the implied soul or *Being*. The space within is emphasised, yet appears to escape the confines of the box through the use of light and shadows (Figures 38, 39 and 48). This description refers back to section 4.3.1.2 above, describing 'ribs' used in Gothic architecture to emphasize concepts of lightness and freedom of restrictions.

In addition to the open spaces created in Gothic cathedrals and in these ossuaries, the use of light implies something beyond the life of the bones i.e. human *Being,* and therefore links the physical and spiritual aspects of life. As the bones are sturdy and 'contain' light and space, it is implied that the bones are left behind when one transcends mortal existence. Reference is made here to Boltanski's use of light and shadows, explored in chapter two, when discussing pagan and Egyptian references to the sun-myths and Gods. Light and shadow has thus been used to create a certain mood and enforce a pre-determined conceptual understanding and hence horizon, from which the viewer might read the work.

The ethereal shadows reflected onto the wall are a mimesis of the actual work, and thus the work can be considered as an archetype reflecting onto a new surface. Although this reflection will vary at different points of time, depending on space, place and time, the original version of the work will always be the point of departure of understanding. This notion endeavours to reflect Eliade's understanding of archetypes and a celestial world, as described in chapters one to three. Additionally, the shadows and light can be understood in relation to Kristeva's notion of intertextuality and Genette's palimpsest to describe the way that one text influences and overlaps another in order to create new structures and texts. The latest text is always influenced and affected by the earlier version of that text, i.e. artwork.

The typical use of geometric shapes in the negative spaces have been contrasted to the organic shapes of bones and been given a porous appearance. The aim is to visually create a connection to the bone material, as well as remind the viewer of Gothic iconographies and Christian symbolism. As Koudounaris (2011:15) explains, instead of our realization of our finitude, i.e. referring to *memento mori*, we are often faced with reminders of death as *timor mortis*, i.e. "instead of simply reminding us of our own mortality, death tends to provoke fear". It is important to understand that "bone houses of centuries past were sacred sites, and many incorporated chapels of worship, making them places not of fear, but of eschatological hope" (Koudounaris 2011:15). It is thus possible to conclude that death is not only a natural and biological necessity, but also a spiritual one.

© University of Pretoria

4.3.3.2 *Endborn*

The notion of reaching a spiritual and transcendental state of *Being* is further explored in the sculptural work, *Endborn* (Figure 51) comprising an ouroboros and glass and bone installation. My work explores the continuity of life, the realisation of human finitude and life everlasting.

Figure 51:
Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015.
Installation: Glass and bone,
ca. 450 x 220 x 210 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

The symbolic use of the ouroboros (tail-eater) sign can be found in visual representations dating ca. 5 000-3 000 BC. The use of the snake symbol was later adapted by Greek societies, who refer to the symbol as the ouroboros (Bochi 1994:58). During these eras, the ourboros was associated with "the sun god, the creation of the world, the circular ocean, darkness or underworld..." (van der Sluijs & Peratt 2009:3). These narratives were explored in chapter two, specifically referring to sun-myths and an *Ungeheuer* in the underworld. According to the early Egyptian narratives, the endlessness of time can be represented through images of a snake, as seen in Figures 1 and 9. The snake is used here to represent "space between heaven and earth" and could indicate the journey of the son or the hero (van der Sluijs & Peratt 2009:5). Bochi (1994:56) explains that "the gigantic and endless snake" can occur either circular or linear. The linear representation expresses the fleetingness of human life, while the circular representation indicates life everlasting, as experienced by gods and heroes (discussed in chapter two), thus those who have reached the transcendental state of divinity.

The ouroboros essentially depicts the end of one life as the start of another, indicating life everlasting. The use of ribs (Figure 52 and 53) draws attention to the function of protecting the space that which lies within. As discussed in section 4.3.3.1 above, the ribs serve a double function: on the one hand they are used to protect life within, i.e. the belief systems and phenomenological *Dasein* of each individual; on the other hand, they allow for a transcendental transition and *freedom-towards-death.*

© University of Pretoria

Figure 52:
Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015.
Detail: Installation: Glass and bone,
ca. 450 x 220 x 210 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

Figure 53:
Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015.
Detail: Installation: Glass and bone,
ca. 450 x 220 x 210 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

This work not only explores the cyclical nature of life and timelessness, but also the linear expression of searching and reaching a transcendental state of *Being.* The installation below (Figure 54) the ouroboros, consisting mainly of bones is representative of life on earth. The intermittent glass bone is indicative of an occasional understanding and development of the phenomenological *Dasein*.

Figure 54:
Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015.
Detail: Installation: Glass and bone,
ca. 450 x 220 x 210 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

The installation however changes into a multitude of glass bones (Figure 55 and 56) moving up towards the ceiling. By implication, human understanding and the meaning of life, death and possibility of life after death is explored. Moving towards *Being-towards-death* and *Being-towards-the-end*, humans come to accept their finitude and hence reach a transcendental state of phenomenological *Being.* The glass bones are thus indicative of the fragile possibility of life everlasting, as well as the transparent and spiritual possibility of reaching *freedom-towards-death.*

© University of Pretoria

Figure 55:
Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015.
Detail: Installation: Glass and bone, ca. 450 x 220 x 210 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

Figure 56:
Deléne Human, *Endborn,* 2015.
Detail: Installation: Glass, ca. 450 x 220 x 210 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

4.3.3.3 *Oratio de vitae I, II* and *III*

Notions of humans attempting to reach life everlasting are further explored in the *Oratio de vitae* (prayer of life) (Figure 57) series comprising three rosaries created for this body of work. Rosary beads are traditionally used during Roman Catholic prayer. Believers employ this praying ritual to express their hope for salvation, which essentially will grant them access to life everlasting. The strings consisting glass and bone beads and human hair form complete circles. This phenomenon should be read in reference to the symbolism of the ouroboros above. The string of rosary beads needs to be prayed three times in order to complete the entire rosary prayer (Caroll 1987:487). Further reference is made to Victor's *Eight Marys* discussed above.

