REPRESENTATIONS OF DISPLACEMENT IN THE EXHIBITION

Dis-Location/Re-Location

by

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DECLARATION

Student number: 28618247

I declare that

Representations of displacement in the exhibition

Dis-Location/Re-Location

is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been
indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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ABSTRACT

> Identity always presupposes a sense of location and a relationship with others and the representation of identity most often occurs precisely at the point when there has been a *displacement* (Bhabha cited in Papastergiadis 1995:17, emphasis added).

In this study I focus on the condition of displacement, placing emphasis on the disjunctures of identity arising from temporal and physical dislocations and relocations in historical and postapartheid South African contexts. Displacement, and the attendant senses of dislocation and alienation it may evoke, is explored with reference to three selected female personae. For each persona, displacement is shown to provoke transmutations in subjectivity and identity, resulting in disjunctive identities and relationships with place. Their individual narratives raise questions around the consequences of displacement for a sense of (un)belonging and the (re)making of identities across geographical, cultural, temporal, ethnic and environmental borders.

The pivotal role displacement plays in the processes of formation and transformation of subjectivity and identity is foregrounded. Familial histories of diasporic displacement, together with colonial legacies that have shaped my subject position as a white, middle-class, female South African woman, are interlaced with a recounting of personal experience of displacement in postapartheid South Africa. This personal sense of displacement, experienced between the years 2000 to 2006, is extended to a discussion on what is argued to be collective forms of white, English-speaking South Africans' dislocation during the same time period. I suggest that their sense of displacement was experienced in relation to the uncertainty of their subject positions in postapartheid South Africa.

In the practical and theoretical components of the degree, I consider how the three personae's subjectivities are practiced and lived from their different space-time continuums. This exploration prompts further questions around how the effects of displacement on subjectivity and new identity formations are contingent upon each persona's relation to the Other of colonial discourse, or the other-stranger-foreigner within. Although there are marked differences between their colonial, diasporic and postcolonial contexts, a central theme that underpins the study is that the three conditions of displacement are linked by disjunctures arising from processes of dislocation, alienation, relocation and adaptation.

Each persona's epistemological reality is shown to comprise multiple ambivalences and ambiguities, and is marked by processes of cultural contestation and inner conflict. Their ambivalences and ambiguities encompass slippages between positions of inclusion and exclusion; insider and outsider; inhabitant and immigrant; alienation and belonging; placelessness and locatedness; homely and unhomely that the experience of uprooting and relocating foregrounds. While displacement is understood in terms of trauma and conflict, this condition is also regarded as a generative space of possibility for the emergence of new identity formations. Using my experiences of self-transformation and renegotiation of my identity through processes of cultural contact and exchange as a departure point, I consider ways in which collective white, English-speaking South Africans' cultural identities are being reformulated, renegotiated or 'hybridised' in postapartheid South Africa as a transforming, postcolonial society.

KEY TERMS

postcolonial and postapartheid identity constructions

identity as emergent

in flux

in process

politics of displacement

self-other relations

diaspora

processes of cultural fusion and exchange

grafting

hybridity

liminality

alienation

dislocation

identities-in-becoming

heterotopias of crisis

reconfiguration of subjectivity and identity

embodied experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

> [H]uman difference [is] articulated in displacement, tangled cultural experiences, structures and possibilities of an increasingly connected but not homogenous world ... *Practices of displacement might emerge as constitutive of cultural meanings rather than as their simple transfer or extension* ... Cultural action, the making and remaking of identities, takes place in the contact zones ... new paradigms begin with historical contact, with entanglement at intersecting regional, national and transnational levels (Clifford 1997:2, 3, 7, emphasis added).

1.1 Introduction to the study

In the creative and theoretical work produced for this study, histories embedded in my art-making practice,[1] familial histories of diasporic displacement and colonial legacies that have shaped my position as a white, middle-class, English-speaking, second-generation Jewish female South African are interwoven with personal experience of displacement in postapartheid South Africa. These personal histories are intermeshed with what is argued to be collective forms of historical memory and traumas of displacement experienced by white English-speaking South Africans (WESSAs)[2] with regard to the post-1994 period of political transition in South Africa. The creative and theoretical work constitutes an enactment of the personal and a personalisation of the political. The relative specificity of these personal and collective relations is used as a prism through which to engage wider psychological spaces of displacement, and the consequent disjunctures of identity arising from specific temporal and physical dislocations and relocations in historical and current South African contexts.

In my artistic practice, I follow Maarit Mäkelä and Sarah Routarinne's (2006:12) formulation of practice-led research (PLR) wherein "[t]he product of making — the artefact created during art and design practices — [occupies] a central position in the academic research process". I adopt the term 'practice-led research' as this emphasises practice as an active component of the research process. In the study the creative work is thus located at the core of the research: the artwork is a visual means of articulating the dislocation of identity and evoking the realm of affect towards the formation of new subjectivities or what Couze Venn (2010:322) terms "new ways of being".[3]

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[1] These histories are sketched in the text of the catalogue that accompanies this thesis. Both form parts of the theoretical component of the research.

[2] 'White English-speaking South African' identity — if this can in any sense be defined — is a complex hybrid that originated in the British Empire. In assessing English national identity, Robert Young (2008:1, emphasis added) observes that, "Englishness was created for the diaspora — an ethnic identity designed for those who were precisely not English, *but rather of English descent.*" Owing to the pervasiveness of Englishness throughout Empire, Young (2008:1) speaks of English ethnicity as a "global, racial and cultural identity". As Anthea Garman (2011) acknowledges, it is this global, racial and cultural identity that has formed, and continues to form the central subject position that WESSAs occupy. It is in this group that my interest lies, although the 'group' is far from homogenous; its members are divided geographically, politically, religiously and economically (Salusbury & Foster 2004:93). The term 'WESSA' itself is problematic as it tends to set up a definition of identity that offsets a white English-speaking self against an Afrikaans-speaking other. It could also be seen to reinforce apartheid notions of 'natural', static and unchanging ethnic groupings. Furthermore, as Tess Salusbury and Don Foster (2004:93) note, the terms 'white', 'English-speaking' and 'South African' are themselves constructions. Although the term 'WESSA' refers to those who speak English predominantly, if not solely, it encompasses a broad range of ethnicities, including mixtures of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic, Dutch, German, Portuguese, Greek, Jewish and Afrikaner ancestries (Salusbury & Foster 2004:93; Matthews 2011:13). Salusbury and Foster (2004:93) conclude that, "the only reason for ... having considered the WESSAs to be a group ... was that this assortment of people clung to each other in the face of tension arising with more clearly defined cultural groups in the country's past: specific social circumstances without which any social conception of the group as a whole surely would not have existed."

[3] With regard to the framing of the theoretical research, terminology used in this thesis, and several readings of the artwork, I am indebted to Couze Venn's (2009, 2010) insights. I therefore acknowledge at the outset the significant contribution his writings on the *Dis-Location/Re-Location* exhibition have made to the study.

The wider analytical framework for this exploration of subjective change is the recognition of subjectivity as "relational, embodied and metastable by reference to the material, discursive and psychological conditions that constitute it" (Venn 2010:321). As Venn (2010:322) notes, any change in these conditions produces mutations in subjectivity and identity: "It is taken for granted now that identity displacement — whether diasporic or otherwise — provokes dislocation in how subjects are grounded in a network of relations, and how they insert themselves in that network." In this thesis I draw on the artwork to outline the effects of displacement on subjective change. My reflections on the creative work are located within the conceptual framework of postcolonial and feminist theory. Key themes are postcolonial and postapartheid identity constructions[4] with particular focus on emergent formations of WESSA subjectivities in postapartheid South Africa,[5] the politics of displacement, self-other relations, diaspora and processes of cultural exchange.

In the research I explore constructions of South African immigrant, first- and second-generation Jewish identities, with reference to three female personae. My exploration traverses wide geographic and temporal terrain, spanning Victorian England, late nineteenth and mid twentieth century Eastern Europe, to the Transvaal Republic in southern Africa and postapartheid South Africa.[6] Identity formation is traced through the genealogy of the subject over time, space, history and geography. The three personae's encounters with the lifeworld, or what Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964b) describes as the "body-world relation"[7] (as the term is usually translated) from their differing space-time configurations, are positioned as sites of displacement. Although there are marked differences in the three personae's respective colonial, diasporic and postcolonial contexts, a central argument proposed is that the three conditions of displacement are linked by disjunctures arising from processes of dislocation, alienation, relocation and

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[4] I use the term 'postcolonial' or 'the postcolony' to denote the discursive condition of postcoloniality (the way colonial relations and the aftermath of European colonisation are constituted in representation) in South Africa, with acknowledgement that in cultural studies the term 'postcoloniality' is usually taken to include colonial discourse itself (Barker 2004:148). Whenever possible, I distinguish between colonial and postcolonial discourses, emphasising hierarchical binary oppositions as the foundational principles of the former, and processes of cultural exchange and fusion as a thematic in the latter. Although frequently referred to as '*the* postcolonial nation-state', the postcolony is not, as Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2001:631) stress, a singular, definitive entity, but rather "a labile historical *formation,* a polythetic class of polities-in-motion". Achille Mbembe's (1992:2) conception of 'the' postcolony is "that of societies recently emerging from the experience of colonisation and the violence which the colonial relationship ... involves ... It is a particular system of signs, a particular way of fabricating simulacra or re-forming stereotypes ... characterised by a distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and a lack of proportion as well as by distinctive ways in which identities are multiplied, transformed and put into circulation."

[5] Apartheid is often considered as an extension of colonialism and imperialism (see Steyn 2001:xxiii; Mamdani 1996). Both postapartheid and postcolonialism may be regarded as having begun in 1994 — the year of South Africa's first democratic election — and as ongoing to the present. While I work within this timeframe, in order not to conflate the two terms, I use the term 'postapartheid' to refer specifically to conditions pertaining to post-1994 racial constructs of identity and reformative changes in South Africa. This is because, although my concerns

around WESSAs' displacement are postcolonial in nature, these concerns stem predominantly from the instability of their post-1994 identities.

[6] Informally known as the 'Transvaal Republic', the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (ZAR) was an independent Boer-ruled state in southern Africa during the second half of the nineteenth century. It occupied the area later known as 'the Transvaal', from 1910 a province of the Union and later (1961-1994) of the Republic of South Africa (Towards a people's history [sa]). Although they are not interchangeable, in this study I use the terms 'southern Africa' and 'the Transvaal Republic' in addition to 'the Highveld'. 'Southern Africa' refers to the southernmost region of the African continent, encompassing numerous territories, whereas 'the Highveld' indicates a section of the ZAR.

[7] Also known as *Unwelt* or "the world as lived through the body" (Meecham & Sheldon 2000:179). Merleau-Ponty's (1964b) theory of embodiment, which he terms "the philosophy of the lived body", emphasises the "bodily nature of the human subject" (Meecham & Sheldon 2000:179). The 'lived body' is not just a physiological entity, or an object in the world that is separate and distinct from the knowing subject, but rather a "phenomenal body — the body as individuals experience it" (Meecham & Sheldon 2000:180). Subjectivity is understood as relational and emplaced, "existing as a nexus of relations with others and with a lifeworld" (Venn 2010:334). In using terms such as 'lived experience of place', 'encounters with the lifeworld', 'being-in-the-world' and 'lived' or 'inhabited' space, I refer to Merleau-Ponty's constitutive relationship between the world and the body as a spatial practice. Albeit with slightly different nuances, these terms may also be associated with Edward Soja's (1996b, 1999) phenomenological conception of 'Thirdspace' (see 4.4) and Gaston Bachelard's (1964 [1958]) phenomenological exploration of the home (see footnote 150).

adaptation. While each persona's individual subjectivity is foregrounded, it is framed within the historical and contemporary epochs, geographic and cultural locations and ideological contexts of the larger social groups in which it is positioned. Subjects comprise a matrix of vectors: nationality, class, gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity and religion. These vectors are not necessarily parallel — they can be entered into through multiple alliances or convergences. The personae are:

- Bertha Marks (née Guttmann) (1862-1934), an English, upper-middle-class, orthodox Jewish woman who was the wife of the Rand entrepreneur Samuel Marks.[8] She arrived in southern Africa as an immigrant from Sheffield in England in March 1885 at the age of 22. My exploration of Bertha Marks's experience in southern Africa is limited to the years 1885 to approximately 1901 (the late Victorian era), as this would have been the period that she felt her immigrant status most keenly

- my mother, Freda Farber (1932-), an orthodox Jewess who came to South Africa from Latvia at the age of three, and

- myself (1964-), a postcolonial, second-generation Jewish woman, focusing on my experiences of cultural transformation and renegotiation of my South African identity in terms of hybridity. Using these personal experiences as a departure point, I consider ways in which WESSA cultural identities are established, co-opted or 'hybridised' in South Africa as a transforming, postcolonial society.

1.2 Research question

Research questions revolve around the disjunctures of identity that result from the three personae's geographical, social, cultural and/or psychological displacement and the ways in which these displacements produce changes in their subjectivities. My central research question investigates the role displacement plays in the processes of formation and transformation of subjectivity and identity. While displacement is understood in terms of trauma and conflict, I question whether processes of dislocation and relocation cannot also provide generative opportunities for the production of new identities-in-becoming and ways of being-in-the-world. This idea prompts further questions as to the manner in which the effects of displacement on subjectivity and new identity formations are contingent upon each persona's relation to the Other[9] or the other-within.

Following Michel Foucault's (1986 [1967]) conception of the term 'heterotopia', I consider how the three personae's experiences of physical and psychological displacement result in "heterotopias of crisis".[10] To address these questions, the

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[8] Sammy Marks was born in Lithuania in 1844. His humble beginnings as a *'tocher'* or *'smous'* — terms used to describe the itinerant Jewish trader who peddled his wares among the rural Boers in the Cape Colony (Mendelsohn & Shain 2008:54) — and subsequent rise to prosperity may be likened to those of my maternal and paternal grandparents who, as Jewish immigrants from Latvia and Lithuania respectively, were forced to start a 'new life' in South Africa. At the age of 16, Sammy Marks left Russia for England and settled in Sheffield. Seven years later, in 1868, he immigrated to southern Africa. Within a decade he had made his first fortune through diamond dealing in Kimberley, going on to make his second fortune as the founder of the Highveld coal-mining and steel industry, a property investor and the proprietor of a liquor distillery. This was followed by the establishment of glass and jam factories as well as brickworks (Mendelsohn 1991:23-115).

[9] In this thesis, the 'other' has a lower-case initial unless Jacques Lacan's Other of psychoanalytic theory is referred to (see footnote 41), or the Other of colonial discourse, in which case I use capitals for the 'Self/Other' binary (see footnote 42).

[10] The ideological construct of the heterotopia forms part of broader utopian discourses.

differing ambivalences and ambiguities[11] between Bertha Marks's and Freda Farber's experiences of displacement and those of many WESSAs living in postapartheid South Africa, including myself, are identified and explored.

1.3 Context of the study

The study consists of a practical component that takes the form of an exhibition comprising photographic, sculptural, installation, performance, video and sound art titled *Dis-Location/Re-Location* (hereafter '*Dis-Location*') and a theoretical component that includes this thesis and a catalogue of the creative work. The two research components are presented as interrelated in terms of topic, thematic choices and content, with acknowledgement that each has its discrete approaches, methodologies, aims, objectives and outcomes. Following Mäkelä and Leora

Farber's (2010:4) formulation of "academically attuned practice-led research",[12] the creative work occupies a central position in, provides the basis of and acts as a catalyst for the theoretical outputs. However, certain key theories formed departure points for and emerged during production of the artwork.[13] These were used to fuel my visual thinking and enrich my understanding of the subject matter. Visual explorations of these theoretical concerns are used to develop themes and content in this thesis, thus effecting a cyclic relationship of praxis; that is, practice-following-theory-following-practice. The theoretical underpinnings of the artwork were not arrived at retrospectively through a process of analysing the completed exhibition and setting out derived observations or conclusions in textual forms but prospectively, through a dynamic process of integrating conventional forms of research with the art-making process. Given that these theoretical concerns were present during the process of making, and that I have previously examined the

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Given that it has provoked many interpretations and applications across a range of disciplines (Johnson 2006:75), it is not possible to reduce the term 'heterotopia' to a single, succinct definition. Foucault himself (1986 [1967]) provides multiple definitions of the term, many of which are briefly sketched, open-ended and somewhat confusing. Given its multifaceted nature, I focus specifically on Foucault's (1986 [1967]) discussion of the heterotopia provided in his paper, *Des espace autres,* without going into the broader terrain of heteropology (Foucault's [1997:352, 353] project in which the object of the study is the "analysis, description and 'reading'... of those different spaces, those other places [that enable] ... both mythical and real contestation of the space in which we live"). I follow his conception of the heterotopia as a *site of displacement* (Johnson 2006:77) or a *'space of otherness'* located in an already existing place (see 1.6.1.1). As I am working only within the parameters of Foucault's (1986) paper, I do not contextualise the heterotopia's positioning within the broader utopian genre; neither do I examine the discourse of utopian theory in which the term is located. Similarly, the historical and conceptual underpinnings of the terms 'utopia' and 'dystopia' are not explored in this thesis, although they are briefly referred to where applicable.

[11] According to Foucault (1986), heterotopias encompass the kinds of uncertainties signified by the word 'ambivalent'. However, I extend this definition to include 'ambiguity'. This is because the kinds of uncertainties Bertha Marks experienced are ambivalent in nature, whereas those I perceived are better described as ambiguous. The former term is associated with colonial paradigms, the latter with postcolonial modes of thought. Ambivalence suggests an uncertainty of two conflicting elements caught in a dualistic system of opposition, whereas ambiguity exists in the absence of "firm institutional definitions of relational norms" or when "institutionalised expectations themselves seem to contradict one another" (Zielyk 1966:58).

[12] In academically attuned practice-led research, creative practice itself is not necessarily regarded as research, but if it meets certain criteria, and offers a combination of artefacts and a critical exegesis that illustrates how the artefact advances knowledge, understanding and insight, it may be considered as such. These criteria stipulate that there have to be explicit research questions, specific methods for answering the questions and a particular context in which the research is carried out (Mäkelä & Farber 2010:4; see also Biggs 2002:19; Scrivener 2002:19).

[13] Most of these theoretical positions were first articulated in an interview Sandra Klopper conducted with me (Klopper & Farber 2008:1-50) and are included in the revised version of the interview reproduced in the catalogue that accompanies this thesis (Klopper & Farber 2012). The initial interview was formative for me in that key concepts discussed have remained seminal to my understanding of the artwork. Many of the concepts and readings of the artwork in the initial and revised versions of the interview are included in this thesis, albeit in extended forms. There is therefore considerable overlap between the content and phrasing of both versions of the interview and this thesis. The three texts are intermeshed to the extent that it is difficult to reference each instance where either of the interview texts is cited in this thesis, either directly or indirectly. However, I acknowledge that the three texts are congruent in many respects.

artwork from various perspectives in a range of textual outputs (see Farber 2005, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009e, 2010b, 2010d, 2011), the process of writing the thesis was one of critical self-reflection and consolidation.[14]

In this thesis theory is used as a framing device within which to contextualise the artwork. The writing is primarily interpretive and analytical as opposed to discursive; theory functions as a lens through which the artwork is read. This means that in each chapter the theoretical discussion emanates *from the artwork* and not vice versa. Chapter Four is an exception wherein the artwork serves as a point of entry to a broader theoretical discussion. Throughout this thesis, selected theoretical frames are drawn upon and mobilised only insofar as they pertain to, illuminate and extend concepts that are visually articulated in the artwork. Where relevant, I refer to selected historical artworks and literature that formed references for the creative work.

In writing the thesis retrospectively, new theoretical positions became applicable and further possible readings of the artwork arose, over and above those conceptualised during its making. One of these is the concept of the heterotopia. While it was not possible to incorporate this concept into the already made artwork, introduction of it into the thesis did not necessarily alter the underpinning thematics of the research. Rather, for me, it added layers of depth, complexity and meaning to ways in which the artwork may be read.

In both components of the study, constituents of South African identity are aligned with issues of space — personal, cultural and/or geographic — and implicate issues of (un)belonging. Using my body as metonym for myself and Bertha Marks,[15] spatial and temporal configurations of dislocation and relocation in the artwork are blurred, inscribing split identities and multiple subjectivities-in-becoming.[16]

Despite visual congruencies and theoretical parallels drawn between Bertha Marks's and my experiences of displacement, in certain artworks Bertha Marks's life experiences are more obviously addressed; in others, I deal more explicitly with my lived experiences. Where these differences are marked, in this thesis I differentiate between the two personae by speaking of myself in the first person or by referring to 'the postcolonial protagonist', and using the name 'Bertha Marks'. Although at strategic points I draw a distinction between myself (as *artist* or *maker of the image* and the person who *performs* my part as the postcolonial protagonist) and the postcolonial protagonist (my *character* which is being portrayed), in the main my speaking position slips fluidly between the two. When referring to the postcolonial protagonist as she features in the artwork, I use the present tense. However, when making reference to my experiences of displacement, I use the past tense.