Figure 57:
Deléne Human, *Oratio de vitae I, II and III,* 2015.
Installation: Glass, bone and human hair, ca. 81 cm each.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

Even though my work does not represent the Catholic faith as such, nor does my phenomenological *Dasein* reside in a Catholic background, the works are to be understood and interpreted within the hermeneutical circle. As Ricoeur (1981:111) postulates "insofar as the

© University of Pretoria

meaning of a text is rendered autonomous with respect to the subjective intention of its author, the essential question is not to recover, behind the text, the lost intention, but to unfold, in front of the text, the 'world' which it opens up and discloses".

The 'opening up' of hidden texts are explored in the various materials employed in this work. The materials used in the creation of *Oratio de vitae I, II* and *III,* constitute bone and glass beads, as well as strings woven and plated out of my own hair (Figure 58). The bone and glass are used for their inherent symbolism, as discussed throughout section 4.3 above. The incorporation of my own hair can be interpreted in various ways.

Figure 58:
Deléne Human, *Oratio de vitae I,* 2015.
Detail: Installation: Glass, bone and human hair, ca. 81 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

Firstly, hair, similar to bone, will outlive the person to whom it belongs. For years and centuries to come, hair will continue to exist and thus serve as a reminder of the *Being* of its owner. It was not possible for me to use my own bones in the creation of the work. But I was able to use my own hair to leave a trace of my own *Being* behind.

Secondly, my choice of medium draws inspiration from the Victorian use of mourning jewellery. During the late 17th and early 18th century England, mourning jewellery made out of hair became a common phenomenon (Holm 2004:139). The reason for creating these pieces of jewellery was to serve as *memento mori,* using the hair of the deceased to create broaches and bracelets, so that they could be remembered for years to come (Holm 2004:139). A duality is created in the use of hair in this situation: on the one hand hair is already considered to be a dead material. Additionally, it needs to be removed (cut or shaven) from the body of a person. Yet, as soon as it has been cut, it will no longer be able to grow; On the other hand, the hair will 'outlive' the person to whom it belongs. Holm (2004:140) describes that "the material medium of remembrance marks the act of remembrance as the very moment when its natural status was transformed into a cultural status, and when the present presence of the body is anticipated as a future absence".

The significance of using beads in the Rosaries should also emphasized. The word 'bead' has its origin in the Old English *bede* (prayer). Rosary beads were originally "*aides-memoires* for the illiterate, but are used today throughout the modern world in rituals of religious observance" (Coetsee 2015:25). Contextualising the use of beads in a South African reading, "beadwork styles and their meanings are passed down from one generation to the next, as an extension of oral traditions and the shaping of traditional value systems" (Ranking-Smith & Charlton

© University of Pretoria

2002:108). This statement serves as a confirmation, that even in a contemporary South African context, society still relies on history to make meaning of certain situations and lifestyles. Traditional objects are precious and preserved because "their use and purpose throw light on past ways of life and the traditions of a former culture" (Sellschop, Goldblatt & Hemp 2002:13). This could possibly be a result of "the intellectual connection to historic eras or events that have a personal or symbolic meaning to the craftsman and are passed on to those who see and appreciate the object" (Sellschop *et al* 2002:22). This is especially true for the *Oratio de vitae*. Various horizons are fused here. Not only are the historical (Western) references to the use of rosary beads in the ritual of prayer important, but also the traditional (African) uses of beadwork are to be incorporated when interpreting the meaning of this work.

Levine (in Gittlin 2002:148) explains that material remains are problematic to interpret in a contemporary setting, as is the *Dasein* of the materials are difficult to define. As has become evident throughout this study, Gadamer (1991:18) attempts to illustrate the development between a historical background, as well as the direct orientation towards the subject matter. This situation is visible in *Oratio de vitae.* Ricoeur (1981:108) describes that "this is the moment of interpretation in the technical sense of *textual exegesis*. It is also the moment of the hermeneutical circle between the understanding initiated by the reader and the proposals of meaning offered by the text".

4.3.3.4 *Scapha*

Intertextuality and palimpsest as read above in *Oratio de vitae* should also be seen in relation to *Scapha* (Lifeboat) (Figures 59 and 60). This work was immensely influenced by the symbolism and iconographies found throughout this study. *Scapha* comprises a vertebrae structure of bone and curved glass, indicating the shape of a boat or vessel. Concurrently, this work also resembles the backbone of a fish. Visual reference is made to my earlier work *swallow*, 2010 (Figure 37).

Figure 59:
Deléne Human, *Scapha,* 2015.
Installation: Glass, bone, aluminium and steel, 50 x 15.6 x 80 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

Figure 60:
Deléne Human, *Scapha,* 2015.
Detail: Installation: Glass, bone, aluminium and steel, 50 x 15.6 x 80 cm.
University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
Photograph by author.

© University of Pretoria

Conceptually this sculptural installation is derived from the pagan and Greek mythologies concerning the boat of Charon carrying the dead to the other side of the shore, from life to afterlife. However, where the Greek mythology mostly creates negative connotations of death, this work aims to create positive emotions towards life everlasting.

The boat, which could also be read as a fish symbol, carries established references to both early and contemporary Christian belief systems. The fish, which is a symbol of the Christian faith, denotes the hope that many Christians foster in terms of a resurrection. The boat and fish combined, however, also refer to the Jonah narrative. Furthermore, the title, as well as subject matter is paralleled to Victor's work *Lifeboat* (Figure 25), discussed in chapters two and three.

The installation of this work is of great importance. *Scapha* is not simply placed on the floor, which would on a conceptual level link the boat to an earthly anchor. Instead, the work is suspended, creating the illusion of transcending from this world into the next. Reference is made to Eliade's celestial world and thus the belief that the archetype of the resurrection myth is implemented to ensure a meaningful life in this world.

4.4 Conclusion

As discussed throughout this chapter, my work aims to explore "an opportunity to affirm life by embracing death" (Koudounaris 2011:16). By exploring various Christian traditions and iconographies, the body of work emphasizes human mortality and the possibility of a resurrected life. Meaning is created by considering the complete hermeneutical circle of understanding. The fusion of horizons ensures that various interpretations of the works exist. As Ricoeur (1981:116) postulates "the 'lived experience' of phenomenology corresponds, on the side of hermeneutics, to consciousness exposed to historical efficacy".

Furthermore, the contrast of bone (earthly bound) and glass (divine and transcendental) are implemented to emphasize the essential elements (*Sachen selbst*) of the materials. The fragility and vulnerability of the glass, is supported by bone structures, indicating structures, i.e. archetypes, circulating human existence to essentially understand death and have faith in a resurrected life.

The ephemeral and enigmatic moods created aim to stimulate a sense of consecrated and transcendental lives lived. As Gadamer (1989:150) infers "a work of art always has something sacred about it". In conclusion, my work could be considered to portray the sacred and inexpressible within all humans.

© University of Pretoria

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of chapters

Since pre-history the human race has relied on archetypes and myths in order to describe the inexplicable. Through fictional and mythological narratives, contemporary society relies on archetypes to make meaning and understand the ineffable. The archetype of the resurrection myth expresses a form of truth, which is the reason it has survived for centuries.

This study commenced by defining and understanding the related terminology and semiology of the research topic. In chapter two the origin, development and recurrence of the resurrection myth was explored. The relation between this myth and certain iconography and symbols found in ancient and contemporary visual art was clarified. This was done in relation to the Jonah narrative, as well as Joseph Campbell's *Journey of the hero* and early depictions of the ancient Egyptians, Greek and East Asians sun and moon myths. Furthermore, Mircea Eliade's theories of archetypes and the relevance of Julia Kristeva's intertextuality and Gérard Genette's palimpsest were investigated. This study has shown that most representations of the resurrection myth are based on what Eliade and Jung refer to as archetypes. These archetypes often appear in the form of myths and disguise themselves as cultural truths and realities.

The symbols and metaphors used throughout the resurrection myth narratives have clearly influenced the conceptual development, as well as the subject matter of Victor and Boltanski's artworks, as seen in the subject matter (fish, boat, light and shadows) discussed in this study. Recurring symbols include an *Ungeheuer* or 'big fish'. Furthermore, the notion of a boatsman, or a boat travelling from one shore to the other, is dominant in most historic and contemporary depictions of the resurrection myth. These symbols can ultimately be described as a representation of human hope for eternal life and resurrection and the belief that our actions in this world lead to a better (celestial) world and life everlasting.

As discussed throughout this study and seen in my own body of work, meaning is created through the use of certain iconography and semiology in the representation of myths and metaphors. Symbolism has always played a vital role in both Victor and Boltanski's works. Victor (2013a) notes that she uses symbols that have been re-appropriated over time, as evidenced in chapters two and three, meanings and interpretations have been accumulated, adopted and contextualised, which may be interpreted differently by each viewer. Even though Boltanski (Semin 1997:23) believes his work does not focus on the actual imagery, such as candles, shadows or light, but could represent any religion, the objects in his works carry inherent symbolism, which contribute to the interpretation of his artworks. This indicates that subject matter and site-specific exhibition spaces are used to create certain moods. Additionally, it has been established that intentionality of the artist and the viewers' situatedness in the world contribute to an overall understanding of the works under discussion.

© University of Pretoria

Both artists' background and history allowed for Heidegger's and Gadamer's theories to be tested within contemporary visual arts. As aforementioned, Boltanski does not have a 'conventional' and traceable background, as most artists and citizens in society do, but instead appropriates his own history, with fact and fiction intertwined. Through appropriating photos of deceased people (Grenier 2010:5-19), he creates stories of his childhood that could be described as universal. Victor similarly keeps her background and personal life private. She adopts universal imagery in her artworks, in order to establish a horizon from which her work can be understood. By doing this, it becomes difficult to define the exact situatedness and *Being-in-the-world* of either artist. Even though their *Sitz-im-Leben* are similar, both artists portray their *Lebenswelt* in an individual manner and also attempt to leave their artworks open-ended enough for each viewer to interpret and enjoy their oeuvre from their own personal *Dasein.*

Considering the artworks discussed in this research, one could argue that art in contemporary society can still be grounded in religion and faith. In fact, there is a strong similarity between ancient cultures and contemporary cultures, in the way the resurrection myth is executed and lived, and represented in art. Any contemporary conceptual artist produces his/her work with a very specific message in mind. This message or meaning that the artist creates is ultimately something that he/she believes in, questions, or rejects. This was ascertained throughout the work by the two selected artists, by exploring their *Dasein* and acceptance of what Heidegger refers to as *Being-towards-death*.

It was argued that both Victor and Boltanski, perhaps even unknowingly, use the resurrection myth in their work, in order to communicate multiple meanings and interpretations. Firstly, their subject matter speaks of giving a second or resurrected life. By immortalising selected figures, these artists resurrect and bring their figures back to life, while simultaneously telling their stories. Secondly, the mediums and exhibition spaces used speak of new life. Considering their use of medium and materials, the artists have discovered a way to represent the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art. These notions have also become evident in my own body of work.

5.2 Conclusion of study

The main premise of this study was to interpret the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual culture while employing theories of Heidegger on finitude and Gadamer on hermeneutical phenomenology. The relevance of the archetype of the resurrection myth and the development of its depiction throughout history was explored.