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[14] Excerpts from and views I have expressed in these textual outputs have been incorporated into this thesis. Because the writing of the thesis and many of the textual outputs took place in tandem, references to self-authored texts are not consistently cited.

[15] This amalgam of Bertha Marks and myself is hereafter referred to as 'the protagonist'.

[16] Aside from her presence in the form of her voice (which constitutes one of the three narratives that make up the soundtrack of the DVD-ROM *A Room of Her Own*) and her image as a child in Latvia as part of a family portrait, Freda Farber is not represented in the artwork. As in the exhibition, she plays a cameo role in this thesis; greater emphasis is placed on Bertha Marks's and my subjectivities.

Furthermore, my use of Bertha Marks's full name does not necessarily refer to Bertha Marks the historical figure; it rather denotes a combination of a part-fictionalised, part-imaginary and part-historical persona. In speaking about the historical figure of Bertha Marks, I use the past tense, but when referring to her as a persona in the artwork, the present tense is used. The empirical facts of her life experiences provided the basis for my perceptions of her but in making and writing on the artwork, personal interpretation and imaginative projection were necessary to fill in gaps in the historical sources. In my extrapolation of the information gained from these historical sources, I do not attempt to speak for Bertha Marks, but rather to evoke a sense of "empathic unsettlement" — a term used by Dominick LaCapra (2001:87) to denote an experience of otherness by putting "oneself in the other's position while recognising the difference of that position and hence not taking the other's place".

In the artwork, setting up a dialogical relationship between southern African Victorian colonial histories and personal experiences within a postcolonial environment enabled me to establish a fragile identification with a personal and collective past that continues to exert an impact on the present. By inserting myself into Bertha Marks's narrative and historical context, in a sense, I re-lived the past in the present, signalling that identity is not only contingent on space but also continuously in-process over time (Van Rensburg 2008:43, 44). Shifts in meaning between time and space as they intersect in a variety of configurations are epitomised by Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981:84; see also Van Rensburg 2008:41-46) critical tool of time-space organisation, the chronotope, which fuses *chronos* (time) and *topos* (space). Wilhelm van Rensburg (2008:43) provides a useful summary of the chronotype. When applied to an artwork Bakhtin's chronotope shows how, first, in a particular genre or era, real historical time, space and actual historical persons are articulated and, second, how fictional time, space and characters are constructed in relation to one another. Bakhtin's chronotope encapsulates ways in which time becomes spatial and space is historicised in an artwork (Vice 1997:218). The work on *Dis-Location* is chronotopic in its implication that both the relationship between time and space and the human subjects that occupy these dimensions alter according to context (Van Rensburg 2008:41). Van Rensburg (2008:43) explains that on one level, this relationship is defined as being the means by which histories are represented in an artwork; on a second, as the way in which histories can be constructed in an artwork through images of time and space; and on a third, "as a means to discuss the properties of the artwork in relation to other works".

Despite their differences, the three personae's experiences of displacement are underpinned by questions related to their respective positions as white, Jewish, southern African and South African subjects. The multifaceted positions that Jews have occupied in southern African and South African society, particularly during the apartheid era, constitute a broad area of investigation. While an in-depth engagement with the formation and enactment of southern African and South African Jewish subjectivities is beyond the scope of this thesis, I provide a glimpse of them as they are metonymically represented in the persona of Freda Farber. I single out her Jewish subjectivity for discussion because — given that there is no singular South African Jewish subjectivity — to propose synchronic linkages between the three personae would be problematic. Furthermore, all subjectivities are inextricably bound up in specific cultural-historical moments, and generational linkages are always rendered problematic by the diachronic specificities that they elide.

Throughout the artwork, leitmotifs of the quintessential English rose[17] and indigenous South African aloe[18] are hybridised. While the rose is used as a signifier of whiteness and 'Englishness', various species of indigenous aloes are used as metonyms for South Africa or 'the land'. In this sense the protagonist's body could be seen to represent the quintessential 'English rose'[19] onto which the 'African' aloe is grafted. My choice of the aloe stems from impressions of the land, particularly scenes of the Eastern Cape and Gauteng, where the flowering aloes in winter evoke a sense of landscape that is, for me, characteristically South African.[20] In an evocative passage on the difficulties colonial writers experienced when representing the southern African and South African landscape, JM Coetzee (1988:7, 8) points to how landscape art and writing in southern Africa and South Africa from the early nineteenth to the mid twentieth century revolves around the question of finding a language to 'fit' Africa:

This landscape remains alien, impenetrable, until a language is found in which to … represent it … there exists [sic] plenty of authentically African languages … But their authenticity is not necessarily the right authenticity … For the European to learn an African language 'from the outside' will … not be enough: he must know the language 'from the inside' as well, that is, know it 'like a native', sharing the mode of consciousness of the people born to it, and to that extent giving up his European identity … Is there a language in which people of European identity, or if not European identity then of a highly problematical South African-colonial identity, can speak to Africa and be spoken to by Africa?

As a person born and raised in South Africa, my experience of the landscape differs significantly from that of the colonial artist or writer. Nevertheless, Coetzee's passage resonates with my initial concerns when choosing a signifier for the land. While I would define myself as a 'white African', the question of how to represent South Africa in a way that was not overdetermined or clichéd or that risked promoting an essentialist or colonial stereotype of 'Africa' vexed me. I was not seeking any form of 'authenticity' in representing the land (even if such a concept could be determined) but sought a signifier which came from personal consciousness of a person born to it or, to use Coetzee's terminology, which came 'from the inside'.

In addition to my perception of what a 'typical' South African landscape might constitute, three other factors influenced my choice of the aloe. First, the aloe and rose species are structurally similar in that they each comprise a whorl or rosette of petals or leaves. This visual similarity allows for a seemingly endless formal and conceptual play between the two species. Secondly, unlike roses which require careful cultivation and regular watering, aloes are hardy and able to survive in rocky, arid and semidesert conditions because they close their pores to retain water. They are analogous to the immigrant for, as Ryan Bishop (2008:16) states, the microclimate of the aloe "maintains sensitivity to both the external world and

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[17] Roses are a highly developed, crossbred, hybrid plant species. The development of rose breeding began with the import of Chinese roses into Britain in the early 1800s. These roses were crossed with European cultivars to produce the varieties that emerged in the nineteenth century (Quest-Ritson & Quest-Ritson 2003:8).

[18] Since aloes interbreed freely, many are hybrids, making them difficult to identify. In most of the artwork I used two commonly known indigenous species, the *Aloe ferox* and the *Aloe arborescens* (Figure 1). Both are widely distributed, throughout the Swellendam area in south-western South Africa, through the dry parts of the Western and Eastern Cape provinces and southern KwaZulu-Natal, with some occurrences in south-western Lesotho and the extreme south-eastern Free State (Van Wyk & Smith 2005:56).

[19] 'English rose' is a term commonly associated with female English beauty: a woman with what is colloquially known as a 'peaches and cream complexion', 'soft, feminine features', a certain "grace and refinement, which transcend[s] class, a reserved sensuality that is never slatternly and most vitally, a sense of honour, kindness and decency" (Sarah Maid of Albion 2008).

[20] A sense of the aloe-encrusted landscape is echoed in the prospect poem written by Thomas Pringle (cited in Coetzee 1988:163) during his residence in South Africa in the 1820s, titled 'Evening rambles'. In it, he describes images of the eastern Cape for his British readers: "the aloe rears her crimson crest, / Like stately queen for gala drest; / And the bright-blossomed bean-tree shakes / Its coral tufts above the brakes".

the internal necessity for survival"; both the aloe and the immigrant "do what is necessary to survive". A third factor is that the *Aloe vera* leaf is reputed to have healing properties. The bitter-aloe leaves of the *Aloe ferox* plant are used to make a purgative drug known as 'Cape aloes' that cathartically cleanses the body of toxins (Van Wyk & Smith 2005:56). The leitmotif underpinning the exhibition, of the protagonist stitching aloe leaves into her body, therefore suggests processes of physical healing and purging that in turn are intended to point to psychological traumas inherent in acculturation processes.

Figure 1: *Aloe arborescens*.
(Smith 2005:119).

1.4 Aims and objectives

An overarching aim of the research is to identify how the condition of being displaced plays a key role in the processes of formation and transformation of subjectivity and identity. Secondary aims are twofold. First, I aim to show how, while each persona's condition of displacement gives rise to dislocation, alienation, and a sense of the unhomely, it can also be a generative space of possibility for the emergence of new identity formations. A second aim is to demonstrate how each persona's epistemological reality constitutes several multifaceted heterotopias of crisis. In the theoretical component, these aims are realised through the following objectives:

- to locate the disjunctures of identity that result from each persona's geographical, social, cultural and/or psychological displacements
- to contextualise these disjunctures within a temporal framework pertinent to each persona
- to consider how the effects of displacement on subjectivity and new identity formations are contingent upon each persona's relation to the Other or the other-within
- to show how each persona's heterotopias are characterised by multiple ambivalences or ambiguities
- to explore the generative possibilities of diaspora and processes of cultural fusion and exchange, particularly with regard to the formation of new, emergent and/or hybrid WESSA identities.

In the creative work, my objectives are to:

- represent three different encounters with the lifeworld from within their respective space-time continuums
- visually articulate the reconfiguration of subjectivity and identity arising from historical and contemporary processes of displacement
- use the female body as a inscriptive surface for narratives of immigrant displacement
- represent the protagonist's attempts to adapt to her new environment
- explore themes of grafting through visual means, suggesting how, in the artwork, grafting leads to hybridity and psychological/cultural-political spaces of liminality
- demonstrating how grafting, attenuated by hybridity, while encompassing cultural contestation and evoking psychological trauma, can also function as a mechanism for enabling fecund junctures of cultural fusion
- offer the protagonist forms of self-expression that privilege symbolic and semiotic forms of signification
- use the artwork as a means of potentially evoking affect
- excavate the relationship between South Africa's colonial past and a postmodern, postcolonial present by revisiting nineteenth-century Victorian themes within a contemporary context.

1.5 Research method

The research is conducted within a qualitative research paradigm and positioned within a poststructuralist and feminist framework. In the theoretical component, the research is interdisciplinary, drawing on cultural and historical studies, particularly colonialism, postcolonialism, feminism and whiteness studies. I deploy cultural history in my examination of Victorian constructs of gender, British settler and colonial women's writings and Jewish immigration to Southern Africa and South Africa from the late 1800s to 1935. Theories arising from these studies are applied within a visual art context. Discourse analysis is used as a tool to interrogate and expose selected ontological and epistemological assumptions embedded within selected texts and images. Modes of questioning are empirical, historical, conceptual, theoretical and exploratory. The research design is partially interpretivist.[21]

In the theoretical component, I use textual analysis, personal interpretation, biography and autoethnography as primary research methods. Textual analysis incorporates visual images and the written word. Critical literature analysis is employed as a means of constructing an argument to support central premises in the writing and practical work. Textual analysis extends to critical visual analysis of selected historical artworks and the works on the exhibition. Images are analysed in terms of iconographic choices, formal strategies, materials and media adopted, from which thematic and conceptual deductions are drawn. Through visual analysis, I contextualise the artwork and locate my art-making practice within a theoretical framework.

The autoethnographic text is an account of a subject's identity. While Michael Fischer (1986) refers to autoethnography as "contemporary ethnic autobiography", many alternative definitions exist, most of which are congruent with one another

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[21] An interpretivist research design asserts uncertainty as a key principle and "encourages varieties of data and different sources and analysis methods" (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2004:20).

and are pertinent to this study (see for instance Chang 2008; Denzin 2006; Fischer 1986; Pratt 1992). As a method, autoethnography is appropriate to both components of the study as it offers a reflexive account of personal experience that is not only autobiographical but reflects the subject's understanding of her[22] "personal history [as] implicated in larger social formations and historical processes" (Russell 1999). Allan Munro (2011:162) notes that the term 'autoethnography' is based on a tripartite structure: "'auto' refers to the 'self' … (in this instance, the artist) … 'ethno' refers to culture … and 'graphy' … speaks to the act of writing (or … any act that commits form to idea)". Key data-gathering and analytical processes are captured in the practice of narrative (Munro 2011:162).[23]

In both components of the study, primary research is conducted by drawing on information gained from four archival sources.[24] The first is Bertha Marks's original letters to her husband, housed in the Samuel Marks Papers archive at the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research (hereafter the 'Kaplan Centre for Jewish Research') at the University of Cape Town. These letters form an important primary source in both components, given that they provide first-hand accounts of Bertha Marks's homesickness for England, her loneliness and alienation in her new environment and her frustration with her position within Victorian gendered relations, while simultaneously revealing her ingrained colonial prejudices and values.

The second form of archive drawn on is the Sammy Marks Collection of Photographs, currently housed at the Sammy Marks Museum. This extensive collection includes individual and group portraits (Figure 17), photographs of servants in front of the family mansion, Zwartkoppies,[25] photographs of the house (Figure 2) and depictions of the family enjoying leisure activities. Thirdly, the Sammy Marks Museum itself is a 'living archive' in that at the time of writing it is fully furnished as it was during the period that the Marks family lived there (Figures 3 & 4). Fourthly, I draw on collections of personal family photographs, such as those taken of Freda Farber and her family before leaving Latvia (Figures 18 & 19).

Exploratory research is applicable to the creative work. In the artwork, the end result is not the proof of a distinct hypothesis but rather the investigative process of praxis. In this type of research, variables are not known — they are manipulated, and subjective observations can be made. These observations may be argued through written critical literature analysis and/or documented primary research. For example, the practical work is the visual and/or tangible articulation of a concept realised through a series of formal decisions and choices

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[22] In individual cases, the subject is gendered in the text. If the subject who is being referred to is specifically male, the terms 'he' or 'his' are used. 'She' is used in particular instances where, as in autoethnographic writing, it is important to 'write myself' into the text.

[23] According to Munro (2011:161), because autoethnography falls within the paradigm of qualitative research methods,

> [it] draws on the ontological position that the world is experienced and therefore can only be tangentially described and predicted. The epistemological strategy that goes with this ontological paradigm is one of interpretation rather than facts and definitive conclusions. Given this, the position of the researcher within his or her own paradigm needs to be embedded in the research process and taken to be part of that research process.

[24] Carolyn Hamilton (2010) defines the archive as an "inert repository of information … a site where the politics of knowledge emerge". Relics become an archive when identified as having importance — the archive is formed as a consequence of recognition and acknowledgement (Hamilton 2010).

[25] Literally translated from the Afrikaans as 'black hills', Zwartkoppies was originally part of a farm called Christienen Hall. When Sammy Marks acquired the farm, there was nothing on it but a simple clay house. This was the original house in which Bertha Marks lived when she arrived in South Africa. In 1885, Marks began building the mansion later known as Zwartkoppies Hall (Mendelsohn 1991:33).

Figure 2: Zwartkoppies Hall, Transvaal, c. 1900.
Sammy Marks Collection of Photographs, album SM nn.
Courtesy of the Sammy Marks Museum.

Figure 4: Corner of the drawing room, Sammy Marks Museum, Pretoria, 2006.
Photograph by the author.
Courtesy of the Sammy Marks Museum.

Figure 3: Section of the billiard room, Sammy Marks Museum, Pretoria.
(Illyria house [sa]).

of media, materials and iconography. These become part of the information assembled in support of a central argument or theme. In the practical work, a wide range of media and materials is employed, based on choices which best suit the realisation of the underpinning concept of the artwork and ways in which these media and materials might evoke affective responses. The written text of the catalogue takes the form of an interview conducted with me by Sandra Klopper. In my responses to Klopper's questions, I outline the theoretical framework and conceptual underpinnings of the artwork, contextualise *Dis-Location* within a history of my art-making practice, provide a history of the research as it evolved from a collaboration with the design team Strangelove, describe how source material was processed during the production of the artwork, explain reasons for my choices of media and materials (detailing ways in which these support

content and possible readings of, or affective responses to, the artwork), clarify my reasons for having chosen particular venues in which to exhibit the artwork and touch on some of the predilections and anxieties that led to its production. In the catalogue, I present comprehensive documentation of the works that make up the exhibition and documentation of *Dis-Location* installed in the seven venues in which it was exhibited.

1.6   Theoretical framework of the research

The research is located within a broader postcolonial, postmodern, poststructuralist and feminist framework. Identity is defined within constructivist[26] paradigms wherein it is regarded as polyglot, performed, heterogeneous, in-process, plural and relational — an unstable construction that challenges and destabilises Enlightenment and modernist conceptions of cultural purity and authenticity. Although the underpinning premise of the research is aligned with postcolonial and postmodern discourse, it also brings into play those forms of identity that fall into historical contexts by taking cognisance of modernist and colonial perspectives.[27]

Dis-Location comprises three core narratives, titled *Aloerosa* (2006-2007), *Ties that Bind Her* (2006-2007) and *A Room of Her Own* (2006-2007), as well as a collection of prints and sculptures titled the *Cultivar* series (2006-2007) and a single print titled *Between Cup and Lip, Thought and Action* (2006-2007). Although each narrative series takes place in linear progression and the chapters in this thesis follow the chronological trajectories of each persona, Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1988:7-12) concept of the rhizome is useful in understanding the disparate and lateral trains of thought that characterise both components. Deleuze and Guattari propose that because the rhizome has no beginning or end and grows according to a pattern of multiplicity as opposed to singularity, it can act as a metaphor for modes of thought that decentre and deterritorialise individuation. The rhizome's disparate, heterogeneous and multidirectional growth patterns, established through a matrix of connections and disconnections, disrupt the structured arboreal patterns of western thought. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1988:7-12), the tap root and radical are figurative exemplars of the singular, hierarchical, linear and dualist logic of western knowledge production. The rhizome — like other terms such as '*creolé*', 'hybridity', 'heterogeneity' and '*métissage*' — is used in postcolonial discourse as a critique of the binaries upon which colonial discourse is founded (Braziel & Mannur 2003:4). Given the reoccurring motifs of plant and human hybrids throughout the artwork and their metaphorical implications, the rhizome's ability to rupture, reform, connect and fuse with any point of another rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari 1988:7) so as to become an(other) is significant.

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[26] In contrast to essentialist theories which posit identity as fixed, stable and unchanging. Working across various interdisciplinary fields, constructivist theorists deconstruct the notion of an integral, originary and unified identity constituted by the self-sustaining Cartesian subject located at the centre of western metaphysics. They assert that postmodern identities are fragmented and fractured; "never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions" and that identities are "produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices" (Hall 1996:4).

[27] For instance, Bertha Marks's subjectivity comprised a combination of colonialism, ethnic othering and gender subordination, but was also constructed through the specificities of group histories and ideological positionings.

1.6.1　　Narratives of displacement

The study is centered around forms of displacement and the attendant senses of dislocation and alienation in relation to each persona. In each case, displacement is shown to provoke mutations in subjectivity and identity, resulting in dissident or disjunctive identities and relationships with place. Each persona's narrative raises questions around the consequences of displacement for a sense of (un)belonging and the (re)making of identities across geographical, cultural, temporal, ethnic and environmental borders.

Despite its comforts, Zwartkoppies was a place of physical and emotional restriction for Bertha Marks. Her sense of physical isolation was coupled with the intellectual, creative and psychological constraints of the gender constructs that determined her life as a Victorian woman (Mendelsohn 1991:187). As John Comaroff (cited in Goldberg 2000:82) observes, "Colonialism ... was about managing heterogeneity, dealing with difference through imposition and restriction, regulation and repression." Management and control of racial, cultural and class difference was institutionalised through what Anne McClintock (1995:47) and Laura Ann Stoler (1989a:635) refer to as the colonial 'politics of exclusion'. These were contingent upon the construction of categories and legal and/or social classifications designating race, class and legitimacy of progeny and citizens (as opposed to subjects of the British Empire) (Stoler 1989a:635). Stoler (1989a:635) argues that the categories of coloniser and colonised were instated through forms of sexual control that defined Europeans' domestic arrangements and the cultural investments by which they defined their identity. As she states, "Gender specific sanctions delineated hierarchies of power by refashioning middle-class conventions of respectability,[28] which, in turn, prescribed the personal and public boundaries of race and class" (Stoler 1989a:635). These sexual prescriptions were central to the politics of rule. Given the pivotal role that the politics of exclusion played in colonial life, I argue that Bertha Marks's sense of insularity was closely linked to her upholding of hierarchical Victorian conventions of class, language, race and gender differences. Thus, for Bertha Marks, the potential productivity of cultural exchange is contingent upon her levels of adherence and resistance to the politics of exclusion.

Like most British immigrant or settler women, Bertha Marks was reluctant to embrace, or even adapt to, her new surroundings.[29] Rather, her identity was constructed around a constant striving to maintain Victorian attitudes, behaviours and values through assertion of Victorian codes of respectability, with their inherent assumption of white supremacy. Living according to Victorian codes of conduct must surely have resulted in a critical disjuncture between her subjectivity and her lived experience of place in southern Africa.