Gadamer's theory concerning the fusion of horizons was incorporated when decisively analysing artwork of contemporary visual culture. It was discovered that not only through subject matter, but also the relationship between medium and exhibition space influence the interpretation of an artwork. The selection of a national and international artist emphasized hermeneutical aspects of

© University of Pretoria

the various interpretations in the consideration of the societal, cultural and personal experiences and influences of the respective artists.

With regards to the research question concerning the meanings of Western symbols and how they have changed over time, their continued relevance in a changing environment, such as the diverse backgrounds and shared consciousness of the contemporary viewers, were interrogated. According to the research of ancient depictions and analysis of contemporary visual art in this study, clear similarities were found. In ancient times the resurrection theme was mainly depicted on gravestones and sarcophagi. Drawings and inscriptions were made on tombs, graves and ossuaries. Comparing these concepts to contemporary visual culture, it is clear that the place, space and site for depicting this myth has radically changed. Where in ancient times art and religion were synonymously utilised during religious burials and rituals, in contemporary society these concepts are conveyed through visual media for example through ash and smoke drawings, sculptures and installation artworks found in galleries and museums, as well as alternative spaces, such as churches and cathedrals.

The changes in symbols used to convey and represent the resurrection myth are negligible. Symbols of boats, ships, fish and whales, water and earth is as prevalent in contemporary society, as it was in ancient representations. The message of these symbols might have gained extra meanings and additional veracities, yet the basic concepts and notions of these symbols remained. These were seen in works discussed in chapter two and three by Boltanski and Victor, and in chapter four during the discussion of my own body of work.

The main difference that has been discovered during this research is that in contemporary visual culture the focus is not so much on life after death, but rather on what is left behind after death, with the destination being eternal life and inner self discovery. The artists of contemporary societies explore the journey of the soul that an individual undertakes in order to find the true inner self and reach a transcendental state of *Being*. Trials and tribulations such as manifested in the work of the selected artists are encountered in a much more conceptual sense than in ancient depictions. Yet the individual has to undergo these trials before he can fill a personal vacuum. Where in ancient times societies would focus on the resurrection of the soul within a new world, and life after death, contemporary artists rather portray the journey that is taken in order to reach the transcendental state of *Being*, through the use of pre-determined subject matter, mediums and exhibition space.

The selected contemporary artists rely on an *Erlebnis* by the viewer, when confronted with their work. This is an individual experience by each viewer and hopefully leaves a lasting impression on the viewer (Gadamer 1989:61). Similarly, this relates to the individual experience of death, which Heidegger refers to as finitude. As has been argued here, the fusion of multiple horizons is established, as both the artist and the viewer contribute to the understanding of artworks. Horizons of understanding are constantly shifting, which result in ever-changing interpretations of

© University of Pretoria

artworks. Gadamer (1989:61) explains the purpose of *Erlebnis* as "both the immediacy, which precedes all interpretation, reworking, and communication, and merely offers a starting point for interpretation – material to be shaped – and its discovered yield, its lasting result".

In especially their later works, such as Boltanski's *Last Days* and *Last Years, and* Victor's *No Country for Old Women,* the *Erlebnis* of the artists in their own works becomes intensified. The artists investigate what separates them from their own deaths. By employing ephemeral objects in their work, the artists aim to establish the purpose of life, and therefore death. Victor (2013b) explains that essentially she attempts to "catch ghosts". As aforementioned, Boltanski uses old and recycled clothes and gives the viewer the opportunity to wear them again, in a new situation. The use of photographs, and the process of copying and copying again, creating a simulacrum, and refers to a cycle re-creating or giving renewed purposes and meanings to the medium. Through these artworks the duality of life - death and afterlife is questioned. Even though the works will survive long past the death of either artist, these works will eventually perish and disintegrate. Yet, after their deaths, these exact works will resurrect the memories of the artists' lives, and bring parts of them back into existence, allowing new viewers to create new meanings and interpretations of these works. A continued hermeneutical circle is thus established and it can be concluded that the fusion of horizons is a never-ending process.

As Boltanski (in Mendelsohn 2010:157) infers, all of us are replaceable. There will be people living in the future, telling their stories, which will be in effect our stories. Other artists, who try to present and represent the exact same issues that we are dealing with now, will continue to exist. Grenier (2010:80) explains this process by stating that "by conjuring up the past, art returns us to what is essential. The persistence of memory, abolished by neither death nor forgetfulness, is metaphorically evoked by the artist".

As discussed in chapter three, memories are all that will remain after death. Through their works, the selected artists discover and accept that they too will eventually become a memory. This is also true for my own body of work. Von Veh (2012:12) effectively states that "... each ghostly portrait [by Victor] evokes an air of sadness and loss as they appear to be blurring into the hazy half-life of memory". In order to make sense of the fact that their works will last much longer than they as a humans will, both Boltanski (Mendelsohn 2010:157) and Victor refer to the human struggle against time in numerous artworks, as discussed above. Many individuals hope that the transcendental deity will outlive all human existence and that there will be a life hereafter. Irrespective of our views most persons still cling to the idea that eventual death gives meaning to life because we have a limited time on earth and this fact motivates our *Lebenswelt.* As discovered in my own body of work, the belief in the immortality of the soul could serve as an attempt to find meaning in life.

It is understandable that humankind wants to know more, achieve more and reach further into the unknown. Myths are evidently employed as cope-mechanisms and may serve as guidelines

© University of Pretoria

on the journey to reaching a transcendental state of *Being*. Through various means, humans try to explain the inexpressible and understand the inexplicable. Artworks usually contain mythical elements and it appears that art making serves as a device for both selected artists to grapple with the issues surrounding death.

It can be concluded that because of the realisation of the inevitability of death, each human needs to find a way to understand and accept their own mortality. Through the discussion of selected artworks, and through the creation of my own artwork, this study concludes that the art making process aids in an artist's discovery and experiences of finitude. In various ways and by employing Heidegger's theories on finitude, as discovered throughout this study, ancient and contemporary humans have been and still are, driven by the desire to derive meaning from the awareness of death, and what happens thereafter.

Only towards the end of this study, and through exploration in my own body of artworks, I have come to understand what the two selected artists mean by allowing the viewer to create their own meaning and understanding. The implied connotations initially led me to believe that the artists' intentions were not to give specific meaning to their work. Yet, I have come to understand and thus conclude, that instead the artist's realise (perhaps unconsciously) that they do not have control over the interpretation and hence understanding of their work– however there is always a fusion of horizons between viewers and artists. A personal perception of the phenomenological *Dasein* and *Being-in-the-world* has thus been achieved.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

Whereas this study mainly focused on Western representations and depictions of the resurrection myth, for future research it might prove valuable to investigate representations of the archetype of the resurrection myth with the focus on both Eastern and African cultures and societies.

Considering eastern traditions and depictions concerning the eternal life and reincarnation, one might consider contemporary Eastern artists, such as the Chinese born Chen QingQing. She is a female artist, who similarly to Victor and Boltanski, explores the internal spirituality and human determination through her installation works. Although at first glance her works may seem like conceptual Western art, there is a strong link to Eastern traditions. QingQing views art as a means of achieving personal freedom. Her art touches on questions concerning her soul: "From what sort of vehicle does this spirit emerge? And how does this vehicle achieve its freedom and rebirth?" (Qi 2005:1).

Moreover, to delve into African representations of the same myth might proof to be intriguing. Cave paintings and stone drawings have always been a part of the African history, and it perhaps would be enriching to discover the early African depictions of the belief in ancestors and the resurrection myth compared to contemporary African artists. Fascinating results may be exposed

© University of Pretoria

when a comparison of these ancient depictions are made between artists from different ethnic groups in contemporary South Africa.

Theorists whose work will be interesting to include in future studies include Paul Ricoeur, Jean Baudrillard and Marie Louis van Frans. Although Mercia Eliade's theories of the eternal return have been considered in this research study, a complete comparison between his work and Ricoeur's theories on the narrative of time could be explored. Throughout the abovementioned depictions it will also be captivating to discover the role of the hero's journey in artworks. These are likely to be based on recurring archetypes, which could include further concepts to be researched.

The possibilities of comparisons are endless, and multiple conclusions could be formed. Yet one finding is prominent: the human race has for centuries relied on the resurrection myth to aid them in this life. For centuries to come the human existence will be dependent on this very same myth to transmit and manifest the one thing that they cannot live without: Hope.

© University of Pretoria

SOURCES CONSULTED

Adams, LS. 2007. *Art across time.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Alberts, B. 2010. *The Valley of the Dead-Naples Fontanelle cemetery.* [O]. Available: http://www.napoliunplugged.com/the-valley-of-the-dead-naples-fontanelle-cemetery.html Accessed 1 May 2015.

Allara, P. 2012. Diane Victor - Ashes to ashes. Paper presented at the Art of Death and Dying Symposium, 25-27 October, University of Houston.

Allen, D. 2002. *Myth and Religion in Mircea Eliade.* New York: Routledge.

Allen, G. 2000. *Intertextuality.* London: Routledge.

Armstrong, K. 2005. *A short history of myth.* Edinburgh: Canongate Books.

Aviam, M & Syon, D. 2002. Jewish Ossilegium in Galilee, in *What Athens has to do with Jerusalem,* edited by LV Rutgers. Leuven: Peeters:151-187.

Barnard, M. 2001. *Approaches to understanding Visual Culture.* New York: Palgrave.

Barthes, R. 1972. *Mythologies.* New York: Hill and Wang.

Barthes, R. 1977. The Death of the Author, in *Image-Music-Text*, translated by S Heath. London: Fontana Press:142-148.

Baudrillard, J. 1995. *Symbolic Exchange and Death.* London: Sage.

Becker, R. 2002. Exhibitions and craft, in *Craft South Africa,* edited by S Sellshop, W Goldblatt & D Hemp. Hyde Park: Phan Macmillan:70-73.

Bochi, PA. 1994. Images of Time in Ancient Egyptian Art. *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 31(1):55-62.

Bronswijk, AC. 1987. *Symbolen: de taal van kunst en liturgie.* Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum.

Burke, E. 1990. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and beautiful.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Bush, TW & Gallagher, S (eds). 1992. *Hermeneutics and Postmodernism*. Albany: State University of New York.

Button, D & Pye, B. 1993. *Glass in Building.* Oxford: Pilkinton.

Buxton, R. 2005. *Das grosse Buch der griechischen Mythologie.* Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag.

Campbell, J. 1949. *The hero with a thousand faces.* Prinston: University Press.

Campbell, J. 2008. *The hero with a thousand faces.* Third Edition. California: New World Library.

Caroll, MP.1987. Praying the Rosary: The Anal-Erotic origins if a Popular Catholic Devotion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26(4):486-498.

Champagne, RA. 1983. Review: Palimpsests: La literature au second degree. *World Literature Today* 57(2), Spring:243.

© University of Pretoria

Chapereauge, D. 1984. *Einführung in die geschichte der christlichen symbole.* Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Christian Boltanski. 2009. [O]. Available: http://www.art-ba-ba.com/main/main.art?threadId=21883&forumId=8 Accessed13 April 2015.

Christian Boltanski. 2010. [O]. Available: http://kimvergaert.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/monument-de-kinderen-van-dijon-1986.jpg Accessed 1 May 2013.

Christian Boltanski. [sa]. [O]. Available: http://www.the-histories.com/archives/neurogramma_files/pageimgragrd/bolt.htm Accessed 2 June 2013.