Freda Farber's displacement is explored through the dual lenses of historical diaspora and complicity with the apartheid regime by virtue of her privileged whiteness. Nostalgia, a characteristic of historical diasporic experience, is

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[28]　Respectability was a Victorian code of conduct organised around a complex set of practices and representations that defined appropriate and acceptable modes of behaviour, language and appearance (Lemmer 2007:28). These social and moral codes regulated both gender and class identities (Davidoff & Hall 2002:398; Nead 1988:28).

[29]　Helen Dampier (2000:1, 167) writes that settler women in the Cape between 1820 and 1890 sought to replicate Victorian ideals and customs, adding that, "Maintaining and advancing British ideals, social systems and ways of life lay at the centre of every settler woman's life." By inscribing the frontier with the Victorian values of respectability, hard work, decorum and refinement, women attempted to tame it, to render it safe and familiar, instead of frighteningly unknown (Dampier 2000:i).

proposed as a sense of double consciousness — a way of inhabiting a heterotopic space of otherness that is simultaneously *here* and *there*. I suggest that from adulthood onwards (circa 1958-), as a member of the South African Jewish community and as part of the white minority, Freda Farber took a similar double stance in relation to apartheid policies. In her case, displacement led to a particular kind of adaptation to her new environment that involved a form of tacit complicity with the injustices of apartheid.

My experiences of displacement in postapartheid South Africa are set in the timeframe just prior to the time of making the artwork (2000-2006), which was the period during which these experiences resonated strongly for me. My sense of psychological dislocation from, and consequent experience of displacement within, postapartheid South Africa was rooted in a heightened awareness of the power and privileges my whiteness affords me. This awareness prompted in me a desire to re-evaluate my past in the present of postapartheid South Africa, coupled with a need to relocate myself within this environment. Such relocation entailed processes of self-scrutiny and self-criticism, necessitating assessment of those Anglo-Saxon legacies that constitute a form of deeply internalised colonialism, or what Melissa Steyn (2001:128) calls "tutelage into whiteness".[30] These processes

of re-evaluation were traumatic, as they entailed making conscious attempts to shape a new identity by discarding and/or reassessing naturalised Eurocentric values, morals, ideologies and customs embedded in South Africa's colonial past and within my consciousness, while retaining those that still seemed relevant to my sense of self. Although this re-evaluation was a personal process, it was, and is, also public, as post-1994 reformative changes have brought South African society into postcoloniality and cultural, racial and political identities were, and are, being reframed on contested political and psychological terms (Steyn 2001:xxiv).

Steyn (2001) and Gerald L'Ange (2005) identify displacement as a psychological state which informed the larger white South African public consciousness during the first decade after transition. This was a time in which WESSAs felt a sense of urgency to confront the instability of their positionings in the new dispensation in definitive terms (Steyn 2012). As underpinnings of white identity were being challenged through processes of transformation and redress, many WESSAs felt that they had been severed from their European roots (Steyn 2001; L'Ange 2005:xxiii-xxviii). In a panel discussion, Steyn (2006) commented that after 1994 she perceived a "crumbling of the old certainties of what it meant to be white in South Africa", noting that many whites felt "dislocated" from the country, as anchors that had previously held the master narrative of whiteness[31] in place were shifting or had been removed.

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[30] In relation to her childhood in South Africa, Steyn (1999:267) reflects that, "my whiteness certainly retained a colonial grain". She continues that before 1994, as a 'white' in South Africa, one "lived close to one's imperialism", in contrast to the situation in the United States of America (USA), where the structuring framework of colonial imperialism was psychologically more distant (Steyn 1999:266). She ascribes this to demographic differences — in the USA whites were in the majority; as the minority, blacks represented no serious challenge to them. This configuration created a confident, stable 'white' centre, in which others could be considered psychologically 'far' (Steyn 1999:267). In contrast to this "Distant-Other-Whiteness", Steyn (1999:267) suggests that her subjective experience of whiteness in South Africa was a "Present-Other-Whiteness" that had to do with "sensing the 'other'" as a psychologically close, "active presence in my 'white' psyche" (Steyn 1999:267).

[31] A socially constructed system that has been naturalised as normative in First World, western culture.

The ideological thrust of apartheid denied pride in black identity, giving rise to a post-1994 societal challenge of defining what postapartheid identities might constitute. This challenge led to the emergence of various discourses, such as Pan-Africanism and then South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's (1996) re-evocation of the utopian concept of an African Renaissance.[32] Mbeki's vision can be characterised as "a rallying summons to rebuild Africa in its 'own' (pre-colonial) image, to nurture a resurgence in African arts and culture, and thus extend South Africa's struggle and anticipated success to the rest of the continent" (Law 2005:108). In its validation of ethnic signifiers, the African Renaissance is seen as "refram[ing] and interpret[ing] these ... through ... a broader African experience" (Klopper 2000:217). To mark the occasion of the adoption of the South African Constitution on 8 May 1996, Mbeki — then Deputy President — quoted the Freedom Charter of 1955 in a speech to the Constitutional Assembly, in which he made "a firm assertion ... that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white" (Mbeki 1996). As Jennifer Law (2005:108) comments, this statement articulates what the South African Constitution, as a charter and social contract, defines in legal terms. In their implication that every "fragmented, dispossessed, and irresolute identity, every descendent of a migrant settler, every child of an indigenous 'native'" is part of the reborn nation, Mbeki's words re-image a nation in which "there are no strangers, only citizens" (Law 2005:108). The combination of the Constitution and Mbeki's words expounds a utopian ideological unification of individuals in an equalised citizenship that, although ideal and desirable, was, and

remains, besieged by many obstacles. One of these is that those 'white Africans' who staked their identities on their privileged whiteness became politically subordinated in a country that has been, and still is, in the process of redefining itself as African within the context of the African continent (Steyn 2001:xxii). As Steyn (2001:xxviii) observes, postcolonial narratives redefine and problematise identities for those interpellated by discourses of whiteness, bringing them into dialogue with otherness. Postcolonial discourses on hybridity seek to break down Manichean binaries between black and white to find an intermingled area of generative possibilities that may arise from cultural contact and exchange. Yet, despite the prevalence of such discourses, for many WESSAs 'belonging' and 'home' were, and still seem to be, contested terms.[33]

1.6.1.1 Heterotopias: sites of displacement

According to Kevin Hetherington (1997:46, emphasis added), heterotopias are sites wherein "all things *displaced, marginal, novel* or *rejected,* or *ambivalent*" are represented. In this thesis, the heterotopia, as defined by Foucault (1986), is positioned as a 'site of otherness' or 'displacement'. The three personaes'

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[32] The concept of the African Renaissance, mentioned by President Nelson Mandela at a conference of the Organisation for African Unity in Tunis in 1994 and later popularised by President Thabo Mbeki during his term of office, was an indication that government wished to align itself with the African continent, as opposed to retaining its Eurocentric heritage that had been in place since the 1600s (Van der Watt 2003:19).

[33] In 2001, after having conducted a series of interviews with groups of WESSAs in Johannesburg, Cape Town and the rural Eastern Cape, Salusbury and Foster (2004:94) conclude that in contrast to Afrikaners, "a ... reason for the lack of theory pertaining to WESSAs has been that there is apparently very little to be said about them. They have historically adhered to the philosophy of individualism and have resisted defining themselves according to group membership." WESSAs' minimal sense of nationalistic group consciousness is evident in the lack of self-reflexive literature, community cohesiveness and cultural or political organisations that represent their interests (Salusbury & Foster 2004:94). Possibly due to this absence of group articulation, WESSAs "feel a lack of purpose, of direction: they want to feel they belong [but] they don't know what to belong to" (Guy Butler cited in Salusbury & Foster 2004:95).

experiences of physical (literal) and psychological displacement (imaginatively occupying an 'other place' that differs from the normative) result in heterotopias of crisis.

Medically the term 'heterotopia' is used to describe misplaced body parts, or the presence of normal tissue at an abnormal bodily site: it can be used to refer to parts of the body that are displaced, absent, extraneous, or foreign to the body (Jorgensen 2010:4). Foucault (1986) extends the medical term to apply to textual and social space; in the case of social space, he considers the body as an occupied space in society and the transposed flesh or organ as a site of cultural and social significance. Heterotopias are "places of Otherness, whose Otherness is established through a relationship of difference with other sites, such that their presence either provides an unsettling … or an alternative representation of spatial and social relations" (Hetherington 1997:8).[34]

Foucault (1986:24) describes the heterotopia as a "real" dislocated or "other" site that may occupy mental and/or physical space, in contrast to utopias,[35] which are "fundamentally unreal spaces" existing only in the imagination. Whereas heterotopias do not exist independently of reality, utopias are fictitious and invented (Topinka 2010:57). Foucault (1986:24) speaks of heterotopias as being "outside of all places, even though it might be possible to indicate their location in reality". Heterotopias not only stand in contrast to utopias, but "unstitch, undermine and transform" them (Johnson 2006:84). Although Foucault (1986:24) describes heterotopias as "effectively enacted utopias", Peter Johnson (2006:84, 85) reiterates that, as opposed to utopias, heterotopias do not offer any primary form of resistance, redemption or liberation. Nevertheless, following Foucault, it may be argued that heterotopias can have a connection to the illusionism of utopias: they are often *real places articulated or envisioned through the imagination or perception*. Heterotopias may include urban and geopolitical spatial constructs (such as hinterlands, wonderlands and borderlands), physical and material spaces, as well as conceptual (psychological, imaginary), virtual and immaterial spaces. As I show with reference to multiple, diverse forms of heterotopias in the chapters to follow, heterotopias have no singular, 'pure' form; rather, they exist in a variety of formations and combinations that reverberate with and against each other (Johnson 2006:84).

Foucault (1986:24-27) classifies heterotopias according to six principles. First of all, although the forms they take are heterogeneous, heterotopias are universal; secondly, heterotopias function in relation to all sites. The latter principle includes 'heterotopias of illusion' that create a space of illusion which exposes real space and 'heterotopias of compensation' which create a real space that is other (Topinka 2010:56, 57). Thirdly, society can refashion their use over time to allow them to function in different ways; fourthly a heterotopia may be a single, real place in which several spaces, sites or elements are juxtaposed; fifthly, 'temporal' heterotopias are connected with both the accumulation of time (exemplified in the museum) and its fleetingness (as evident in sites where time is transitory and precarious such as the fairground or festival); and sixthly, 'heterotopias of ritual

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[34] Foucault (cited in Johnson 2006:78) uses a number of verbs to describe the heterotopia's relation to other sites: "they mirror, reflect, represent, designate, speak about all other sites but at the same time suspend, neutralize, invert, contest and contradict those sites".

[35] Utopia, a term coined by Sir Thomas More (1985 [1516]), expresses the desire for a better way of life; a space occupied by those wishing to "make some change to society and seek[ing] to bring about that change" (Hetherington 1998:123). It is usually used in the context of an attempt to create a perfectly ordered, stable and properly governed society, in which the principles of freedom are upheld (Hetherington 1997:viii). Utopias are represented through literary, filmic, religious, political and spatial descriptions of alternative societies. They can be supplemented in the form of daydreams and fantasies, critiques of existing conditions and the desire for transformation (Johnson 2006:82).

or purification' that require a system of opening and closing which isolates them from other spaces while retaining their penetrability. Heterotopias are therefore ambivalent and uncertain spaces owing to the multiplicity of social meanings that are attached to them (Hetherington 1997:41).

Foucault (1986:24, 25) further divides heterotopias pertaining to the first principle into two types: spaces of "crisis" and of "deviation". The former house people in the states of crisis (menstruating or pregnant women, the elderly) and include shelters such as orphanages, rest or retirement homes. They are sacred, privileged or forbidden sites (for example, monasteries or brothels). Sites of deviance, such as prisons, military camps and psychiatric asylums, are for those whose behaviour deviates from societal norms. Heterotopias can thus be both "marginal and central, associated with transgressive outsiderness as well as 'carceral' sites of social control" in which the desire for a perfect order is manifest (Hetherington 1997:46).

While heterotopias are "counter-hegemonic spaces that exist apart from 'central' spaces that are seen to represent the social order" (Hetherington 1997:21), they are paradoxically also connected to them. Connections between heterotopias and other systems of ordering create a discordant yet productive conflict of spaces, as one system of ordering challenges another (Topinka 2010:63). Although heterotopias are frequently described as *sites of resistance* (see Bosteels 2003; Genocchio 1995; Johnson 2006), Hetherington (1997) and Robert Topinka (2010) offer distinctively nuanced readings of this description, both of which I follow. Hetherington (1997:9) considers heterotopias as "*spaces of an alternate ordering*"; Topinka (2010:55, 56, emphasis added) reiterates Foucault's (1986) proposition that heterotopias are "*sites of reordering*". Topinka (2010:56) argues that the heterotopia is a "space where the telescoping of many spaces in one site leads to

the intensification of knowledge and a revelation of the governing principles of that order". Hetherington (1997:46) expands on this idea, proposing that because heterotopic sites destabilise established orders, such sites can *facilitate* acts of resistance and transgression, which are *processes that can become alternative forms of ordering.*

Heterotopias problematise knowledge by removing, and thereby revealing, the ground (or grid) upon which knowledge is based (Topinka 2010:62). As Topinka (2010:60) explains, "heterotopias hold up an alternate order to the dominant order, providing glimpses of the governing principles of [that] order". These glimpses emerge through connections established between heterotopias and the dominant order. The contestation of classification systems is a result of the spaces between each element in the heterotopia having been removed. There is thus no longer a supporting order against which separation and distinction of elements can occur (Topinka 2010:60-63). In conventional modes of perception, knowledge "always occurs in the interstice … what we know … is not the thing in itself but the space between the thing and something else" (Foucault 1970:150). It is because of the underlying support that elements can be recognised and known; its removal or destabilisation "represent[s] nothing less than an attack on our way of knowing, a direct assault on our episteme", rendering the heterotopia an unsettling site (Topinka 2010:62).

1.6.2   *Cultural contacts and exchanges*

In the artwork, Bertha Marks's and the postcolonial protagonist's experiences of displacement prompt a need to redefine their identities in terms of heterogeneity. Similarly, the postapartheid era has necessitated rethinking and reformation of

South African identities in ways that destabilise homogenous forms of national, ethnic and cultural identity (see for instance Nuttall 2009; Wasserman & Jacobs 2003; Zegeye 2001). In this context, the constructivist notion of identity as fluid, multiple and unstable is relevant, yet rendered more complex by the difficulties of fixing these positions in a socio-political environment where the very notion of identity is emergent and contingent upon socio-political terrain and history (Farber 2010c:304, 305).

Within Stuart Hall's (2000 [1996]) postcolonial framework, destabilisation of identity comes about through "differences that have been brought together so that they make contact" (Brydon 1995:136). Postcolonial discourse offers a range of terms to describe processes of cultural contact, fusion, intrusion, disjunction, crossovers and assimilation. Although many of these terms might be applied in an examination of how processes of cultural exchange are effected in the artwork, they might also operate as useful points of departure for analysing currently emergent South African cultural identity formations and as such could be pertinent to the research. Venn (2010:322) provides a comprehensive overview of this vocabulary which I cite and add to. His overview addresses issues in terms of concepts such as the term 'acculturation', which is also referred to as 'roots and routes' (James Clifford; Paul Gilroy); 'doubleness' (WEB Du Bois); 'hybridity' (Homi K Bhabha; Néstor García Canclini); 'transculturation' (García Canclini; Fernando Ortiz); 'belonging and unbelonging', 'uprooting/regrounding' (Sarah Ahmed); 'translation, syncretism and creolisation (or *métissage*)' (Edward Ricardo Braithwaite; Édouard Glissant); 'intersystems' (Lee Drummond); 'ethono-, media-, techno-, finan- and ideo-scapes' (Arun Appadurai); 'amalgamation (or the Brazilian *mestizo*)' (Gilberto Freyre); 'borderlands (or *mestizaje*)' (Gloria Anazaldúa); 'semiotic psychology' (Yuri Lotman) and 'co-optation' (Ashis Nandy). In Venn's words (2010:322), "These

... concepts ... register the fact that the crossing of borders by cultures and peoples brought together through migration, trade, war, environmental pressures and so on, results in subjective turmoil that triggers [the] forging [of] new identities and new ways of being."

In their analysis of emergent postapartheid South African cultural identities, Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl-Ann Michael (2000:6) favour the term 'creolisation' to describe the multiple transformative fusions prevalent in postapartheid South Africa, arguing that it offers a more nuanced understanding of identity and culture than multiculturalism and hybridity.[36] For Nuttall and Michael (2000:6), creolisation, or "the process whereby individuals of different cultures, languages, and religions are thrown together and invent a new language, Creole, a new culture and a new organization", can be "dynamic and self-conscious" or an osmotic, unpredictable process of cultural exchange. Nuttall (2009:22) examines how work done elsewhere on *creolité* might be employed in a postapartheid context, specifically in studies dealing with South Africa's legacy of violence. She suggests that if it were to be applied to aspects of the South African cultural archive, *creolité* "might offer a programme of possibility in relation to neglected questions, a point of interrogation directed towards a richly complex and extremely conflictual history" (Nuttall 2009:22).[37] Furthermore Nuttall (2009:1) proposes "entanglement"

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[36] Nuttall and Michael (2000:6) propose 'multiculturalism' as a term that stands close to the metaphor of the Rainbow Nation which was coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and enthusiastically taken up after the 1994 South African elections. Yet, as they note, by 2006 this metaphor was already somewhat tarnished because, in their view, it posits a form of multiculturalism that is about "polite proximities, about containment" and thus perpetuates apartheid conceptual structures of separation (Nuttall & Michael 2000:6). See footnote 40 for detail on how these authors see the terms 'creolisation' and 'hybridity' as differently nuanced.
[37] In her interrogation of the assumption, often made by Marxist critics, that processes of creolisation are devoid of conflict, Nuttall (2009:21) leans towards creolisation as a form of integration that *includes resistance and contestation*. These assumptions draw on the premise

as another descriptor of past and present South African identities. She uses this term critically, not only in relation to race but to explore other registers, material life and modes of identity-formation in postapartheid South Africa. She phrases her description of the term poetically:

> Entanglement is a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of intimacy gained, even if it was resisted or ignored or uninvited. It is a term which may gesture towards a relationship or set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle, but which also implies a human foldedness. It works with difference and sameness but also with their limits, their predicaments, their moments of complication (Nuttall 2009:1).

I acknowledge that because it suggests a complex range of generative possibilities arising from cultural contact and exchange, entanglement can play a critical role in redefining identities for those previously interpellated by Eurocentric discourses. I also recognise García Canclini's (1995) anthropologically oriented interpretation of hybridity (or transculturation) as being well suited to the analysis of processes of hybridisation in relation to South Africa's particular socio-historical circumstances. García Canclini (1995:xxx) suggests that hybridity is "a process [to] which we can gain access and which one can abandon, from which one can be excluded or to which we can be subordinated, [and in so doing] it is possible to understand the various subject positions implicated in cross-cultural relations". His conception of hybridity, initially formulated in the context of Latin America's adaptation to modernity, refers to globalising processes that accentuate cross-cultural contact

and exchange by creating world markets for money and material goods, messages and migrants (Farber 2010a:131). As such, it may be usefully adapted to describe processes of entering and exiting modernity in African nation states and to denote forms of transcultural contact such as those that are relevant to postapartheid South Africa. Although García Canclini (1995:xxxiv) is well aware that globalising interactions may diminish the autonomy of local traditions, he also argues that they foster a variety of hybridisations in production, communication and styles of consumption. I therefore give credence to the view, without bearing it out in my argument, that García Canclini's work on Latin America could be useful in a postapartheid South African context (Farber 2010a:131).

While acknowledging that creolisation, entanglement and other forms of transculturation processes are potentially useful theoretical tools for analysing the multiple forms of transformative fusions prevalent in postapartheid South African society, for research purposes I position my discussion within the parameters of the term 'hybridity'. Albeit that hybridity is a contested term, given its correlations with the creative work — in which organic species of plants and human skin conjoin through grafting — my use of it is strategic in that it refers to both biological and cultural 'merging'. Like the term 'grafting', its etymology is biological and botanical. It is commonly used in postcolonial discourse to describe a range of social and cultural borrowings, exchanges and intersections across ethnic boundaries and the emergence of new cultural forms that might ensue from such combinations. While recognising postcolonial criticisms of hybridity[38] such as David Theo Goldberg's (2000:82) view that in 'fusing' the

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that processes of creolisation are not based on materialities and that use of the concept as a theoretical tool therefore sidelines issues such as class struggles, social hierarchies and inequalities. Yet, as Herman Wasserman and Sean Jacobs (2003:16) note, creolisation is not devoid of power struggles; neither does it signify a complete break with the past. This is borne out, for instance, in the way South African society still reflects economic inequalities which coincide with past racial divides that affect cross-cultural movement (Wasserman & Jacobs 2003:16).

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[38] One criticism is the argument that the concept of the hybrid, as used in postcolonial discourse, is inherently dualistic because it is based on two sources, each of which has its distinct origins. In coming together to form a third variant, aspects of these origins remain manifest (Nuttall

heterogeneous, hybridity reasserts homogeneity (in his words, it "fixes the flux and flow, orders the dis-orderly, renders more or less safe by 'capturing' the transgressive expression of the hybrid") and the discomfort of some South African theorists with the application of the terms 'hybridity' and 'creolisation' in a South African context because of their association with the state-sanctioned racial construct of 'colouredness' under apartheid (Nuttall 2009:21; see Jacobs 2002),[39] I align my use of the term 'hybridity' with Bhabha's (1994) reading of it. In my understanding, Bhabha overcomes such criticisms by shifting the concept of hybridity towards a theorising of what he calls the 'Third Space of Enunciation' that destabilises all identity. Bhabha's hybridity is a space of cultural resistance — a 'third term' "which can never … be third because, as a miscreated perversion of its progenitors, it exhausts the differences between them" (Young 1995:23).[40] Bhabha stresses that the concept of hybridity must not replicate or reify binary

categories of the past but rather call attention to the mutalities of the postcolonial condition and facilitate the generation of new, non-essentialist modes of cultural (ex)change (Farber 2010a:131).

1.6.3   *The address of the other*[41]

In the artwork, the protagonist's actions of grafting, which arise from a sense of displacement in her new location, lead to hybridity and new subject formations. During this process, Bertha Marks and the postcolonial protagonist encounter the other of postcolonial discourse,[42] but differentiations between what would most likely have been Bertha Marks's understanding of selfhood and otherness and mine are drawn. For Bertha Marks, the Other is positioned as the negative polarity of the Self/Other binary — a dichotomised, polarising framework based on Manichean, hierarchical categories of description and classification upon which

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& Michael 2000:6). However, as Chris Barker (2004:90) observes, hybridisation involves a mixing together of that which is already hybrid. Few if any cultural formations are bounded and homogenous; rather, they are hybridised forms that may be further divided along the lines of gender, class, nationality, age and so on (Barker 2004:90). For a detailed critique of hybridity, see David Theo Goldberg (2000:723-786).

[39] Nuttall (2009:21) advances the view that such uneasiness is due to correlations drawn between the 'mixed' nature of the terms 'creolisation' and 'hybridity' and the apartheid state's construct of 'colouredness' that acted as an intermediatory zone between blacks and whites. Thus, as Nuttall (2009:21) concludes, "the interpellation of 'colouredness' as neither black nor white (according to an ideology of racial purity)" is often considered by South African academics to be a "racist and suspect" notion.

[40] While acknowledging Young's reading of Bhabha's Third Space of hybridity, Nuttall and Michael (2000:6) argue that Bhabha still advocates difference by basing his argument on the dualities of challenge and opposition. They propose creolisation as being more applicable to a South African context because, unlike Bhabha's Third Space, it is not confined to resistance but offers a "more varied sense of the making of identities" (Nuttall & Michael 2000:7). They support their argument by reference to Édouard Glissant's (cited in Nuttall & Michael 2000:7) explication of creolisation as an ongoing process inherent to all forms of cultural encounters: "If we speak of creolised cultures … it is not to define a category that will be opposed by its very nature to other categories (pure cultures) … Creolisation as an idea is not primarily the glorification of the composite nature of a people: indeed, no people has been spared the cross-cultural process … To assert peoples are creolised is to deconstruct the category of 'creolised' that is considered as 'halfway between two pure extremes'."

[41] The phrase 'the address of the other' suggests dialogic acts of speaking: engagement with issues (dealing with, attending to, focusing upon, taking up, adopting), referential acts (referring to, gesturing towards, indicating) and the location of speaking (where one is literally and figuratively when one speaks: the address of one's address) (Farber 2010c:304).

[42] This conception of selfhood and otherness goes beyond the other of psychoanalytic theory, in which the emergence of the individual self or the 'I' inscribes an Other. I discuss this Other in Chapter Five, with reference to Lacan's definition thereof as a symbolic site at which the subject is constituted. For Lacan, the subconscious is the discourse of the Other, formed at the moment of the child's constitution via entry into the symbolic order (Barker 2004:140). The symbolic order is the homogenous, naturalising structure within language in which "fixed classifications" such as vocabulary, grammar and syntax, as well as the "rules of logic", innately suggest a unity (Felluga 2003). The preverbal state of the Other is positioned as 'lack' and associated with the feminine (Barker 2004:140). My use of the term 'the other of postcolonial discourse' refers to the dialogical relation between self and other; the 'I' and that which is 'not I', or 'You'. As Jacques Derrida and feminists such as Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous (among others) have shown, historically — in colonial and patriarchal, phallogocentric discourses — the 'I' of the pairing is positioned as the rational, unitary, self-present, autonomous Cartesian subject. Self and other are considered as fixed, opposing categories wherein the (European, white, male) self is set up in a dichotomous relation to the cultural/racial/ethnic/gendered other, the oppressed colonial subject, the subaltern or the sub-cultural other. These binaries that inscribe difference usually involve a relationship of power, wherein 'self' is empowered with positive attributes and 'other' is positioned as subordinate (Barker 2004:139).

colonial discourse itself is based. From the fundamental Self/Other binary, in Manichean allegory, a range of diverse yet interchangeable dichotomies emanate: white and black; good and evil; darkness and light; superiority and inferiority; civilisation and savagery; intelligence and emotion; rationality and sensuality; male and female; coloniser and colonised; oppressor and oppressed; European and African (Steyn 2001:12).

Apartheid policies institutionalised and concretised the dichotomies of Self/Other upon which colonial discourse is predicated: "Africa, and what it was constructed to represent, was split off from the 'European', and what that was constructed to represent, namely the cultured, the ordered, the rational, the centre of progress, the measure of cleanliness, of civilization" (Steyn 2003:238). Until the mid-1990s, otherness in South Africa was formulated primarily in racial terms and represented as a naturalised, essentialised category. The post-1994 South African political dispensation and consequently ever-changing socio-political environment began, and continues, to call into question power dynamics between racial groupings previously legislatively categorised as 'black', 'white', 'coloured' and 'Indian/Asian/Asiatic', opening up possibilities of rethinking difference as a fixed theoretical category. It is these conditions of fluidity, instability and flux that, speculatively, might give rise to what Hall (2000:32) proposes as a "form of representation which is able to constitute us as new kinds of subjects, and thereby enable us to discover places from which to speak". For Hall, the politics of self-representation reside not in the establishment of a fully-fledged, stable and definitive identity in the modernist sense, "but in its use as a strategy to open up avenues for new speaking trajectories, the articulation of new lines of theorizing" (Ang 1999:544).

Nuttall (2010:461) identifies one such 'new line of theorising' in what she sees as a shift in contemporary South African visual art and culture away from the identity politics prevalent in the 1990s. She observes that shifting questions of address in the contemporary South African public sphere — "letting go ... of the force of a clear contained otherness" — might provide generative opportunities for "other kinds of formations, or inflections, in both artistic and political senses [that] speak of an increasing instability and flux" (Nuttall 2010:461). These 'other kinds of formations' suggest alternative approaches to the representation of self and other that more appropriately address a society in which identities (cultural, racial and ethnic) are constantly in processes of transformation and 'becoming' and have relevance to the address of the other in global terms.

Conception of South African identities as being in a perpetual 'state of becoming' may be linked to a broader postmodern, postcolonial context. Hall (2000:23, 1996:2) theorises identity as a process of "becoming" as well as of "being"; for him, identity (or *identification*) is a "'construction, a process never completed — always 'in process'". Hall (1996:4) extends this conception of identity to representation, noting that, "identities are about ... using the resources of history, language and culture [to represent] not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves". Hall's words resonate with Albie Sachs's (1990:22) identification of critical cultural production as a site within which South Africans might "constantly remake [them]selves". Sachs's 1990 phrase implies that 'South African identities' are never stable or concretised but are rather indefinitely emergent, 'in-process'.

In relation to the postcolonial protagonist, I present the concept of the other as estranged within the self, as an example of an alternative formation of selfhood and otherness. Julia Kristeva's (1991) re-reading of Sigmund Freud's (1955 [1919]) psycho-cultural concept of the *Unheimlich* (uncanny) as the other-as-stranger-within, and Eric Santner's (2001:5) openess to "alternity, the uncanny strangeness, of the Other" are used as lenses through which this identity construction is read.

1.6.4   *Remaking identities*

In both components of the study I consider how formal strategies often feminised by association with women artists, or the impact of the feminist movement on western art-making practices — such as staging, use of personae, performance, masquerade, the body, appropriations and subversions of architecture, domesticity and domestic labour, use of (auto)biographic narratives as forms of agency, reflexive deployments of craft and the decorative — are refigured through questions surrounding race, class and gender.

As it was associated with docility, obedience and love of the home, as well as the privilege of leisure, the domestic imperative of needlework, and particularly embroidery, was considered an appropriate activity for an upper-middle-class Victorian lady. In *Dis-Location*, needlework as a Victorian construct of passive, self-negating 'femininity' (Parker 1984:4, 5) is subverted through the implication that the act of sewing can be redefined as a form of agency. Needlework and the historically gendered psycho-logical/somatic disorder of hysteria, as well as the contemporary practice of self-mutilation by cutting, are imaged as means by which the protagonist brings unspoken traumas into language. I suggest that these activities and disorders may be as regarded as evocations of the non-referential

aspects of signification that originate in the semiotic drives.[43] Through these embodied, pre-symbolic forms of speech, as well as through forms of language that privilege the symbolic, the protagonist mobilises the cathartic effects of giving 'voice' to personal trauma. Her intimate acts of cutting and stitching (grafting) of plants and objects that act as signifiers of 'South African' and 'English' identities onto her body lead to potential new subject formations and hybridised identities. While the postcolonial protagonist's responses to trauma are largely articulated in the artwork as personal, they gesture towards shared collective experiences that inform the temporal and socio-political context within which they are rooted.

1.7   Literature review

This thesis is woven from multiple, interrelated and overlapping threads. Diverse postcolonial and feminist theoretical positions are interlaced with historical facts, references to and analyses of literary sources, anecdotal quotations and personal interpretation. Although the disparity of themes, fields and subjects form a characteristically rhizomatic network in which demarcations are fluid, for purposes of clarity they are organised below into subcategories. As I have mentioned, my intention is to use the theory to illuminate and expand upon concepts that are visually articulated in the artwork.

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[43] Following Lacan, Kristeva (1995a:104) identifies the symbolic as a system of "signification that is manifest in linguistic signs and their logico-syntactic organization". For her, signification processes comprise the interplay between the semiotic and the symbolic. Forms of speech that derive from the semiotic represent a discharge of the subject's bodily energy and drives (McAfee 2004:16); they are, according to Noëlle McAfee (2004:18 citing Kristeva) what is "'below the surface' of the speaking being".

1.7.1 Narratives of displacement

1.7.1.1 Colonial displacements

In order to contextualise Bertha Marks's possible perceptions and experiences of — as well as her attitudes towards — Africa, I provide glimpses into aspects of colonial and Victorian discourses in relation to the continent. Ways in which these discourses are relevant to her and play out in the artwork are discussed in each chapter.

For background information on the scientific, cultural, economic and political premises upon which the colonial enterprise was predicated, I consulted a range of anthropological and historical texts. Writings by historians of science and imperial development (for example Blaut 1993; Curtin 1964; Driver 2004; Neale 1984; Pieterse & Parekh 1995; Plotz 2007; Said 1994; Seaman 1973) are important sources. Subjects discussed within these broader colonial discourses include:

- the science of botany (Arnold 1992, 2001; Bean 1908; Brockway 1979; Browne 1989, 1996; Casteel 2003; De Almeida 2004; Frost 1996; Kincaid 2000; MacKay 1996; Miller 1996; Miller & Reill 1996; Ornduff 1984; Pugh 1988; Van Sittert 2003)
- travel writings (Burchell 1953 [1822]; Mills 1991; Pratt 1992; Robertson, Mash, Tickner, Bird, Curtis & Putnam 1994)
- whiteness in British colonies (Chege 1997; Coetzee 1988; Kennedy 1987)
- colonialism in southern Africa (Dagut 1997, 2000; Dubow 2009; Foster 2008; Jacobs 1995; Kirkwood 1984; Mamdani 1996, 1998; Mudimbe 1994; Van Onselen 1980)

- colonialists' self-conceptions in relation to the Other, and their construction of communities built on asymmetries of race, class and gender (Brownfoot 1984; Callan & Ardener 1984; Stoler 1989a; Strobel 1987).

Patrick Brantlinger's (1985) analysis of colonial, and specifically Victorian, conceptions of Africa as the Dark Continent plays a key role in my discussion. Brantlinger positions this mythology within a larger discourse on an imperialism and Empire shaped by political and economic pressures. He shows how the myth of the Dark Continent defined slavery as a consequence of tribal savagery and portrayed white explorers and missionaries as the leaders of a Christian crusade intended to eradicate darkness. His article has been particularly beneficial to my understanding of colonial discourses around Africa that would have informed Bertha Marks's perceptions thereof.

I offer a gendered reading of the patriarchal ideologies that underpin colonial discourse as they pertain to the persona of Bertha Marks. These are evident, for instance, in colonial conceptions of women's social, political and economic roles, as well as attitudes and values ascribed to the colonised peoples, land and landscape. While many texts on gendered colonial whiteness (Bradlow 1987; Callan 1984; Callaway 1987; Chaudhuri & Stobels 1992; Ettienne & Leacock 1980; Gartrell 1984; Mills 2005; Sharpe 1993; Van-Helten & Williams 1983; Ware 1992; Woollacott 1997) informed my discussion, McClintock (1995) and Stoler (1989a) are pivotal to my argument. McClintock (1995:5) proposes a complex series of interrelationships linking gender, race and class that, "come into existence in and through relation to each other — if in contradictory and conflictual ways". She underscores the

point that although white women were barred from formal power and subject to the patriarchal strictures of colonial gender constructs, they held positions of 'borrowed' power over colonised peoples owing to the privileges of race.

Examining the Victorian 'cult of domesticity' as a critical yet often concealed or marginalised dimension of colonisation, McClintock (1995:36) notes that the physical and psychological boundary markers deployed in the home to police the politics of exclusion played a fundamental role in upholding the boundaries of Empire. Thus, she argues, as colonisers and colonised, privileged and restricted, women were ambiguously complicit in upholding and maintaining the interests of imperial rule (McClintock 1995:6). Stoler's (1989a:634, 640) analysis of ways in which colonial authority and racial distinctions were structured in gendered terms connects with McClintock's view. Her argument is based on the premise that,

> European women … in th[e] colonies experienced the cleavages of racial dominance and internal social distinctions very differently than men precisely because of their ambiguous positions, both as subordinates in colonial hierarchies, and as active agents of imperial culture in their own right … European women were not only the bearers of racist beliefs, but hardline operatives who put them into practice, encouraging class distinctions among whites while fostering new racial antagonisms (Stoler 1989a:634, 640).

Simon Dagut (2000) is an important source who informs my understanding of Bertha Marks's position as an immigrant in the social world of colonial southern Africa, and particularly of her role as mistress of the household. Dagut identifies two streams of feminist historiography. Those historians working with the 'recuperative' approach, mostly in the 1980s, examine how women operated in and were constrained by their positioning in the 'separate sphere' of the domestic, and what useful and humane work they did within these confines. The second

stream, 'contemporary feminism', incorporates more recent work by South African historians (see Bradford 1996; Dampier 2000; Erlank 1995, 1996; Hugo 1989; Van Heyningen 1993). These sources provide a comprehensive view of how nineteenth-century settler women in southern Africa experienced gender ideologies and subjugation within a patriarchal social system.

In discussing Bertha Marks's experiences of immigration, I make tentative connections between her empirical, individual experience and the larger social group of British immigrant or settler women in the colonies. Although it would have been preferable to refer directly to Bertha Marks's personal experiences, the paucity of literature on her makes this almost impossible. I therefore draw speculative parallels between her experiences and those of *fin-de-siècle* immigrant colonial women in southern Africa and in other British colonies by examining writings on, or contemporary feminist historians' analyses of, the latter's life experiences as expressed in letters and diaries (Bailey 1983; Callan & Arderner 1984; Cooper 1987; Davis 1987; Formes 1995; Hugo 1989; Kirkwood 1984; Schlissel 1978; Young 1994).[44] I do so recognising that although there were commonalities between these women's experiences of immigration and settlement and those of Bertha Marks, their experiences are not interchangeable and that each case was dependent on circumstances of geographical context, temporal positioning, age, class and family status.

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[44] With acknowledgement that the colonial elites were not unified or 'natural' communities with homogenous class interests, racial attributes, gender relations and political affinities (Stoler 1989a:634, 635).

Many studies in African and imperial history neglect women and gender[45] (for detail see Bailey 1983; Bradford 1996; Van-Helten & Williams 1983; Van Heyningen 1993). In the near-absence of other information about women who immigrated to southern Africa as early settlers, letters and diaries (published and unpublished) are significant historical sources (see Dampier 2000; Erlank 1995, 1996; Hugo 1989; Van Heyningen 1993). Susan Bailey (1983:11; see also Van Heyningen 1993:14) notes that journals, diaries and letters of immigrant or settler women in the British colonies are all that remain to represent their experiences of relocation.[46] Although the contents of letters may appear to reveal little more than trivial details of everyday life, they should not be viewed as merely reflective of physical situations: for example, Elizabeth van Heyningen (1993:21, 22) points out that immigrants' or settlers' letters and diaries reflect ways in which Victorian class, race and cultural values were absorbed, experienced and transmitted through women and thus provides evidence supporting McClintock (1995) and Stoler's (1989a) thesis that women were ambivalently complicit in, and therefore fundamental to, the project of Empire-building.

While Sammy Marks's rags-to-riches story as an entrepreneur is extensively documented, the historical figure of Bertha Marks remains enigmatic. One of the only texts that deals with her life experiences is Richard Mendelsohn's biography of Sammy Marks, specifically his chapter, 'The gilded cage: Zwartkoppies after the war' (Mendelsohn 1991:181-195). Mendelsohn's treatment of the circumstances surrounding the life of the 'real' Bertha Marks foregrounds not only the histories of late nineteenth-century white women living in southern Africa but also the mechanisms of historical research as an academic practice (Law-Viljoen 2008:6). Mendelsohn's text works on two levels. First, through rigorous research and recourse to original archival material, it provides a scholarly and thorough reconstruction of the life of one particular woman living an upper-class colonial life in southern Africa (Law-Viljoen 2008:6) and, secondly, it informs my understanding of the historical persona and life experiences of Bertha Marks. It adds a textual layer that, in its recording of the minute details of Bertha Marks's everyday existence (Law-Viljoen 2008:6), helps me to establish the thematic framework within which my study is situated.

1.7.1.2   Cultural identities and displacement

Of the many constructivist writings on identity, Hall's contributions (1996, 2000 [1996]) form a primary source. Hall (2000:22, 23) points to two definitions of cultural identity, the first being an essentialist approach, the second psychoanalytic and discursive. The essentialist approach suggests that cultural identity is based on "recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation" (Hall 1996:2). Hall (2000:22) sees this production of cultural identity as grounded in a reframing of the past. It involves

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[45] In these studies representations of women and their experiences tend to be overlooked as unimportant. Where information is provided, it usually focuses on biographical and anecdotal detail (Van-Helten & Williams 1983). Helen Bradford (1996:352) comments that in numerous historical texts not only are women neglected but their existence is linguistically denied. They are often subsumed under the category 'man' and the 'ordinary person' is usually conceptualised as male. If referred to, women are generally labelled as 'wife', 'widow', 'sister-in-law', 'sister' or 'daughter' (Bradford 1996:356).

[46] Letter-writing had tremendous import (Erlank 1996:82), given that it was usually the only means by which links could be maintained with friends and families (including children who had been sent to boarding school) in the 'old country'. In her study of the diaries and letters written by middle-class English-speaking settler women living on the Eastern Cape frontier between 1820 and 1890, Dampier (2000:18) observes that the majority of women suffered from intense loneliness and frustration. Correspondence provided an opportunity for social interaction and a forum in which women could express their grievances.

the retelling of hidden histories, the rediscovery of identities and a search for 'authentic roots' and therefore suggests an identity construction which is pertinent to my exploration of Bertha Marks's and Freda Farber's subjectivities. The second definition aligns with constructivist conceptions of identity as heterogeneous, fragmented and fractured, "constructed across different, and often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions" (Hall 1996:4).

In many postcolonial texts (see for instance, Boyarin & Boyarin 2003; Brah 1996; Braziel & Mannur 2003; Cohen 1997; Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk 2005; Mouffe 1994; Safran 1991) the historical cultures of diaspora[47] are re-examined as a means of understanding and embracing new modes of postnational citizenship; indeed, diasporas are accepted as being "exemplary communities of the transnational moment" (Khachig Tölölian cited in Clifford 1997:245). Out of these texts, I refer to Clifford (1997), Gilroy (2000) and Nicholas Mirzoeff (2000), who redefine diaspora cultures much as does Simone Osthoff (2000:224), who sees them as "nomadic and migrant, products of constant movement, of living in the 'in-between', of seeing the world from an insider/outsider perspective". I apply these rereadings of diaspora to my experiences as a postcolonial, second-generation South African and in relation to emergent postapartheid WESSA identities.