Clauss, M. 2012. *Mithras Kult und Mysterium.* Darmstad: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Coddington, J. 1999. The Case against Amnesia, in *Mortal Immortality? Legacy of 20th century art*, edited by MA Corzo. Singapore: Paul Getty Trust:19-24.

Coetsee, E. 2015. *Craft in South Africa- Creative Intersections.* Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers.

Corzo, MA. 1999. Intrdocution, in *Mortal Immortality? Legacy of 20th century art*, edited by MA Corzo. Singapore: Paul Getty Trust:XV-XX.

Crowther, P. 2009. *Phenomenology of the visual arts (even the frame).* California: Stanford University Press.

Designboom. 2015. *Christian Boltanski.* [O]. Available: http://www.designboom.com/art/christian-boltanski-the-heart-archive/ Accessed 30 April 2015.

Dillon, S. 2007. *The Palimpsest: literature, criticism, theory.* New York: Continuum.

Dirié, C. 2010. Biography, in *Christian Boltanski*, edited by C Grenier. Paris: Flammarion Contemporary:189-199.

Dreyer, E. 2012. *Terra Pericolosa.* Catalogue for Terra Pericolosa at Fried contemporary art gallery. Pretoria: Fried Gallery.

Dupré, L. 2000. *Symbols of the sacred.* Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing.

Du Preez, A (ed). 2005. *Taking a hard look-Gender and Visual Culture*. Pretoria: van Schaik Publishers.

Eliade, M. 1954. *The Myth of the eternal return, or Cosmos and History*. New York: Princeton University Press.

Ferguson, G. 1966. *Signs & symbols in Christian art.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Fine, S. 2001. Why Bone Boxes? Splendor of Herodian Jerusalem reflected in burial practices, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 27(5).

Forstner, D. 1961. *Die Welt der Symbole.* Innsbruck: Tyrolia Verlag.

© University of Pretoria

Frazer, JG. 2009. *The Golden Bough: A study in Magic and Religion.* New York: Cosimo.

Gadamer, HG. 1960. *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: Mohr.

Gadamer, HG. 1976. *Philosophical Hermeneutics.* California: University of California Press.

Gadamer, HG. 1989. *Truth and Method.* Second, revised edition. New York: Crossroad publishing.

Gadamer, HG. 1991.Gadamer on Gadamer, in *Gadamer and Hermeneutics*, edited by H Silverman. New York: Routledge:13-22.

Gahlin, L. 2001. *Ägypten: Götter, Mythen, Religionen.* Reichelsmein: Anness Publishing.

Gallagher, S. 1992. Hermeneutics and Postmodernism. in *Hermeneutics and Postmodernism*, edited by TW Busch & S Gallagher. Albany: State University of New York.

Genette, G. 1982. *Palimpsestes: la litterature au second degree.* Paris: Editions du Seuil.

Gittlen, BM (ed). 2002. *Sacred Time, Sacred Place.* Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisebrauns.

Gombrich, EH. 1995. *The story of art.* London: Phaidon.

Goodman Gallery. 2012. *Diane Victor / Transcend.* [O]. Available: http://www.goodman-gallery.com/exhibitions/135 Accessed 14 March 2015.

Grattan, D & Williams, RS. 1999. From "91" to "42": Questions of Conservation for Modern Materials, in *Mortal Immortality? Legacy of 20th century art*, edited by MA Corzo. Singapore: Paul Getty Trust:67-74.

Grenier, C (ed). 2010. *Christian Boltanski*. Paris: Flammarion Contemporary.

Groenewald, A. 2007. From Myth to Theological Language in *Psalms and Mythology*, edited by DJ Human. London: T & T Clark International:9-25.

Guggenheim. 2015. *Christian Boltanski.* [O]. Available: http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/education/school-educator-programs/teacher-resources/arts-curriculum-online?view=item&catid=732&id=153 Accessed 24 April 2015.

Gumpert, L. 1994. *Christian Boltanski.* Paris: Flammarion Contemporary.

Harrison, C & Wood. P (eds). 1992. *Art in theory an anthology of changing ide*as. Oxford: Blackwell.

Heidegger, M. 1927. Sein und Zeit, in *Jahrbuchfürphilosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, Band VII. Freiburg: E. Husserl.

Heidegger, M. 1962. *Being and Time.* New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Hillman, J. 1997. *The Soul's Code: in search of character and calling.* London: Bantam.

Holm, C. 2004. Sentimental Cuts: Eighteenth-Century Mourning Jewelry with Hair. *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38(1):139-143.

© University of Pretoria

Hornung, E. 1995. *Die Nachtfahrt der Sonne.* Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag.

Human, D. 2013. Diane Victor: No country for old women - consecrating the forgotten. *The South African Art Times,* May 2013:10-11.

Human, DJ. 2004. Jona se opstanding uit die dood: perspektiewe op die opstandingsgeloof vanuit die Ou Testament. *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 60(1):222-238.

Human, DJ. 2011. Mitologiese taal: verduistering of verheldering? Jona as illustrasie, in *Vaste Rots op wie ek bou*, edited by CJA Vos and DJ Human. Cape Town: NB Uitgewers:133-150.

Hurley, K. 1996. *The Gothic body, sexuality materialism and degeneracy at the fin de siècle.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jenks, C. 1995. *Visual Culture.* London: Routledge.

Jensen, RM. 2000. *Understanding early Christian art.* London: Routledge.

Johnson, P. 2003. *Art a new history.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Jung, CG. 1959. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. London: Routledge.

Kant, I. 1960. *On the Beautiful and Sublime.* California: University of California Press.

Koestenbaum, P. 1971. *The Vitality of Death*. Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing.