Overviews of Jewish diasporas and immigration to South Africa are mobilised in my discussion of Freda Farber's historically diasporic subjectivity. Many authors refer to specific aspects of Jewish diasporic immigration to South Africa, beginning with the influx of Eastern European Jews in the 1880s. These studies (see for instance, Bethlehem 2004; Gilman & Shain 1999; Kaplan 1986; Krut 1985; Leveson 2001; Mendelsohn & Shain 2008; Sherman 2000; Shimoni 2003; Simonowitz 1960) trace the multidimensional roles that the Jewish community has played in building South African economic, political and cultural life. In detailing the political behaviours of Jews as members of the dominant white minority from 1948 to 1994, during which time apartheid was the official political order, Gideon Shimoni (2003) raises key issues that relate to Freda Farber's South African Jewish subjectivity. Underpinning his investigation is the observation that, "the Jews in South Africa have shared in the status of the privileged society based upon a system of legalised racial discrimination" (Shimoni 2003:1).

1.7.1.3   *White displacement*

In the study, race is positioned as a naturalised or institutionalised entity in a social system constructed by participants from within a particular culture. Of background relevance is historical and current work being done in the field of global whiteness studies.[48] Global whiteness studies have relevance to

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[47] The term 'diaspora' broadly refers to forced or induced travel, scattering, displacement, (be)longing and loss, and historically carries negative associations. However, in numerous postcolonial rereadings, the concept of diaspora is used to denote a variety of unequal but overlapping experiences and carries a positive inflection. These experiences are indicated by terms such as "immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile-, overseas- and ethnic communit[ies]", as well as borderlands, border crossings, migrancy, and pilgrimage (Tölölian 1991:4, 5; Clifford 1997:11).

[48] Initiated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, global whiteness studies were prominent in Britain, America and Australia (see for instance Dyer 1998; Frankenberg 1993, 1997; Nakayama & Martin 1999; Ware & Back 2002). In the first phase, black authors (Fusco 1988; hooks 1997; Julien & Mercer 1988; Morrison 1992) issued a call to 'make whiteness visible' from its assumed position of 'invisibility' or 'neutrality', claiming that, "the cultural specificity of white ethnicity has been rendered 'invisible' by the epistemic violence that has historically disavowed difference in Western discourses" (Julien & Mercer 1988:6). Such challenges to whiteness are available in David Roediger's 1998 collection of essays. Among these is Richard Dyer's (1997:4) seminal text in which he advocates making whiteness 'strange'. He argues that because whiteness is

postapartheid South Africa, in that they question the mechanisms of power that support and sustain whiteness, draw attention to and deconstruct the master narrative of whiteness, and engage with processes of de-authorising whiteness through revisiting subject positions from within the contexts of history, culture and power. Nevertheless, my discussion is focused on South African whitenesses, as I find that while global whiteness studies provide useful methodological frameworks for analyses of postapartheid WESSA subjectivites, there are significant areas of difference, given the uniqueness of South Africa's demographics. Furthermore, although the concept is highly influential in global whiteness studies, the 'invisibility of whiteness' does not sit comfortably in the South African context, wherein people have historically been marked as raced and 'white' as a racial classification is a contested site of meaning (Falkof 2011:2).

As Natasha Distiller and Steyn (2004:3) observe, the period from approximately 1998 to 2006 saw the publication of several texts dealing with social and cultural identities in postapartheid South Africa (see for instance De Kock, Bethlehem & Laden 2004; Dolby 2001a, 2001b; Erasmus 2001; Foley 1991; Jamal 2005; Ndebele 1998, 2000; Nuttall 2001; Nuttall & Coetzee 1998; Nuttall & Michael 2000; Strauss 2004; Vestergaard 2001; Wasserman & Jacobs 2003). These texts delineate an emergent field of South African cultural studies, but as Distiller and Steyn (2004:3), and Nuttall (2001:118) concur, they do not focus on the historical and current constructions of 'race' in South Africa, nor do they provide insight into ways in which 'race' informs different South African experiences of selfhood. As Nuttall (2001:118) notes, in these studies, "questions of racial identity are conflated with racism, putting the emphasis more on 'racism' than 'race'".

Nevertheless, readings in the field (see for instance — in addition to sources from 1998 to 2006 cited — Carman 2008b; Chipkin 2007; De Kock 2001a, 2001b, 2006, 2010; Farber 2008, 2009c; Garman 1991; Kasibe 2006a, 2006b; 2008; Ndebele 2007; Nuttall 2009; Steyn 2004, 2005, 2007; Van der Watt 2003, 2005, 2008)[49] suggest that a fledgling South African whiteness studies can be identified. At the time of writing, South African whiteness studies is still a relatively undeveloped area of research, although the number of academics working in the field has grown considerably since the start of my study. Most recent work at the time of writing tends to focus on the construction of emergent South African white subjectivities and identity formations (see for instance Falkof, Farber, Garman, Marx, Matthews, Smit and Steyn — all published in 2011).

In my discussion of WESSA displacement in postapartheid South Africa, I focus on the period 2000 to 2006, not only because it was during this time that I experienced my own sense of displacement most keenly, but also because there is substantive evidence in the literature on South African whiteness that displacement formed

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"invisible" to white culture, it is taken as "the norm, the ordinary, the standard" (Dyer 1997:3). Dyer's point is echoed in several key texts from the 1990s (see for instance, Frankenberg 1993; Ignatiev & Garvey 1996; Roediger 1991, 1994). Mike Hill (1997) identifies texts which put forward a 'second wave' of whiteness studies that aims to make the visibility of whiteness possible, indicating a shift in the terms of the debate (Van der Watt 2003:10). In this category, Matt Wray and Annalee Newitz's 1997 study, wherein they argue that whiteness does not necessarily mean privilege, domination or normativity, proved groundbreaking. Focusing on 'white trash' in American society, they identify a form of whiteness that is raced, classed, marginalised and economically disadvantaged. They challenge the idea advocated by Vron Ware and Les Back (2002) that whiteness can be 'abolished', stressing that whiteness is not simply a social system but also an inextricable part of visible identity. For a detailed summary of the historical development of global whiteness studies, see Liese Van der Watt (2003:2-16).

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[49] Also see the publicity generated by Samantha Vice's (2010:323-342) controversial article (for example Gawler 2011; McKasier, 2011) in which she advocates that whites should "practice humility and silence" (Vice cited in Gawler 2011) as a way of dealing with white guilt and shame.

part of a larger WESSA consciousness during these years. I therefore draw predominantly on texts published between 2001 and 2006 to substantiate my argument (Distiller & Steyn 2004; Steyn 2001, 2003, 2006; Van der Watt 2003).

Liese van der Watt's (2003:1) thesis hinges on the premise that postapartheid South Africa is an instance where the norm of whiteness has been fractured to reveal itself as a self-conscious, ambivalent and vulnerable construction. Her text is particularly useful in that she points out how for "many displaced South Africans 'home' is a simulacrum of a place that exists neither in real time nor space" (Van der Watt 2003:iv).

At the time of writing, the construction of whiteness and its relationship to cultural identity is still a key issue in postapartheid South Africa. Steyn (2001) presents what can be regarded as the first comprehensive sociological analysis of the altered status of whiteness in this context. On the basis of answers received from 59 WESSAs to questionnaires distributed between 1995 and 2000, she extrapolated five 'narratives of whiteness' (for an overview see Steyn 2001:153). Respondents in the first narrative, titled 'Still colonial after all these years', reveal a fundamentalist mindset that upholds white supremacy and paternalistically asserts the importance of whiteness for the benefit of blacks. The second narrative, 'This shouldn't happen to a white', comprises views of those who retain a belief in the master narrative of whiteness, not letting go of their white superiority. This group reads whiteness as besieged and disempowered and consider themselves victims within the new dispensation. Respondents in narrative three, 'Don't think white, it's all right', recognise that whiteness has been relativised yet regard their whiteness as integral to their identity. To some degree they accept the changed dispensation in which they pragmatically envision a home and future. Those

in the fourth narrative, 'A whiter shade of white', tend to deny their whiteness and its historical implications by claiming racial innocence, while those in the final narrative, 'Under African skies (or white, but not quite)', acknowledge the need for assimilation, emergent subjectivities and the creation of new hybrid identities. Although this text has been criticised as being too empirical, anecdotal and frustrating because it does not adequately situate the five 'narratives of whiteness' in the broader context of cultural and social markers such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) or the African Renaissance (Van der Watt 2003:20), Steyn's (2001) study is pivotal to my research since it provides empirical evidence of a sense of displacement amongst WESSAs during the first six years after transition.[50]

1.7.1.4 Heterotopias: sites of displacement

I base my discussion of the heterotopia on Foucault's original paper (1986 [1967]), supplementing this material with references to his 1970 text. Secondary sources cited include Hetherington (1997), Johnson (2006) and Topinka (2010). Hetherington draws on Foucault's analysis of the heterotopia in his argument that modernity originates from the interplay between utopian ideals and heterotopic spatial practice. Johnson (2006) proposes that heterotopias refer to various spatial and temporal disruptions that imaginatively interrogate and undermine formulations of utopias. Topinka (2010:54) provides a useful summary of Foucault's

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[50] At the time of writing there seems little evidence of follow-up studies or empirical data available regarding WESSAs' current positionings in the transition process.

heterotopia in which he posits that, "shifting the focus from resistance to order and knowledge production reveals how heterotopia [*sic*] make the spatiality of order visible".

1.7.2 *Cultural contacts and exchanges: grafting and hybridity*

From the abundance of critical literature available on postcolonial constructions of identity, in which hybridity, diaspora, otherness and alterity are important themes (see for instance Appadurai 1993, 1996; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995; Blunt & Rose 1994; Duncan 1993; Hallam & Street 2000; Harasym 1990; Joseph 1999; Mbembe 2001; Rutherford 1990; Schwarz & Sangeeta 2000; Verstraete & Cresswell 2002), I draw on seminal texts by Bakhtin (1981), Bhabha (1985, 1990, 1994, 1996a, 1996b) and Hall (1996, 2000). For Bakhtin (1981:358), the productivity of hybridisation is realised in that moment in which, within a single discourse, one voice is able to 'undo' or 'unmask' another within one utterance, as this represents the point at which authoritative discourse is undone. Bhabha's (1994) translation of Bakhtin's 'double voiced' linguistic hybrid into an active moment of challenge and resistance to a dominant cultural power is critical to my analysis of the artwork. Bhabha (1994) foregrounds his understanding of hybridity in social, cultural and political terms, and it is from this position that his concept of the Third Space emerges. In the context of my argument, the Third Space offers a generative way of dismantling the limiting dichotomies of colonial discourse, allowing for the possibility of producing hybrid cultural identities born out of a fecund social, cultural and political synergy (see Ang 1999:558).

Nicholas Papastergiadis (1995:9-18) provides a comprehensive summary of the history of cultural hybridity in colonial and postcolonial contexts and offers a range of variously nuanced readings of the term. Robert Young's (1995) analysis of how culture and race have been defined through hybridity, both historically and within contemporary theory, also forms a valuable secondary source. Colin Richards's (1997:234-237) text was seminal to my thinking when making the artwork and forms a primary text in my discussion of the concept of 'graft' as the mechanism by which hybrid identities are constructed in the work on *Dis-Location*.

Kristeva's (1991) concepts of the 'stranger' — a term signifying the foreigner, outsider or alien in a country or society that is not 'their own' — and the 'stranger-within-the-self' are important to my discussion of the postcolonial protagonist's encounter with the other. In his reading of the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig and of Freud, Santner (2001) proposes a similar form of psychological internal otherness which, consituted by unconscious drives, opens up the potential to acknowledge and embrace that which "is other in the 'Other'" (Weber 2003:160). Kristeva's foreigner also constitutes a part of the subconscious, which she argues can be activated by Freud's (1955 [1919]) concept of the *Unheimlich* (uncanny) — a disjuncture wherein that which is familiar and known *and* unfamiliar and unknown are present. I regard the latter as a liminal state induced by hybridity and as characteristic of the heterotopia.

1.7.3 *Remaking identities*

In the artwork the (female) body is used as a vehicle for expressing the dislocation of identity and for "reorienting" bodily or semiotically-driven energies towards "new becomings" (Venn 2010:321). The formation of identity is conceptualised as

embodied within representation: the protagonist's skin denotes a figurative and metaphorical site of emergence and intervention upon which tensions are played out and cultural differences are grafted. As an embodied subject, the protagonist negotiates a sense of self-identification through corporeal engagement with her lifeworld. These negotiations empower her to become an embodied subject in relation to the master narratives of colonial discourse and the phallocentric symbolic order.

While several texts provide a background to a feminist understanding of embodied identity (see for instance Betterton 1996; Bordo 2003; Grosz 1989; Jones 1998; Nead 1992; Przybysz 1993), Elizabeth Grosz (1994) presents a comprehensive overview of feminist concepts such as the body as an inscriptive surface and the Cartesian body/mind split. Although not directly referred to in this thesis, her combination of detailed overviews, predisposition towards "the conception of 'embodied' subjects" and view of the body as "central in the formation of individual identity" (Grosz 1994:71) makes this an important background text.

Kristeva's writings are seminal to my artistic practice.[51] In this thesis I refer to her theories of the 'speaking subject' and of semiotically-driven 'transgressive language' which she presents as a subversive, revolutionary element with the

potential to disrupt the symbolic order. These concepts are discussed in a range of her writings (1980, 1982, 1984 [1974], 1989, 1991, 1995a, 1995b, 2002) that form primary sources. Secondary texts in which transgressive language and the speaking subject are contextualised and defined include those by Rosemary Betterton (1996), Dino Felluga (2003), Grosz (1989), Noëlle McAfee (2004) and Kelly Oliver (1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1998). Rozsika Parker (1984) forms a primary source in my analysis of how, historically, the activity of needlework has been constructed as a patriarchal signifier of femininity and, in the case of embroidery, of class. Parker's (1984:11) point that while needlework was the means of indoctrinating women into the feminine ideal, it also provided a weapon of resistance to the constraints of femininity, informs my argument that for the protagonist, the use of needlework in order to enable a graft can be acknowledged as a communicative act effected through the body and, as such, might be an empowering form of agency.

As my research is located within constructivist theories of identity, the postcolonial protagonist's identity is conceived of as 'performative' — constantly in process and masqueraded. The concept of feminine identity as masquerade has its roots in feminist discourse. In Joan Riviere's (1986 [1929]) seminal paper and, although this is not directly referred to in this thesis, Mary Anne Doane's (1982) subsequent reading of Riviere's work, the construction of femininity is proposed as a form of masquerade. Following these writings are Judith Butler's texts (1990, 1993, 2004) in which, by drawing together the complex interactions between the subject, the body and identity in a Foucauldian and psychoanalytic framework, she shows how gender is 'performative' in that it is constructed through the repetition of what she calls "the stylised repetition of acts" that communicate difference (Butler 1990:179).

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[51]   Although only minimally referred to in this thesis, her now almost naturalised definition of abjection as "that which disturbs identity, system, order. That which does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous" (Kristeva 1982:4) underpins the practical work. As McClintock (1995:71) defines it, "the abject is everything that the subject seeks to expunge in order to become social … abjection marks the borders of the self; at the same time, it threatens the self with perpetual danger. Defying sacrosanct borders, abjection testifies to society's precarious hold over the fluid and unkempt aspects of psyche and body." In the abject, whatever threatens the identity of "one's own clean and proper self" is rejected physically and/or mentally yet never completely removed. That which is threatening "hovers at the periphery of one's existence, constantly challenging one's own tenuous borders of selfhood" (McAfee 2004:46). These concerns around the formation of self-identity as lodged within the body,

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bodily borders and the instability of its margins lie at the core of the creative work.

Many valuable feminist analyses of hysteria are available (see for instance, Bernheimer & Kahane 1990; Ender 1995; Evans 1991; Fairclough 2011a, 2011b; Goetz 1999; Matlock 1994; Veith 1965; Verhaeghe 1998). Amanda du Preez's (2004, 2009) and Elaine Showalter's (1985, 1997) texts are particularly informative to my proposition that hysteria may be regarded as a desperate form of bodily communication for otherwise 'voiceless' Victorian women. Rosemary Ellis's (2002) feminist analysis of cutting — a practice that she argues can be used to create a sense of agency through control over the body — supports my contention that hysteria and cutting are empowering forms of self-expression for the protagonist.

1.7.4 *Literary sources*

Virginia Woolf's classic essay, *A room of one's own* (1989 [1929]), was an important prompt for the practical work, in that it provides a literary parallel to the protagonist's quest to deploy the 'room of her own' as a private space that offers a form of psychological, intellectual, emotional and cultural liberation. The metaphor of the room as a transformative space is preceded by EM Forster's *A room with a view* (1988 [1908]). Charlotte Perkins Gilman's dramatic indictment of the debilitating social pressures imposed on nineteenth-century women in *The yellow wallpaper* (1973 [1892]) is analogous to the narratives of confinement and liberation that play out in *Dis-Location*. Beth Snyder-Rheingold's (2003 [1999]) literary analysis of Gilman's novella provides a critical basis for the analogies I draw between the 'interiorised' nature of the room as it features in *Dis-Location* and *The yellow wallpaper*.[52]

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[52] Nadine Gordimer's novel *A world of strangers* (1962 [1958]), in which Europeans en route to South Africa find themselves sensorally immersed in the sweaty thrill and vibrant fascination of 'Africa' even as they feel themselves in danger of being overcome by the climate, landscape

1.7.5 *Writings on* Dis-Location/Re-Location

The volume on *Dis-Location* (Law-Viljoen 2008) contains ten scholarly essays, in which the authors either refer directly to the artwork in support of their argument or focus on issues that arise out of or are tangential to *Dis-Location*. Venn (2009, 2010) demonstrates how artistic practices can play a key role in processes of renegotiating identity by referring to selected works on *Dis-Location,* tracing the ways immigrant displacement can be translated into new or 'reimagined' forms of being. Selected reviews (Allara 2008; Buys 2008), panel papers (Allan 2008; Carman 2008a) and conference papers (Carman 2008d) on *Dis-Location* are resources that provide insight into further possible readings of the artwork.

1.8 Overview of chapters

Each narrative is represented through a series of photographic prints and, in the case of *A Room of Her Own,* through the additional media of video, performance, installation and sound. In a visual analysis of the *Aloerosa* and *Cultivar* series in Chapter Two, I provide a theoretical and historical contextualisation of hybridity, indicating how the term is used in colonial and postcolonial discourse. I focus on grafting as a form of juncture, examine how hybrid botanical forms in the *Aloerosa* and *Cultivar* series are used as metaphors for human displacements and

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and people, the first volume of Doris Lessing's *Under my skin: volume one of my autobiography, to 1949* (1994 [1949]) and her memoir *Going home* (1997 [1957]) provide reference points for colonial life in southern Africa. In more oblique ways, JM Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) and Antjie Krog's *Begging to be black* (2009) have also influenced my thinking. I found Coetzee's stark portrayal of the main character's alienation in, and attempts at adaptation to, postapartheid South Africa to be emblematic of white displacement in the early years after transition. Krog's exploration of change and becoming in South Africa, which spans vast temporal and spatial distances, resonates with similar approaches and themes in *Dis-Location*.

touch on the intertwined histories of horticulture, colonialism and imperialism. In Chapter Three, I present the main bedroom at Zwartkoppies, the mirror within it and the protagonist's body — all three of which are imaged in the *Ties that Bind Her* series — as examples of material heterotopias. The immaterial heterotopias arising within disjunctures of displacement, and the particular ambivalences and ambiguities that make up these heterotopias, are explored with reference to each persona in Chapter Four. In this chapter, the print titled *Between Cup and Lip*, *Thought and Action* (2006-2007) and the second segment of the soundtrack from the performance and video *A Room of Her Own* are starting-points from which broader discussions around themes of displacement arising from diasporic dislocations unfold. In Chapter Five, parallels between ways in which the 'room' features as a heterotopic space of confinement and liberation in the narrative *A Room of Her Own* and in Gilman's *The yellow wallpaper* (1973) are drawn. By way of conclusion, in Chapter Six I trace certain key insights derived from the study and propose that it is in these insights that the value of the research lies.

CHAPTER TWO
THE *ALOEROSA* AND *CULTIVAR* SERIES

> Hybridity … consists of a bizarre binate operation, in which each impulse is qualified against the other, forcing momentary forms of dislocation and displacement into complex economies of agonistic reticulation (Young 1995:26, 27).

2.1 Introduction

With reference to the *Aloerosa* and *Cultivar* series, I begin my discussion by exploring themes of grafting, leading to hybridity and psychological/cultural-political spaces of liminality that underpin the works on *Dis-Location*. From a formal description of the *Aloerosa* series, I move to an explication of Bakhtin's linguistic model of hybridity and Bhabha's rereading thereof. These understandings form the lynchpin for the concept of hybridity as it is deployed in the creative work and applied throughout the theoretical discussion of the artwork.[52] For clarity, I separate my discussion of how the concepts of grafting and hybridity are explored in the artwork from their theoretical explication.

For the protagonist, the desire to initiate the graft stems from a sense of disenchantment in her new location, signifying a need to adapt or feel more 'at home' in an 'unhomelike' environment. My discussion focuses on hybridity and the Third Space as they feature in the artwork and in relation to the protagonist. In the artwork, grafting, attenuated by hybridity, is positioned as paradoxically conflicted yet productive: it gives rise to cultural contest and is evocative of psychological

trauma, yet also functions as a mechanism for enabling a juncture that is fecund with possibilities arising from cultural exchange. Although codependence, intermingling, borrowing and cohabitation effected through processes of cross-cultural fusion, such as hybridity, creolisation and entanglement, can be productive in the formation of new identities, these processes are not devoid of conflict. In this regard, García Canclini's (1995:xxxi) positioning of transcultural practices as exchanges — in which the productivity of "fusion, cohesion, osmosis" is dependent on and arises out of "confrontation and dialogue" — resonates with the ambivalent nature of cross-cultural exchanges that occur through grafting in *Dis-Location*.

I touch on aspects of colonial and Victorian discourse that pertain to Bertha Marks's lifeworld and play out in the artwork. A point that is critical to an understanding of the inner conflict her entry into hybridity generates is that, for her, the productivity of the graft is limited, or at least regulated, by the extent to which she is willing to transgress the deeply internalised colonial doctrine of exclusion. The entrenchment of differentiating boundaries, power structures and social hierarchies, subordination of peoples and constructions of Self/Other founded on the racial sciences[53] developed from Social Darwinism were key tenets of the colonial politics of exclusion. These politics were intended to create a utopian society based on separatism and distance from the Other. In order to uphold the politics of exclusion, strict maintenance of boundaries was paramount; transgression, particularly in the form of hybridity, figured as a form

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[52] Many of the protagonist's life encounters described in this chapter might be associated with, or argued to be, heterotopias. However, in order to keep the chapter focused on hybridity and grafting, I do not develop direct connections between her life experiences and heterotopias as is done in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

[53] The racial sciences drew on a diverse range of fields, including ethology, ethnology, phrenology, eugenics, philology and physical anthropology (Steyn 2001:17). The underlying power relations operative in these discourses were couched in the 'objective' language of scientific positivism. In all of these 'sciences', the Caucasian male was ranked superior, with black Africans as the most inferior in hierachical systems of classification (Steyn 2001:17).

of degeneration (Papastergiadis 1995:10). Contextualising ways in which the politics of exclusion was operationalised in the colonies, I explore how Bertha Marks's physical and psychological entry into the *space* of the Other (literally, the veld[54] surrounding Zwartkoppies), as depicted in the *Aloerosa* series, could be considered socially, culturally, politically, spatially and morally transgressive and suggest that, through her fraught entry into this space, she disrupts the core ideological construction of Self/Other upon which colonial discourse is predicated.

By comparison, my experience of hybridity is ambiguous; the space of the other is a manifestation of that which was once familiar and established in the mind, but has become estranged from the self. Despite its seeming 'newness' to the subject, the stranger-within-the-self is disturbingly foreign or strange precisely because it is no longer known and familiar. Its re-emergence through the uncanny allows for spaces of interchange, a fluid conversation wherein the fixity of subject and object relations is disrupted.

In conclusion, I analyse the physical grafting of plant materials in the sculptures that make up the *Cultivar* series. The image of the garden as metaphor for processes of transcultural interchange, as an icon of imperial power and as a signifier of diaspora and exile is touched upon, as is the use of the grafted flower as metaphor for human violence.

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[54] Afrikaans term in wide South African use. It signifies a dry, uninhabited grassland or scrubland, common in the Gauteng province in which Johannesburg and Pretoria are located. Although this is not apparent to the viewer, *Maturation I* and *II,* and *Supplantation* were photographed at a Johannesburg nature reserve containing only indigenous species of grasses and shrubs.

2.2 The *Aloerosa* series

> [W]e might think that the aura of the start, the genesis of the graft, might have been something like an utterance or invocation, something such as: 'Find the vein'. Such an imperative might be found in a productive interruption, a rupture that brings forth, incision as insight (Bishop 2008:112).

The *Aloerosa* series consists of nine photographic prints in which the sense of the protagonist as overwhelmed by the Other or the stranger-within, combined with her desire for and resistance to mutation and adaptation, plays out. Throughout the series, as Venn (2010:326) observes the tropes of "stasis and metamorphosis, of fixity and movement, of order and dissolution are engaged with in" in an attempt to convey the inner turmoil that emerges from traumatic disruptions of identity under conditions of displacement. As conveyed in the subtitles of the images, invasive processes of planting, propagation and maturation are performed on the body that functions as a corporeal surface upon which to inscribe Bertha Marks's confrontation with the Other, and the uncanny strangeness of my coming to terms with, and embracing, the foreigner-within. In the series the protagonist's transmutation is narrativised, so that a "hybrid, in-between life-form" appears to emerge in a "transitional place and space" (Venn 2010:327). Set within the linear timeframe of a day (signified by the protagonist's actions of taking morning tea, a mid-afternoon nap and a walk into the sunset in the respective images, as well as the accompanying light changes), the aloes' growth in the series is accelerated, visually fast-forwarding the implied acculturation processes. The indication of time's passage within a 12-hour framework temporally links Bertha Marks's colonial lifeworld to my postcolonial experience. The artwork thus functions as

a chronotype in which the transposition of Bertha Marks's and my bodies might be read as an attempt to recast the past into the present (Venn 2010:327).[55]

In the first image of the series, titled *Induction*, the protagonist, dressed in a voluminous white skirt and a tightly laced vegetan leather corset[56] similar in tone to her pale, white skin, is shown seated upright in the formal Victorian English rose garden that still exists at the Sammy Marks Museum. Stiff and impenetrable, like a sheath of armour around her upper body, the corset acts as a signifier of her constricting Victorian and colonial values. The surrounding roses are signifiers of her English heritage inasmuch as she herself represents the 'quintessential English rose'. She is engaged in needlework, but such traditional 'women's work' is violently turned inwards onto the self; through the use of cinematic special effects (make-up techniques), it appears as if she is cutting her skin with embroidery scissors. The horror of self-violation undermines not only the gentility of needlecraft but also

the overtly sweet, sentimental aesthetic sensibility that pervades the image.[57] In a Victorian context, this sensibility is linked to femininity. Following the Victorian codes of respectability and surrounded by the pleasantnesses of colonial living such as the morning tea-table with silverware and cream scones, she sews, but not the conventional forms of embroidery or tapestry, traditionally expected of a Victorian lady.[58] Rather, from the initial cut, she inserts a seedling aloe into her flesh, delicately 'planting' the indigenous South African succulent into her forearm. This action represents a physical grafting of an alien[59] botanical life form into the "lily-white corpus of Europe" (Ord 2008:106).

In the second image of the series, *Propagation*, the protagonist is napping, shaded in a grove of large aloes.[60] The aloes appear darkly menacing as they surround and threaten to engulf the figure. The seedling aloe has taken root in her body; its stem

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[55] Her sense of being located in between the past and the present is signified by the plastic fabric of her skirt and short, contemporary haircut, while the setting of the images is clearly Victorian.

[56] Although the corset was introduced in the Middle Ages and popularised during the early Renaissance (Thesander 1997:26), it is particularly associated with the Victorian era. In the late nineteenth century, the stylised S-curve, a tighter corset than its predecessors, came into fashion (Bordo 1997:242). It came to represent an ideal form of feminine beauty, achieved by means of bodily constriction and containment. As Marianne Thesander (1997:85) comments: "The woman's clearly corseted figure and expensive and impractical dress demonstrated both her and her husband's social position; the corset was also a symbol of physical control and self-discipline, attitudes that were fundamental to middle-class views." The S-curved corset forced the female figure into an upright, forward-tilted position, displaying an unnaturally narrow waistline and wide bosom. Its forceful impression on the body physically disabled the wearer, restricting her movement and breath. Thorstein Veblen (cited in Bordo 1997:242) describes the Victorian corset as "a mutilation, undergone for the purpose of lowering the subject's vitality and rendering her permanently and obviously unfit for work". As Susan Bordo (1997:242) elaborates, "in it a woman could barely sit or stoop, was unable to move her feet more than six inches at a time, and had difficulty keeping herself from regular fainting fits". These physical limitations reinforced women's pathologised social positioning as the fragile, ill and weak gender. Furthermore, the uprightness of the body that the corset enforced was metaphoric of a similar propriety and rigidity of mind; for Victorians, enduring the tight corset was a sign of self-restraint and control (Bordo 1997:242).

[57] While consciously suggesting the Victorian propensity towards 'chocolate-box' sweetness through stylistic choices (such as the garden setting, Victorian wicker chair and floral-print cushion), my intention was to simultaneously disrupt this sensibility by representation of abjection in the form of intervention in/onto the skin. The visceral associations evoked by the cut could provoke a disturbing mix of simultaneous attraction (beauty) and repulsion (horror) in the viewer.

[58] Parker (1984:189) notes that the act of embroidering was an index of gentility — "correct drawing-room behaviour" — amongst the upper classes, and its content was expected to convey the social and psychological qualities attributed to a lady. The Victorians conceived of the link between embroidery and women as 'natural': "women embroidered because they were naturally feminine and were feminine because they naturally embroidered" (Parker 1984:11).

[59] In a South African context, terms such as 'indigenous' and 'alien' assume political connotations. They are usually deemed to be binary oppositions, dependent on yet threatening each other for their existence, and are linked to conceptions of belonging, ownership and the right to occupancy of space (Jorgensen 2010:24). Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2001:627) posit that the idea of 'alien' plants and people has come to embody the ambivalences of boundedness/unboundedness, belonging/foreignness. Those who, or that which, fit/s the criteria of being 'naturalised', 'natural' or 'indigenous' are considered legitimate entities of the status quo of power while the 'illegitimate' person, plant or entity is deemed strange, unfamiliar, alien and other. They observe that in the postcolony discussions on alien and indigenous plants have been used as a means to "frame urgent issues of being-and-identity; in particular, being-and-identity in the body of the 'new' nation state" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001:628, 629).

[60] Although not apparent to viewers who might not be familiar with the grounds of the Sammy Marks estate, the aloe grove is situated a few metres down the dirt road outside the main gates.

has extended; new leaves have sprouted. The plant appears to be growing under her skin, marking the aloe's growth as embodied. In the third image, *Veldscape,* the protagonist is taking an afternoon walk, venturing further beyond the cultivated confines of the rose garden; in the next, *Efflorescence,* she rests awkwardly on a rock while retaining her 'civilised' accessories (gloves, a pearl necklace, a metal handbag), appearing displaced and ill at ease in the landscape. The now matured aloe displays a full crown of leaves and roots that sprout from her wrist.

By the final stages of her transmutation, shown in the images titled *Maturation I* and *II*, the protagonist appears to have wandered too far into the veld, into what, in the colonial imagination, would have been the 'wilderness' of untamed and therefore, 'dangerous' nature that lay beyond culture and 'civilisation' — literally and metaphorically into the 'Dark Continent' of Africa.[61] Bertha Marks's venture into the veld signals a highly charged 'border crossing' that marks a shift from stability to instability, from the safety of the known into the threatening unknown. For her, this crossing would most likely have been fraught, as Victorians conceived of the Dark Continent as a place of superstition, human sacrifice, barbarity, sexual promiscuity, depravity and savagery (Brantlinger 1985:157).[62] Africa as a site of cannibalism was an image that acted as a metonym in the colonial imagination for the fear of engulfment (McClintock 1995:27). While the colonisers attempted to ward off the threat of the unknown by labelling the practice of human sacrifice 'cannibalism', their attempts at control through linguistic signification also spoke of the underpinning dread that the unknown might devour the invading colonisers (McClintock 1995:27).[63]

One reading of *Maturation I* and *II* might be that, indeed, the aloe is devouring Bertha Marks's body, as the invasive, parasitic plant appears to consume her both physically and psychologically. In this reading, her body becomes 'virgin territory' that like the 'unknown world' was mapped as feminised and open to the "violence" of male "penetration" in the form of imperial conquest (McClintock 1995:230). While this reading is not applicable to my experience of hybridity, it is congruous with colonial tropes of Africa, and therefore might be applicable to Bertha Marks's experience of transformation. Far removed from the controlled, erect figure taking her morning tea, in *Maturation I* and *II* she is dishevelled, barefoot and in a state of disarray, with her corset laces undone and body exposed. She appears as if mutating into a new, hybrid species, overwhelmed by the self-induced catalyst for change, at once desirous of, yet resistant to, it. Her collapse onto the ground indicates a loss of self-restraint and dignity, giving way to disorder, chaos and what, in the Victorian imagination, would have been considered a 'regressive' move towards 'nature'.[64] As Venn (2010:330) observes, her "alienation

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[61] Brantlinger (1985:198) identifies the image of 'darkest Africa' as a Victorian mythology that formed part of a larger discourse around Empire. He notes that by the mid nineteenth century the success of the antislavery movement, the impact of Victorian explorations and the merging of racist and evolutionary doctrines in the social sciences culminated in the British public's demand for imperialisation on moral, religious and scientific grounds (Brantlinger 1985:167, 168). Brantlinger (1985:175) concludes that by the time of the Berlin Conference in 1884, the British tended to see Africa as a "center of evil, a part of the world possessed by demonic 'darkness' … represented above all by slavery and cannibalism, which it was their duty to exorcise". 'Whiteness' was associated with the 'light' of Europe in dialogic relation to the 'darkness' of Africa (Steyn 1999:268).

[62] These mythologies are articulated in the British antislavery leader Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton's text *The African slave trade and its remedy* (1839) and extended in the journals of, and books about, Victorian explorers that became popular among the British public from the late 1850s. See Brantlinger (1985:176) for examples of, and more detail on, these "nonfictional quest

romances".

[63] Ironically, the accusation has also been reversed; western domination is often described by African and Third World peoples as a form of cannibalism (Nederveen Pieterse cited in Steyn 2001:191).

[64] It could be argued that by representing these dichotomies in a literal manner, I am perpetuating gendered historical binaries. However, it is important to remember that these

of being out-of-place and out-of-time is intimated in the images of the body … taken over by biologico-botanical forces … death or a semblance of death stalks her in the decaying surrounding … perhaps signalling the end of the old life and the beginning of the new".

In the last image of the series titled *Supplantation*, the corset is her only remnant in the landscape. This suggests a sense of liberation, yet implies loss. The rigidity of its shape and form is retained, but its colour is darkened from exposure to the harsh African sun and the materiality of her flesh is gone, perhaps subsumed. The corset becomes but a trace of her presence.

2.3   Hybridity

> [A] disruption and forcing together of any unlike living things, grafting a vine or a rose on to a different root stock … Hybridity is a making one of two distinct things, so that it becomes impossible for the eye to detect the hybridity of a geranium or rose. Nevertheless, the rose exists, like the vine, only in so far as it is grafted onto the different stock … Hybridity … makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different (Young 1995:26, 27).

The term 'hybridity' has its roots in the nineteenth century, where as part of a convention of rational either/or choices it was used to refer to the mixed-race offspring resulting from sexual relations between races.[65] In the Victorian lexicon, processes of identity formation were premised on an exclusive boundary between 'us' and 'them'; the hybrid, born out of the transgression of this boundary,

binaries formed the bedrock of colonial discourse and therefore would probably have been inherent in Bertha Marks's lived experience as a colonial woman.
[65] See Young (1995:1-28) for a detailed history of hybridity as it evolved in nineteenth-century Britain.

was figured as a "moral marker of either contamination, failure or regression" (Papastergiadis 1995:9). Hybridity was closely tied to Social Darwinism, prevalent from the 1860s onwards, that promoted racial purity and the mythology of white supremacy (Brantlinger 1985:182; Duncan 1993:46; McClintock 1995:49). However, in its countering of nineteenth-century dualistic thinking through double logic, hybridity has become characteristic of the twentieth century (Young 1995:26, 27). From its use as a metaphor for the negative consequences of racial encounters in the nineteenth century, 'hybridity' has found redemption as a term used in postcolonial discourse to signify various kinds of productive cultural fusions. If the boundary between 'us' and 'them' is marked positively so as to solicit exchange and inclusion, the postcolonial hybrid is figured as a potential source of strength and fecundity (Papastergiadis 1995:10).

Bakhtin's literary model of hybridity, which he divides into two strands — intentional and unconscious — provides an instance wherein such positive, generative outcomes can emerge. Bakhtin (1981:358) delineates the way in which language, even within a single sentence, can be double-voiced: "What we are calling a hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages', two semantic and axiological belief systems." Intentional semantic hybrids are "internally dialogic"; "Two points of view are not mixed, but set against each other" in a way that retains "a certain elemental, organic energy and openendedness" (Bakhtin 1981:360, 361). In contrast, unconscious or organic hybridity produces fusion, but "the mixture remains mute and opaque, never making use of conscious contrasts and oppositions" (Bakhtin 1981:360). This imperceptible process, whereby two or more cultures merge to produce a new mode, language, world-view or object, can

have culturally productive effects (Young 1995:21); as Bakhtin (1981:360) comments, unconscious hybrids "are pregnant with potential for new world views, with their new 'internal forms' for perceiving the world in words". Bhabha (1985:154) shifts the subversion of authority that results from a singular voice being able to ironise the other through hybridisation to the dialogical situation of colonialism (Young 1995:22, 23). For Bhabha, hybridity is a process in which the single voice of colonial authority undermines the workings of colonial power by inscribing and disclosing the trace of the other, so that the voice reveals itself as double-edged. As he states, "If the effect of colonial power is seen to be the *production* of hybridization [then] the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority enables a form of subversion, founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention" (Bhabha 1994:160).

Bhabha (cited in Young 1995:23) translates this productive moment into a "hybrid displacing space" that develops in the interaction between the indigenous and colonial culture. As a hybrid space, it has the effect of 'depriving' the imperialist culture of its politically imposed authority and claims to authenticity. This hybrid strategy is synonymous with neither assimilation nor collaboration; rather, it opens up a space of negotiation wherein power relations are unequal, making possible the emergence of an "interstitial" agency that denies any form of binary representation (Bhabha 1996a:58). In this sense hybridity "operates according to the form of logic that Derrida isolates in the term 'brisure', a breaking and a joining at the same time, in the same place: difference and sameness in an apparently impossible simultaneity" (Young 1995:26, 27). For Bhabha (1994:53, 41) "the production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space [wherein] [t]he meaning of the utterance is quite literally neither the one nor the other … *but something else besides,* which contests the

terms and territories of both". He extends his notion of hybridity to include forms of counter-authority: the Third Space is a space of contestation and tension that subsumes prevailing conditions and attitudes into new formations. As a space of in-betweenness, it is not generated through "two original moments" but rather from that which "enables other positions to emerge" (Bhabha 1990:211). The Third Space "displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (Bhabha 1990:211). For Bhabha (1994:56), the Third Space becomes the form of cultural difference itself in both colonial and postcolonial contexts. He points to its potential to "open the way to conceptualizing an *inter*national culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*" (Bhabha 1994:56).

Hetherington (1997:4) connects Bhabha's Third Space, the anthropological concepts of liminality and liminal space (Van Gennep 1960 [1908]; Turner 1969) and the heterotopia, noting that the term 'heterotopia' is often used interchangeably with "marginal space, paradoxical space or third space" (Hetherington 1997:41). Considering Foucault's (1986 [1967]) description of the heterotopia as a 'displaced' or 'other place' whose existence sets up unsettling juxtapositions of numerous incommensurate 'objects' to form "a hybrid combination of the incongruous" (Hetherington 1997:8), these links seem well- founded. Furthermore, like liminal space and the Third Space, the heterotopia could also be regarded as an in-between space: following Louis Marin (1984, 1992), Hetherington (1997:viii) locates Foucault's heterotopia as the 'neutral' space or chasm that opens up between *eu-topia* (good place) and *ou-topia* (no-place); it is both a space of impossibility and a realm of *differénce* (Hetherington 1997:66). However, as Hetherington (1997:ix)

acknowledges, heterotopias are "not quite spaces of transition — the chasm they represent can never be closed up". For Hetherington (1997:27), the heterotopia is a margin "in the sense of the unbounded and blurred space between rather than the easily identified space at the edge".

Although I acknowledge that these links might fruitfully be developed in my argument, I refrain from this route partly in order not to conflate the already complex terms 'heterotopia', 'Third Space' and 'liminality' and partly because I understand the heterotopia and the Third Space to differ in three fundamental respects detailed below.