Koudounaris, P. 2011. *The Empire of Death. London:* Thames & Hudson.

Kristeva, J. 1980. *Desire in Language.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Kroksnes, A. 2010. *Christian Boltanski.* [O]. Available: http://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/collections_and_research/absolute_installation/christian_boltanski/
Accessed 4 February 2013.

Kübler-Ross, E. 1969. *On Death & Dying*. New York: Simon and Schuster/Touchstone.

Kübler-Ross, E. 1975. *Death: the final stage of growth*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Kurcfeld, M. 2011. *"CHANCE" Encounter: Christian Boltanski Weighs Birth and Death at the 2011 Venice Biennale.* [O]. Available: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-kurcfeld/chance-encounter christia_b_924000.html
Accessed 30 April 2015.

Law-Viljoen, B. 2012. The shadow arrives first, in *Diane Victor: Burning the candle at both ends*, edited by K von Veh. Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing.

Levine, BA. 2002. *Ritual as Symbol: Modes of Sacrifice in Israelite Religion*, in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place,* edited by BM Gittlen. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisebrauns:125-135.

Littleton, CS. 2003. *Das grosse Buch der Mythologie.* München: Christian Verlag.

Loy, D. 1996. *Lack and transcendence*. New Jersey: Humanities.

Lyotard, J. 1992. What is Post Modernism?, in *Art in theory an anthology of changing ideas,* edited by C Harrison and P Wood. Oxford: Blackwell.

© University of Pretoria

Marshall, J. 2007. Image as insight: visual images in practice-based research. *Studies in art education* (49):23-41.

McKenzie, L. 2012. *Pagan resurrection myths and the resurrection of Jesus.* Charlottesville: Bookwrights Press.

Mendelsohn, D. 2010. Conversation, in *Christian Boltanski*, edited by C Grenier. Paris: Flammarion Contemporary: 139-163.

Moran, D. 2000. *Introduction to Phenomenology.* New York: Routledge.

National Child Safety Council. 2010. *Missing children milk carton program.* [O]. Available: http://www.nationalchildsafetycouncil.org/index.php?searchword=missing+children+mil&ordering=&searchphrase=all&Itemid=63&option=com_search Accessed 20 April 2015.

New International Version of the Bible (NIV).

Palmer, RE. 1969. *Hermeneutics – Interpretation Theory in Schleiermeier, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Phan, PC. 1994. Contemporary context and issues in Eschatology. *Theological Studies* 55(3):[sa].

Phan, PC. [sa]. *Roman Catholic theology.* [O]. Available: http://www.*obinfonet.ro/docs/tpnt/tpntres/phan_rcth.pdf* Accessed 7 July 2013.

Perryer, S (ed). 2007. *Afterlife.* Catalogue for Afterlife held at the Michael Stevenson art gallery. Cape Town: Hansa Print.

Piezzi, F. 2010. *"Le Fontanelle", where the living talk to the dead.* [O]. Available: http://static0.demotix.com/sites/default/files/imagecache/a_scale_large/400-2/photos/1283662720-le-fontanelle-where-the-living-talk-to-the-dead_429092.jpg Accessed 1 May 2015.

Pitard, WT. 2002. Tombs and Offerings: Archeological Data and Comparative Methodology in the Study of Death in Israel, *in Sacred Time, Sacred Place,* edited by BM Gittlen. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisebrauns:145-167.

Qi, Z. 2005. *Qing Qing.* [O]. Available: http://www.artscenechina.com/chineseart/artists/articles/qingqing.htm Accessed 15 August 2010.

Rankin, E. 2008. Personalising Process: Diane Victor as printmaker, in *Diane Victor*, edited by K von Veh. Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing.

Rankin-Smith, F & Charlton, J. 2002. The mobile craft school, in *Craft South Africa,* edited by S Sellschop, W Goldblatt & D Hemp. Hyde Park: Phan Macmillan.

Ricoeur, P. 1981. *Hermeneutics and the human sciences.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ricoeur, P. 1984. *Time and narrative volume 1*.Translated by K Mc Laughlin and D Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

© University of Pretoria

Rosenbaum-Kranson, S. 2010.*Christian Boltanski.* [O]. Available: http://www.museomagazine.com/#CHRISTIAN-BOLTANSKI Accessed 4 February 2013.

Rosengarten, R. 2014. And death is no parenthesis. Paper presented at the FADA gallery, 15 July, University of Johannesburg.

Rutgers, LV (ed). 2002. *What Athens has to do with Jerusalem.* Leuven: Peeters.

Sellschop, S, Goldblatt, W & Hemp, D (eds). 2002. *Craft South Africa.* Hyde Park: Phan Macmillan.

Semin, D. 1997. *Christian Boltanski*. Londin: Phaidon.

Silverman, HJ. 1991. *Gadamer and Hermeneutics.* New York: Routledge.

Sontag, S. 1977. *On Photography.* London: Penguin.

Stander, H. 2000. *Simbole: veilig of gevaarlik.* Cape Town: Struik Christelike Boeke.

Stander, H. 2011.Opstanding en simboliek in die vroeg-christelike kuns, in *Vaste Rots op wie ek bou*, edited by CJA Vos and DJ Human. Cape Town: NB Uitgewers:337-352.

Steffen, U. 1963. *Das Mysterium von Tod und Auferstehung.* Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht.

Stein, P. 2004. *Deborah Bell.* Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing.

Storey. J. 2010. *Culture and power in cultural studies - the politics of signification.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Storr, R. 1999. Immortalité Provisoire, in *Mortal Immortality?Legacy of 20th century art*, edited by MA Corzo. Singapore: Paul Getty Trust:35-40.