Connections between the Third Space as a space of in-betweenness and liminality can be made. As Ashraf Jamal (2005:39, 40) observes, Bhabha locates the Third Space "*between* and *beyond* polarisation"; in Bhabha's (1994:180) words, it sits "between sign and signifier". Similarly, in anthropological contexts, that which is liminal exists in "an in-between state, not fully realised, fully understood or fully accepted into the socius. Things and beings that exist in a liminal state are properly at the margins, often not accorded a full legal, epistemological or psychological identity" (Sey 2011:6). These in-between spaces, however, differ in the first instance from heterotopias in that a heterotopia is a site of otherness located *within* another site that already exists; in other words, heterotopias are "established by their *difference in a relationship between sites* rather than their Otherness deriving from a site itself" (Hetherington 1997:43, emphasis added). In contrast, I understand Bhabha's Third Space to be independent and free-floating, that, "as the product of two differentiated elements ... assume[s] features of each into a transformed 'third' element" (Goldberg 2000:80), and in so doing, "gives rise to something different ... a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation"

(Bhabha 1990:211). Herein lies a second difference: while heterotopias expose the underlying premises of the dominant order, they offer no hope of freedom from its constraints. Although it is not always regarded as redemptive (Papastergiadis 1995:18), following Young (1995:25) I suggest that Bhabha's Third Space can potentially lead to liberating processes; as Goldberg (2000:82) notes, "hybridity is conceived as about Becoming, about transformation ... fusing ... antithetical senses into new expression and form". A third difference is that, while in the Third Space elements or cultural differences fuse or merge — "Hybridity [is] the product if not the very expression of mixture, of the antipure, of Becoming in the face of Being's stasis" (Goldberg 2000:72) — the heterotopia is a site of *alternate ordering* wherein signs that are usually not culturally compatible do not lose their discrete identities but are *juxtaposed* (Hetherington 1997:9).[66] Order is not established through resemblance but through similitude: removal of the space between signs allows for an endless dislocation of meaning through a series of deferrals established between the signifier and the signified (Hetherington 1997:42, 43). Once "the reference 'anchor' is gone ... [t]hings are cast adrift, more or less like one another without any of them being able to claim the privileged status or 'model' for the rest" (James Harkness cited in Hetherington 1997:43).

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[66] In this sense, the concept of the heterotopia seems closer to an ambivalent colonial mindset of rigid distinctions. A postcolonial inflection of the term would suggest a more fluid dissolution of blurring of boundaries into ambiguity (Jorgensen 2010:5).

2.4 Grafting

> Let us start where there is no beginning, with the cut: (Greek) *graphein,* to scratch or to carve, which yields gamma: a mark or a letter of the alphabet. The mark, or sign, harrows its medium, leaving an impression to be conveyed into the future … and still, it is bloody business — this grafting, this cutting, this surviving. It is wet work. There is no other way if one wants to hit bone, to find bone, to make bone a style for marking, a needle for joining, a tool for presenting — there is no other way but through the skin (Bishop 2008:111, 117).

In the *Aloerosa* series, as in each of the *Dis-Location* narratives, hybridity, used in the 'double-voiced' sense Bakhtin describes and Bhabha extends, is a product of grafting. In horticulture, a graft's purpose is to cultivate new orders through actions of cutting, severing, transplanting and attaching different things from and to each other. In a postcolonial context, 'graft' implies cultural contact and exchange — interactions that commonly intersect across difference; as Richards (1997:234) notes, "'Graft' requires cultivation and time; the *work* of culture. It can be regenerative, reparative, even redemptive. But not always."

In *Insertion (detail),* the first incision leads to an insertion of organic materials into the protagonist's body. Richards's (2005:17) description of skin, used in relation to Penelope Siopis's artistic practice, as a space "where public and private meet … a zone of magical contamination, where metonymy and metaphor, contiguity and arbitrary signification clash and play out on a shifting, semiotic sediment of what goes before and beneath" also seems pertinent here. The protagonist cuts with premeditated precision: her white Victorian gloves are like surgical gloves and the embroidery scissors resemble a small surgical blade. Richards's (1997:234, emphasis added) use of the term 'graft'[67] is strategic to my foregrounding of hybridity in the artwork:

> Before contact, a 'graft' involves cutting. The cut is not simply a boundary, an edge or two, but a deep, even traumatic incision, an inscription. In cutting into and across 'difference', 'graft' enjoins the discourse of 'hybridity' *without disavowing the violence and desire which underpins cultural fusion.* 'Graft' marks tensions between metaphors of nature and culture, and the way cultural discourse (dis)articulates these tensions.

Following Richards, the traumatic incision created by the cut represents a marginal site of danger, in which meaning unfolds interactively between two subjects. As Jennifer Ord (2008:107) notes in relation to the work on *Dis-Location*, "skin is the joint that articulates what lies on either side of it; and, in this instance, it is the indigenous African and the immigrant European whose difference is the dynamic that temporarily and temporally pinpoints culture in post-colonial South Africa". Richards (1997:235) continues that grafts are "also about disfigurations, cultural error … the parasitic in the symbiotic". In *Transplant* — an image that depicts the stem and roots of a mature aloe as having grown under the skin of the arm, with its roots replacing veins at the wrist and an abundant crown of leaves emerging out of the flesh — the protagonist's body is the site of grotesque disfiguration. The sense of disfiguration is heightened by the 'amputation' of the arm from the body, as the arm floats against a white background; bodily fluids and tissue serve both as nutrients and host to the emergent hybrid specimens; flesh replaces soil. As foreign to the body, the aloe signifies insertion of an(other) culture that takes root and

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[67] Richards (1997:235, 236) also draws attention to the association of the word 'graft' with labour (*graft* is an informal British term and South African slang for 'hard work'), which, given its implications of cultivation, time and material investment, is relevant here.

disfigures the body through its forceful growth under the skin. The combination of these opposing entities manifests as a "monstrous misfi[t]" (Richards 1997:234), even as it attests to the positive effects of cross-cultural contacts. The self-initiated action of cutting sets up a cyclic process: the skin is opened, the graft is effected, and closure is attempted though stitching — yet, as the needle pierces the skin, it reopens the flesh, drawing blood. The protagonist's grafts are the results of deep bodily incisions; needle and thread puncture and conjoin skin in ways that close and heal, but not without leaving permanent scars. As Ord (2008:107) puts it, "the skin is made porous by a needle at work; the needlework of a genteel Victorian lady that is simultaneously the rupturing of skin as thread is replaced by suture in the labour of grafting, of affixing one composite to another, so that they are complements of each other and supplements of others". Albeit hesitantly in Bertha Marks's case, the protagonist's grafting actions arise from a desire to integrate or 'belong', yet become metaphors for cultural contestation through which generative fusions occur.

Given that the artwork represents a personalised response to the violent traumas of colonialism and apartheid in southern African and South African histories, it seems appropriate that the protagonist attempts to transform herself through violent means. In the artwork, traumas — or wounds, in the Greek etymology — are played out on the surface of white skin; the idea of trauma underpins the signifier of the cut or wound (Law 2005:111). Trauma can be described as a psychic state of loss that a child experiences in the process of identity formation (Law 2005:111). This usually repressed psychic state may involuntarily re-emerge at significant moments in a lifetime. The concept of trauma is also used as a metaphor for a community's psychic experience of radical social change marked by extreme pain, loss, guilt and grief (Law 2005:111). Although the 'taking' of the graft is imaged as

physical in the artwork, the graft is metaphoric of a psychological process that takes place through cultural contact and the subsequent combination of difference through processes which imply disfiguration and pain. Bodily violation therefore suggests not only physical but also psychical trauma inherent in acculturation processes. As Steyn (2001:120) notes, the pain of confronting the construction of one's whiteness, willingness to take on its implications, experiencing white guilt and co-operating in deconstructing the structural privilege whiteness entails, can be a painful growth process; for some WESSAs, "the pain is part of the growth". As she puts it with reference to her own experiences of self-transformation, "race … is not just skin-deep … it is generations deep and continents wide. I continue to struggle through the multiple fences of white identity that my heritage constructed to define me. But bits of flesh remain caught in the barbs … A white skin is not skin that can be shed without losing some blood" (Steyn 2001:xvii).

Evoking the wound in a material, bodily amalgam suggests both individual and collective experiences of trauma. This remaking of subjectivity brings issues such as that of the self in relation to the Other or stranger-within to the fore, and opens the artwork up to the ambivalent or ambiguous registers of fear, exposure, vulnerability, agency, disavowal and acceptance. For Bertha Marks and the postcolonial protagonist, the process of remaking subjectivity is deeply disturbing on several levels. Initially, the protagonist's incision into the skin in order to effect the graft is the very opening that transgresses the integrity of the body. Thereafter, the growing closeness to the Other or other-within that the graft evokes is not only uncomfortable and unnerving but deeply threatening. For both personae, the underlying threat is related to the fear of losing autonomy as a subject through the dissolution of ego boundaries. However, as I explain in the following two sections, the process by which each persona achieves hybridity and

the kinds of encounters with, and understandings of, the Other or other-within that emanate from their attainment of hybridity differ significantly given their respective colonial or postcolonial contexts.

2.5 Transgressing boundaries between Self/Other

2.5.1 Crossing into the space of the Other

The cut represents a violation of a bodily boundary. Mary Douglas (cited in Betterton 1996:139) proposes that the human body is a metaphor for social structures and, as "societies are threatened and precarious at their margins, so bodily margins too are invested with special vulnerability". In Bertha Marks's case, borders and boundaries have particular import, given that the colonial politics of exclusion determined her social behaviour. The Victorian hierarchical demarcations between race, class and gender led to what McClintock (1995:33, 47) describes as the middle class's "intense preoccupation with rigid boundaries" and the "peculiarly Victorian paranoia around boundary disorders". While Stoler (1989a:634) observes that in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries colonial women confronted intensely rigid restrictions in their domestic, economic and political lives, she acknowledges that ultimately the politics of exclusion "required regulating the sexual, conjugal and domestic life of both Europeans in the colonies and their colonized subjects".[68] The psychological and economic underpinnings of the politics of exclusion can be found in a set of interrelated discourses in which fears of sexual contamination, physical danger, climatic incompatibility and moral breakdown are linked to the racist, gendered and class-specific core of European colonial identity (Stoler 1989a:636).

Dagut (2000:558) notes that for the 'recuperative' historians of the 1980s, "the creation and defence of rigid boundaries between coloniser and colonised was one of the most important tasks which imperialist patriarchy imposed upon settler women".[69] For women, the policing of boundaries took place primarily within the domestic sphere, as this represented a site where class and race difference potentially came into direct contact. In the Victorian household, distinctions between servants and family were demarcated through its spatial organisation[70] and the social rituals that kept employer and employee at a distance from each other (Giles 2004:67). It was the duty of the mistress of the household to impose middle-class notions of order and discipline not only on herself and her children but also on her staff. Furthermore, the home was deemed to be a space wherein the threat of (sexual) contact between the white mistress and the black male was imminent (Rosner 1999:72). Hence, its gender-specific requirements were predicated on racist constructions of colonised men's supposedly heightened

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[68] However, as Stoler (1989a:635) points out, the idea that boundaries separating colonial from colonised were self-evident and easily drawn represents an inaccurate reflection of colonial life. Internal divisions were generated by conflicting economic and political agendas, disagreements over appropriate methods for safeguarding European privilege and power, and what Stoler (1989a:635) terms "competitive criteria for reproducing the colonial elite".

[69] Marcia B Formes (1995:637) argues that this view is simplistic, as it assumes that imperialism created an ordered social system, regulated by the dualistic categories of race and gender, without taking into account the complex, often-conflicting identities and experiences that coexisted. However, she notes, it is precisely because colonial societies were so diverse and contested that such rigid social categories and boundaries were invented.

[70] Families and servants occupied the same overall space but the servant's quarters were situated some distance from the main house, so that the house and the servant's quarters formed separate 'islands' within that space (Kirkwood 1984:157). The spatial organisation of the Victorian household was also organised along gendered lines. At Zwartkoppies this is manifest in rooms such as the 'gentleman's smoking lounge' (to which the men retired after dinner, while the women remained in the drawing room), the billiard room (Figure 3) and some of the upstairs bedrooms that are furnished in a more 'masculine' style, with lace and floral patterning having been kept to a minimum.

sexuality (Stoler 1989a:641).[71] These requirements dictated that space be divided into the binaries of interior and exterior, safe and dangerous, domestic and wild. The house, which operated as a "hermetically sealed relic of England" (Rosner 1999:67, 77), was thought to provide a solid barrier between the settler/colonial family and the threatening landscape. These distinctions between "house-land and bush-land" were critical to women's sense of personal safety (Rosner 1999:74).

The Victorian preoccupation with boundaries was particularly applicable to women's bodies, which were subject to stringent methods of control (McClintock 1995:33, 47). Because the bush represented specific threats to women, predicated on anxieties around the desecration of their bodily boundaries and consequent miscegenation, spatial restrictions specified that women should stay indoors, particularly during the heat of the day, or at least close to the house (Rosner 1999:22). A primary threat was the fear of rape by a black man who, driven by so-called 'primitive' sexual urges and uncontrollable lust, was thought to be easily aroused by the sight of white women (Rosner 1999:72; Stoler 1989a:641). Another was the health risks that the bush represented (Rosner 1999:73): as the imagined, and racist, threat of being deflowered in the bush signified bodily penetration by the Other, so did the mosquito's bite (Rosner 1999:77). In other words, as Victoria Rosner (1999:77) puts it, "the Englishwoman's body was not to be penetrated by Africa". Furthermore, the outdoors, and the environment itself, supposedly posed particular health risks to Europeans in general. The rays of the harsh African sun seemingly caused madness; medical manuals warned people who "stayed in the colonies too long" of the dangers of "overfatigue, individual and racial degeneration, physical breakdown … cultural contamination … neglect of the conventions of supremacy and *agreement* about what they were" (Aimé Dupuy cited in Stoler 1989a:646; also see Steyn 2001:31).

As McClintock (1995) and Stoler (1989a) detail, in British metropolitan and colonial discourses on racial degeneracy and social reform, sexual sanctions demarcated positions of power by enforcing the personal and public boundaries of race. Within this context, Bertha Marks's foray into the veld carries significant import: I propose that it is through her reluctant physical and psychological entry into the space of the Other that she transgresses the codes of inclusion and exclusion that determined the raced, classed and gendered core of European colonial identity. For Bertha Marks, the physical space of the Other — the veld — is at once wild, alien and abject and — perhaps because of these threatening qualities — simultaneously fascinating (or evocative of what Bracha L Ettinger [2006] terms 'fascinance' with the other).

The dichotomies of inclusion and exclusion formed the bedrock of colonial discourse. Bertha Marks's position as a white, upper-middle-class Victorian woman necessitated that she live her life according to, and within the parameters of, these dichotomies: *inside* her mansion and within the *known safety* of domestic space, as opposed to *outside* on the *wild* southern African landscape, with its connotations of darkness and threats of imminent danger (Van Rensburg 2007:[sp]). As Stoler (1989a:651) observes, "the exclusionary politics of colonialism demarcated not just external boundaries but interior frontiers, specifying internal conformity and order among Europeans themselves".

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71 Contact between African males and English settler women was minimised through stringent policing: just as the settler woman was not allowed to venture outdoors for fear of being raped, so the African man was forbidden to penetrate the house (Rosner 1999:73). An exception was the male African servant, whose presence was deemed necessary to maintain the functioning of the domestic environment. In order to allay this threat, the infantilising and emasculating term 'house-boy' was commonly used to refer to the black male servant (Rosner 1999:73).

Bertha Marks's crossing of the boundary of her English rose garden to enter the wild of the African bushveld may thus be considered physically and spatially transgressive of the Victorian codes of respectability or, as Venn (2010:331, emphasis added) puts it, the conventions of "*culture, place, and the proper*". By invoking hybridity through the graft, Bertha Marks enters into deeply threatening, forbidden territory that in the Victorian imagination denoted the realm of regression and degeneration. In doing so, she contravenes the politics of exclusion and risks sexual violation and consequent contamination, physical danger, the effects of climatic incompatibility, cultural disintegration and moral breakdown. Furthermore, her 'boundary crossing' may be viewed as transgressive in that it represents an attempt to gain freedom from gender constraints. Given that possession and mastery of the land defined the male colonist, the ability to impose one's identity on the landscape was a masculine prerogative (Rosner 1999:73). Although in all probability the veld ultimately consumes her, by imagining it as a space of self-conception Bertha Marks assumes a masculine attitude towards the land and in so doing transgresses Victorian gender constructs.

2.5.2   *Looking at the otherness of the Other*

It is the cut that initially compels Bertha Marks to 'look at' the construction of Self and Other upon whose fixity the ideological construction of otherness in colonial discourse is predicated. Colonial (and, later, apartheid) paradigms are based on a fundamental dichotomy in which the self is constructed in an ambivalent and *visual* relationship to the other: "to exist is to be called into being in relation to an otherness, its look or locus" (Bhabha 1994:63). One of the defining characteristics of the colonial gaze is the manner in which the colonial's inability to fully perceive the colonised subject's identity negates the subject's existence: "as even now you

look/but never see me" (Bhabha 1994:67, 79). While I use the metaphor of 'looking' to describe Bertha Marks's encounter with psychological otherness, it is important to note that in colonial discourse otherness is a relativised construct, based on the visual markers such of blackness and whiteness (Bhabha 1994:63). Boundaries between Self and Other are demarcated by appearance, although psychologically there are no neat divisions between them. As Renata Morresi (2004:149) suggests, this dualism denotes a territory that can be traversed "where distances are not uniform and areas overlap".

For Bhabha (1994:64) the psychological processes that govern colonial relations between Self and Other are characterised by a fundamental ambivalence that entails an oscillation between their two fixed, opposing polarities, a "doubling dissembling image of being … in two places at once". Although the Other occupies a subordinate position in the hierarchal, dualistic structure, both parties experience this ambivalence — "'otherness' … is … an object of desire and derision" (Bhabha 1994:96). The Other resents the authority that the Self commands, but nonetheless desires to occupy the privileged position that it inhabits.

Given the fundamental duality between the colonial Self and Other, Bertha Marks's hybridity might be aligned with Bakhtin's 'intentional hybrid', since her grafting entails the combination of two different species in which the entities are set against each other, enabling "a contestatory activity, a politicized setting of cultural differences against each other dialogically" (Young 1995:22). This

doubleness leads to the suggestion that inasmuch as Bertha Marks's entry into hybridity might have been fraught with fear, danger and derision, so might it equally have been fuelled by a fascination with, or desire for, the Other.[72]

In the colonial psyche, Africa-as-Other was cast as the polarity of derision (Brantlinger 1985:198). The desire/derision binary has commonalities with the psychoanalytic terms 'splitting' and 'projection' (Rutherford 1990:21). In cases of splitting, the subject is incapable of incorporating contradictory aspects of the same person (or object) into consciousness as a unified whole (Simon 2002). The object is unconsciously divided into binaries — for example, the 'good' side of a person is that which the subject finds acceptable and the 'bad' side is the part the subject finds painful or unacceptable, but the two sides cannot be recognised as parts of the same entity. As Jonathan Rutherford (1990:21, 22) notes, binaries operate by upholding the hierarchical relations of difference, according one polarity status by excluding and marginalising that which it is not. Therefore, "the centre expels its anxieties, contradictions, and irrationalities

onto the subordinate term, filling it with the antithesis of its own identity; the Other, in its very alienness, simply mirrors and represents what is deeply familiar to the centre, but projected outside of itself" (Rutherford 1990:22). The colonial illusion of a singular, fixed and essential Self was thus achieved only in relationship to the Other through projection (Steyn 2001:14). Because it based its sense of homogeneity on exclusions, denials and repressions, colonial identity was alienated from its own unconscious desire for the other, as an estranged part of the self (Steyn 2001:14). Yet, paradoxically, as Young (1995:2, 3) shows, the unconscious fascination and desire for the Other was manifest in the fantasy of 'crossing over' into this unfathomable and treacherous territory.

Bertha Marks's grafting may therefore be read in the context of Bhabha's assertion of colonial Otherness as being an object of simultaneous desire and derision, fascination and attraction, and Young's proposition that the seeming fixity of 'Englishness' is, in fact, unstable (see also Steyn 2001:14). Bertha Marks's 'Englishness' is imbued with an uneasy ambivalence that marks a psychological resistance to her identity — a dissonance that is embedded in western culture itself. This ambivalence towards desire and derision plays out in the artwork. Following from her desire to engage with the Other, signified by the self-induced insertion of the aloe into her body — in *Maturation I*, she tries to cut the aloe off (or out of) herself. This action proves futile, for, as is evident in *Maturation II*, although the head of the aloe she initially inserted lies next to her on the ground, new shoots sprout from different places of her body. Her attempts to cross into the otherness of the Other can thus be seen to represent a transgressive violation of the ideological constructions of colonial discourses, and an enactment of the very ambivalences embedded within them.