Sturken, M & Cartwright, L. 2001. *Practices of looking: an introduction to visual culture.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Thijsen, M. 2014. *The final photograph of her.* [O]. Available: https://iphorblog.wordpress.com/2014/06/06/the-final-photograph-of-her-a-conversation-with-erik-kessels-about-the-significance-of-artists-books-by-christian-boltanski/ Accessed 27 April 2015.

Vadala, D. 2013. *Our visit to the Capuchin crypt, the bone church of Rome.* [O]. Available: http://www.evilsunday.com/wp-content/uploads/new/2011/02/Capuchin-Crypt-4.jpg Accessed 1 May 2015.

Van der Sluijs, MA & Peratt, AL. 2009.The ouroboros as an Auroral Phenomenon. *Journal of Folklore Research* 46(1):3-41.

Victor, D, artist, Absa KKNK, Oudtshoorn. 2013a. Interview by author. [Transcript]. 5 April. Oudtshoorn.

Victor, D, artist, University of Pretoria. 2013b. Interview by author. [Transcript]. 19 April. Pretoria.

Victor, D, artist, University of Pretoria. 2014. Interview by author. [Transcript]. 21 October. Pretoria.

© University of Pretoria

Victor, D, artist, University of Pretoria. 2015. Interview by author. [Transcript]. 18 April. Pretoria.

Von Veh, K. 2005. Saints and Sinners: Re-Evaluating gendered power bases entrenched by Religious Imagery, in *Taking a hard look-Gender and Visual Culture*, edited by A. Du Preez. Pretoria: van Schaik Publishers:47-72.

Von Veh, K. 2008. *Diane Victor.* Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing.

Von Veh, K. 2011. Transgressive Christian Imagery in Post-apartheid South African Art. PhD thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown. Von Veh, K. 2012. *Diane Victor: Burning the candle at both ends*. Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing.

Wyatt, N. 2001. *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East.* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

© University of Pretoria

Appendix 1:
Consent Form signed by Diane Victor

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Deléne Human

I, ……..Diane Victor…… agree to participate in Deléne Human's research study entitled *The fusion of horizons: Interpreting the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art*.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me and I am participating voluntarily.

The purpose of this study is to consider the relevance of the archetype of the resurrection myth in the current socio-cultural environment of South Africa.

Procedures in which I will be participating include verbal and written interviews. These interviews will be conducted upon agreed time slots.

I give permission for my interview with Deléne Human to be recorded. I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data of the interview, in which case the material will be destroyed. I also understand that if the findings of this research paper would be used in the future, my written consent will have to be obtained.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating. I understand that extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications.

I understand that my human and civil rights will be protected throughout the study, and that no false information regarding my identity will be published.

I understand that there are no medical risks involved in the study.

I understand that I will not receive any financial gain from this research, but that I will receive recognition, as well as exposure for my work (art) to the readers of this research study.

Signed…….. Date…5 April 2013

© University of Pretoria

Appendix 2:
Consent Form signed by Diane Victor

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Deléne Human

I, ……..Diane Victor…… agree to participate in Deléne Human's research study entitled *The fusion of horizons: Interpreting the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art*.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me and I am participating voluntarily.

The purpose of this study is to consider the relevance of the archetype of the resurrection myth in the current socio-cultural environment of South Africa.

Procedures in which I will be participating include verbal and written interviews. These interviews will be conducted upon agreed time slots.

I give permission for my interview with Deléne Human to be recorded. I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data of the interview, in which case the material will be destroyed. I also understand that if the findings of this research paper would be used in the future, my written consent will have to be obtained.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating. I understand that extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications.

I understand that my human and civil rights will be protected throughout the study, and that no false information regarding my identity will be published.

I understand that there are no medical risks involved in the study.

I understand that I will not receive any financial gain from this research, but that I will receive recognition, as well as exposure for my work (art) to the readers of this research study.

Signed…….. Date…19 April 2013

© University of Pretoria

Appendix 3:
Consent Form signed by Diane Victor

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Deléne Human (072 691 9724)

I, ……..Diane Victor……agree to participate in Deléne Human's research study entitled *The fusion of horizons: Interpreting the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art*.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me and I am participating voluntarily.

The purpose of this study is to consider the relevance of the archetype of the resurrection myth in the current socio-cultural environment of South Africa.

Procedures in which I will be participating include verbal and written interviews. These interviews will be conducted upon agreed time slots.

I give permission for my interview with Deléne Human to be recorded. I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data of the interview, in which case the material will be destroyed. I also understand that if the findings of this research paper would be used in the future, my written consent will have to be obtained.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating. I understand that extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications.

I understand that my human and civil rights will be protected throughout the study, and that no false information regarding my identity will be published.

I understand that there are no medical risks involved in the study.

I understand that I will not receive any financial gain from this research, but that I will receive recognition, as well as exposure for my work (art) to the readers of this research study.

Signed…….. Date…OCTOBER 2014

© University of Pretoria

Appendix 4:
Consent Form signed by Diane Victor

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Deléne Human (072 691 9724)

I, ……..Diane Victor…… agree to participate in Deléne Human's research study entitled *The fusion of horizons: Interpreting the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art*.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me and I am participating voluntarily.

The purpose of this study is to consider the relevance of the archetype of the resurrection myth in the current socio-cultural environment of South Africa.

Procedures in which I will be participating include verbal and written interviews. These interviews will be conducted upon agreed time slots.

I give permission for my interview with Deléne Human to be recorded. I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data of the interview, in which case the material will be destroyed. I also understand that if the findings of this research paper would be used in the future, my written consent will have to be obtained.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating. I understand that extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications.

I understand that my human and civil rights will be protected throughout the study, and that no false information regarding my identity will be published.

I understand that there are no medical risks involved in the study.

I understand that I will not receive any financial gain from this research, but that I will receive recognition, as well as exposure for my work (art) to the readers of this research study.

Signed…… Date…18 April 2015

© University of Pretoria