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[72] Young's observations regarding the English novel are useful in understanding Bertha Marks's oscillation between desire and derision. He observes that, historically, Englishness is often represented in terms of fixity, certainty, centredness and homogeneity; as that which is "unproblematically identical with itself" (Young 1995:2). Nevertheless, in contemporary and historical literature, representations of Englishness suggest a "painful sense of, or need for, otherness" (Young 1995:2). Young (1995:2, emphasis added) speculates that perhaps the supposed fixity of English identity arose because it was "designed to mask its uncertainty, its sense of being estranged from itself, *sick with desire for the other*". This desire, Young (1995:2) notes, is evident in the work of many English novelists, who write "almost obsessively" about uncertain crossings, invasion of class and gender identities and the imbrications of two cultures within one another. For instance, the precise ethnicity of Emily Brontë's transgressive, 'dangerous' hero Heathcliff in *Wuthering heights* (1847) is open to debate. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) features Mr Rochester's part-Creole wife Bertha, and as for Joseph Conrad, the protagonist in *Almayer's folly* (1895) has a mixed-race daughter while *Heart of darkness* (1899) contrasts the dark horror of the colonised Congo with the presumed "light of civilization". Robert Louis Stevenson's *The strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) is perhaps the best example of all, presenting the reader with the virtuous Jekyll who metamorphoses into another personality, Hyde, the epitome of evil.

2.6 Welcoming the strange/r-within

> Estrangement is a necessary component of the production of new, questioning insight into the familiar and the taken-for-granted (Comaroff 2011:2).

Given the vast development over approximately the last two decades in identity politics concerned with the construction and representation of selfhood and otherness across discursive fields, the other is now associated with multiple forms of alterity. Therefore, in my case, encountering the other had lost much of the transgressive significance that it might have had for Bertha Marks. For me, this encounter was psychological; I had to come to terms with alterity as a repressed part of my psyche. This splitting in the economy of desire raises a series of further concepts that I now introduce into my discussion — Freud's (1955 [1919]) notion of the *Unheimlich*, as well as Kristeva's (1991) and Santner's (2001) re-readings of Freud's uncanny as evocative of the stranger-within.

Freud's concept of the uncanny is perhaps best expressed in its original German, *Das Umheimliche* — literally, the extraordinary or strange. *Das Unheimliche* emerges from its antonym, *Das Heimlich*. *Heimlich* can denote that which is friendly, homelike or comfortable, yet can also signify that which is concealed or kept from sight, while 'canny' in English means deceitful and malicious — as Kristeva (1991:182) says, "to go behind someone's back". Therefore, as she goes on to observe, "in the very word *heimlich*, the familiar and intimate are reversed into their opposites, brought together with the contrary meaning of 'uncanny strangeness' harboured in *Unheimlich*". Freud writes of the uncanny as a phenomenon which appears aberrant, but only because of its closeness or resemblance to, or origins in, that which is familiar; the uncanny, Freud (1955:26)

says, is "nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind ... which has become alienated from it ... through the process of repression". For Freud, fear of return to the womb, or metaphorically losing one's identity, is the ultimate source of the uncanny (McAfee 2004:48); the place which is most *Unheimlich* "is the entrance to the former *Heim* of all human beings" (Freud 1955:368). Freud (1955:236) traces the experience of uncanniness back to "a regression to a time when the ego had not yet marked itself off sharply from the external world and from other people".

For the postcolonial protagonist, the graft symbolically enables an encounter with a part of the self that has been repressed. The 'disquieting strangeness' of this encounter may be identified with the alienness and foreignness of an estranged other that lies beneath the surface of consciousness. In this sense, evocation of the uncanny may be read as partially symptomatic of those encounters with alterity that were, for myself (and others), subliminated as a white woman growing up under apartheid. The graft brings that foreign, strange otherness-within-the-self to the fore; the repressed familiar (*Heimlich*) re-emerges as the unfamiliar (*Unheimlich*). The uncanny reveals that which is concealed — not only from others, but also from the self, for as Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (cited in Freud 1955:119) puts it, "*Unheimlich* is the name for everything that ought to remain secret and hidden but has come to light." The estranged other emerges as disturbingly, frighteningly foreign or strange precisely because it has been repressed, and is no longer known or familiar to the self.

For me, engagement with the *Unheimlich* also gave rise to a deep sense of estrangement associated with the uncertainty and instability of negotiating my identity as a white South African woman in postapartheid South Africa. Yet,

despite its negative implications, this instability has the potential to open up a space for creative opportunities. As Siopis (cited in Nuttall 2010:465), speaking in 2010, comments, "In South Africa now we are confronted with the estrangement and dislocation that come with deep uncertainty about the stability of what we might call the social contract … I find creative opportunities in this instability. This time of flux can congeal into sheer horror, open up into sheer ecstasy, or simply sit on a knife-edge of ambivalence."

The postcolonial protagonist's experience of the graft takes place at the threshold between the unconscious and conscious registers. Its ensuing hybridity therefore seems to have more in common with Bakhtin's form of 'organic' hybridity than with the 'intentional hybridity' that I suggest to be applicable in Bertha Marks's case. As it is not based on ambivalences between Self and Other, desire and derision, the process of fusion is imperceptible, its product opaque in that conscious contrasts and oppositions cannot be detected (see Bakhtin 1981:360). Unconscious hybridity and the affect of the uncanny it evokes may be related to the strangeness of the other-as-stranger-within articulated in Kristeva's and Santner's writings.[73] Santner (2001:6, 9) identifies an "ethics pertaining to my answerability to my *neighbour-with-an-unconscious*". He states, "What makes the Other *other* is not his or her spatial exteriority with respect to my being but the fact that he or she is … a stranger … not only to me but also to him- or herself … the bearer of an internal alterity" (Santner 2001:9). This leads him to propose "the possibility of a 'We,' of communiality … granted on the basis … that every familiar is ultimately strange and that, indeed, I am even in a crucial sense a stranger

to myself … strangeness [is] the locus of new possibilities of neighborliness and community" (Santner 2001:6). By understanding this internal alienness, Santner (2001:7) suggests that it becomes possible to distinguish between a "global consciousness" that focuses on external differences between cultures and societies, and a "universal-in-becoming":

> [I]t is precisely when we, in the singularity of our own out-of-jointness, open to this 'hindered' dimension — the internal alienness — of the Other that we pass from one logic of being-together to another, that we shift from the register of the global to that of the universal which remains as such a universal-in-becoming … this shift of logics marks the point at which we … truly inhabit the proximity to our neighbor, assume responsibility for the claims his or her singular and uncanny presence makes on us.

For Santner (2001:5), recognition of one's internal alienness answers the question of "what it means to be genuinely open to another human being or culture and to share and take responsibility for one's implication in the dilemmas of difference". Stuart J Murray (2003:160), paraphrasing Santner, summarises how Santner departs from Freud by recasting psychic life in existential and what Santner calls 'theological' terms:

> [B]y recognizing my own internal 'otherness,' I am better able to attend to the Other not just where he or she is most 'stuck' or most neurotic, but by hearing what is 'other' in the Other, and identifying with what alienates the Other from his or her being-in-the-world, from a fictional self, and from historical social and cultural norms that provide the framework of intelligibility whereby that self will find its meaningful place in the world.

Santner's proposition of an internal alienness gestures towards addressing questions of how to engage with otherness outside of a dualistic framework, while simultaneously providing a guide to taking responsibility for and inviting hospitality towards the other.

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[73] For a brief overview of Santner's theories presented in the discussion to follow see Venn (2010:335, 336).

Kristeva similarly posits the strangeness of the other as being located within the self. She refers to Freud's writings as showing "us how to detect foreignness in ourselves" and proposes that this is "perhaps the only way not to hound it outside of us" (Kristeva 1991:191, 192). For her, "Freud brings us the courage to call ourselves disintegrated in order not to integrate foreigners and even less so to hunt them down, but rather to welcome them to that uncanny strangeness, which is as much theirs as it is ours" (Kristeva 1991:191, 192). With reference to foreigners and perceptions of foreignness in France, she suggests that the antidote to xenophobia, racism and other prejudices against 'outsiders' is to recognise that, "the foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners" (Kristeva 1991:192). As she states:

> Foreigner … The image of hatred and of the other … Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity flounder. By recognizing him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself … The foreigner comes in when consciousness of my difference arises, and he disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners, unamenable to bonds and communities (Kristeva 1991:1).

Kristeva (1991) argues for a radical examination of the self, beginning with the realisation that what is most fearsome in the stranger may be exactly those qualities human beings do not want to recognise in themselves. Reconciliation with the estranged self, Kristeva asserts, enables citizens to avoid turning the otherness of the foreigner into a fascinating but terrifying entity in order to deny their own alterity; if there is acceptance of those foreign elements in oneself, then there is the potential for admitting foreigners, migrants, aliens and strangers into one's ambit. In a manner similar to Santner's (2001:5) linking of "the internal alienness of the other" to unconscious instincts manifest in daily life (phenomena that Freud identifies as dreams, forgetfulness, parapraxes), drawing on Freud (1955), Kristeva (1991:188) contends that when meeting a stranger, one may be

shocked into recalling repressed images (of death, the maternal mother, or drives such as the desire to do evil and/or to experience it). As Stephen Dobson (1993:83) explains:

> These are the foreign elements within us. This uncanny experience unsettles us. We lose a sense of who we are and begin to set in motion conflictual 'identification': 'rejection' processes. We identify with the foreigner, feeling that at times we too have been 'other' in our own country; we reject them in an endeavor to maintain our autonomy as individuals.

As Dobson (1993:84) notes, Kristeva's concept of the stranger-within poses the question: if everyone is a foreigner, does the category of foreigner exist? Dobson (1993:84) argues that this question, on the one hand, acknowledges the uncanny, strange split of foreignness in all human beings, and on the other hand, suggests a situation where clear self/other, us/them boundaries are no longer required to create the category of 'foreigner'. Taken together, these points underpin Kristeva's (1991:192) (perhaps utopian) political proposal for a new type of cosmopolitanism that breaks with national or ethnic boundaries of we/them, based on "a mankind whose solidarity is founded on the conscious of its unconscious — desiring, destructive, fearful, empty, impossible".

2.7   Entering liminality

Richards's (1997:235) observation that the space between the cut edges of a graft is "symbolically dense" is pertinent to the artwork. By means of the graft, Bertha Marks strives to overcome her derision and realise her desire for the Other, whereas I attempt to embrace the foreigner-within. Crossing cultural or psychological thresholds enables the protagonist to enter a liminal space located in-between self and other. As Mieke Bal (2011:14) notes, liminality is "the event that occurs on

the limen, or threshold"; "the limen is the boundary between inside and outside, not as a border, not a line, but a space where insiderness and outsiderness can be negotiated, transformed, and swapped".[74]

My experience of hybridity had affinities with the transgressive, ambiguous space of the *Unheimlich* that, like Kristevian abjection, renders the subject vulnerable as it threatens the wholeness of subjectivity. As Rosemary Betterton (1996:144) notes, while abjection threatens the integrity of the self, it simultaneously offers "a liminal space where self and other may intermingle". The uncanny and abjection are related in that they are both orders of the liminal, and both engender a sense of simultaneous terror and rapture in the subject that potentially gives rise to, and perpetuates, a sense of ego dissolution.[75] Drawing on Freud's premise that the *Umheimlich* has its origins in the maternal womb, Kristeva (1991:188) stresses that uncanniness maintains a degree of unease that could lead the self toward loss of identity. She notes that it is "a destruction of the self that may either remain as a psychotic symptom or fit in as an opening toward the new" and that, "uncanniness occurs when the boundaries between *imagination* and *reality* are erased" (Kristeva 1991:188). Kristeva (1991:188) develops this observation by positioning the *Unheimlich* "as a crumbling of conscious defenses, resulting from the conflicts the self experiences with an other — the 'strange' — with whom it maintains a conflictual bond, at the same time 'a need for identification and a fear of it'". This instability allows for the possibility of different sensory and affective registers to coexist in the artwork. As Venn (2010:341) states, engagement with the internalised other opens up the possibility of "the withness of being-with-the-other … not only as stranger or as uncanny presence alone" as well as for an "understanding [of] subjectivity and identity from the point of view of the other-in-me" (Venn 2010:341).

2.8   The *Cultivar* series

> **cultivar *n*.** (Bot). variety produced by cultivation.
>
> **cultivate v. t.** prepare and use (soil) for crops; produce (crops) by tillage; culture (bacteria etc.); prepare (ground) with cultivator; improve, develop (person, mind, manners); pay attention to, cherish (faculty, art, person, his acquaintance).
>
> **culture *n*., & v. t. 1 *n*.** tillage of the soil, rearing, production (of bees, oysters, fish, silk, bacteria); quantity of bacteria thus produced. 2. improvement by (mental or physical) training; intellectual development; particular form, stage, or type of intellectual development or civilization … group of products or achievements resulting from this (Sykes 1982:231).

Themes of grafting and hybridity and use of botanical imagery as a metaphor for human displacements are literally, yet enigmatically, realised in the 12 sculptural 'plants' and accompanying set of 12 photographs that make up the *Cultivar* series. The plants are organic hybrids (in the Bakhtin sense), in which various rose varieties are grafted onto those of aloes to form new species in which it is difficult to distinguish either origin. Following Young's description of hybridity, difference is made into sameness and sameness into difference to create newness. Sally-Ann Murray (2008:54) describes the *cultivars* as "[d]elicious monster mutations … They are beautiful and bizarre. They attract and repel. And because of the elaborate fakery of their taxonomy, one cannot possibly trace their lineage. The plants become 'plants', clever substitutes for something else, at once real and make-believe."

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[74]   Hereafter, when referring to liminality, I follow Bal's definition, unless otherwise stated.
[75]   The abject differs from the uncanny in that it engenders a more violent response and is characterised by a lack of recognition of the familiar. In the abject, nothing is recognisable or known (Kristeva 1982:5).

I constructed the *cultivars* by grafting materials of different natures: synthetic, natural, fabric and plastic. Usually beginning with a plastic replica of an aloe and a plastic or fabric replica of a rose, I sliced these up and, using fragments of actual plant materials (rose-thorns, dried roses and petals, cactus spikes, curled-up roots of a pot-bound plant, dried branches and twigs), conjoined these pieces into strange, 'alien-looking' configurations. The cut edge is the point of physical contact and implies cultural fusion, and, as in the *Aloerosa* series, the graft is suggestive of violence through actions of cutting, slicing and severing.

In the *Cultivar* series, references to hybridity along the lines of cross-pollination, transplanting, grafting and the generation of 'new species' hint at the role botanical culture played in shaping the colonial imaginary and the violence embedded therein. The *cultivars* can be considered products of 'bizarre botanical experiments' that I, as pseudo-scientist-artist, conducted in my studio; although I did not actually graft plants in the botanical sense, I simulated the kinds of conjoining that take place in horticulture. This process recalls the labour of species selection, hybridisation and new methods of cultivation, cross-breeding and acclimatising seedlings undertaken by scientists serving the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew from 1841 onwards.[76] Indigenous plants were 'uprooted' (or as Lucile Brockway (1979:451) terms it, "smuggled") from the colonies and transferred to Kew Gardens where botanists undertook scientific plant development that resulted in new plantation crops (Brockway 1979:450). These economically profitable commercial crops were re-transplanted in the British colonies, where

they were cultivated using underpaid local labour (Brockway 1979:450). Kew Gardens became the site for the exchange of plant information and a depot for the interchange of plants throughout the Empire; from there, plants were dispatched wherever commercial possibilities arose (Brockway 1979:451). As Brockway (1979:453) observes, "With one foot in the tropics of each hemisphere … Britain could shuffle plants at will. Often these plants were new and improved varieties, from seeds grown experimentally at Kew."[77] These state institutions therefore played a critical role in the expansion of Empire.

As colonisation intensified, gardens became popular among the Georgian and Victorian English gentry (Soto-Crespo 2002:352). By means of their importation of exotic plants, hybridists — as botanists were sometimes called — changed the form of the country estate; the Victorian country house became a showcase for the design of Victorian pleasure gardens (Soto-Crespo 2002:352).[78] As Ramóne Soto-Crespo (2002:352) explains, the pleasure gardens of the Victorian country house represented the culmination of a long period of accumulated botanical knowledge collected and modified at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Demand for the institutional botanical garden grew as imperial conquest accelerated and empires consolidated their territories. The institutional botanical gardens acquired the characteristics of hybrids themselves by becoming both places of pleasure, where

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[76] Kew Gardens was established as a state institution in 1841 and operated for a century as the hub for the Royal Botanic Gardens. As a formal scientific institution, the Royal Botanic Gardens constituted a "network of goverment botanical stations radiating out of Kew and stretching from Jamaica to Singapore to Fiji" (Brockway 1979:450).

[77] Examples include tea sent from India to Jamaica, tobacco sent to the South African province of Natal, papyrus, ipecac and mahogany sent to India, Portuguese cork oaks sent to Australia and the Punjab, Liberian coffee grown from seeds at Kew sent to the East and West Indies, West Indian pineapples sent to the Straits Settlement and rubber-yielding vines sent from Assam to West Africa (Brockway 1979:453).

[78] Zwartkoppies had affinities with the Victorian pleasure garden. Sammy Marks was known for his hospitality and the extensive gardens were cultivated for entertainment purposes, with afternoon teas held in the garden and summerhouses erected at the croquet lawns and tennis courts. Guests could walk in the park-like gardens, relax on a bench or row on the lake that featured as part of the garden (*Sammy Marks 1844-1920* 2003:7, 8).

people could enjoy the beauty of exotic plants, and drivers of a new agricultural revolution that fuelled the imperial powers in their economic expansion (Soto-Crespo 2002:352). As Soto-Crespo (2002:352) concludes, "If in the age of empire, flora and fauna were globalised, then the botanical garden typifies the processes of transculturation that were established. The botanical garden became an icon of power, and in it, the empire and the diaspora merged into one."[79]

The tropes of plants and (trans)planting as metaphor for the relocation of the (diasporic) immigrant, of the garden as a site of transculturation, and as an icon of imperial power, prevail throughout colonial and postcolonial imagery. The motif of the traditional New World garden as a signifier of exile and displacement is exemplified in the Caribbean diasporic writer Jamaica Kincaid's (2000) fascinating account of the intertwined histories of horticulture and colonialism, in which she uses the garden as a metaphor for cultural hybridity. Soto-Crespo (2002:345) explains that in Kincaid's text, "The garden as metaphor for (as well as a literal site of) hybridity derives from its potential for connecting cross-cultural memories. Through her garden Kincaid sees how her personal past is tied to politics and, specifically, to the history of imperialism."[80]

Considering the "destructive desire to know plants by (re)naming them" (Kincaid paraphrased in Hoving 2002:130), Kincaid (cited in Soto-Crespo 2002:346) asks: "What is the relationship between gardening and conquest?" Soto-Crespo (2002:345) notes that for Kincaid, "the answer lies in naming, because a name establishes meaning by categorising that which is named". The issue of naming is central to Kincaid's critique of conquest, because imperial chronicles of the West Indies landscape depicted the latter as abundant in flora but empty of civilisation; conquerors portrayed the Caribbean islands as unpopulated Edenic gardens to be mapped and claimed on behalf of imperial power (Soto-Crespo 2002:348). As Soto-Crespo (2002:348, 349) concludes, "The garden becomes a site where history and conquest meet in naming the 'exotic other' … the historical processes of naming and renaming were thus central to techniques of imperial domination and control."

Naming plays a critical role in the *Cultivar* series. In the photographs that accompany the sculptures, I played with accepted conventions for naming of organisms established by the Swedish botanist, Carl von Linné (commonly known as Carolus Linnaeus), who created the Latin-based system of nomenclature for cataloguing plants[81] based on their sexual differentiation and fructification (Browne 1996:154; Miller 1996:8). The photographs that make up the series titled *Genera I-XII* (2006-2007) depict the *cultivars* in a manner that closely references historical botanical illustrations (see for example, among many others,

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[79] According to Soto-Crespo (2002:351), owing to colonial expansion, the colony garden became a site of transculturation. Gardens in the West Indies operated as "'contact zones' — spaces of first encounter and knowledge transfer between cultures characterised by an imbalance of power" (Pratt 1992:4). Metropolitan gardens, such as those in London, also acquired the status of contact zones. As Soto-Crespo (2002:351) concludes, "on both sides of the Atlantic, gardens became spaces and energetic centres of hybridity".
[80] Speaking with reference to the Caribbean, Hall (cited in Soto-Crespo 2002:345) proposes that new identities emerging from diasporic and colonial experience be understood as "cultures of hybridity" in which different traditions are dynamically mixed. Similarly, Robin Cohen (1997) emphasises the cultural syncretism of a Caribbean diaspora's hybridity in terms of garden metaphors.

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[81] During the eighteenth-century expansion of natural history knowledge, Linnaeus developed the Linnaean taxonomy — a system of scientific classification now widely used in the biological sciences. In this system, nature is classified according to three hierarchically arranged kingdoms. These are divided into classes that are further divided into orders. Orders are divided into genera (singular: genus), which are divided into species (singular: species). The rank below species is termed 'varieties'.

illustrations in Arnold 2001 and Besler 2007) and albumen and gelatin silver print photographs of plants from the mid-1800s to early 1920s (see for example, illustrations in Ewing 1991).[82]

In the *Cultivar* series, the image of the plant is suspended in isolation against a plain white ground, accompanied by its nomenclature printed in a cursive, script-like font beneath. The nomenclatures mimic the categories of Linnaean taxonomy but differ in that they are based on the orders of family, genus, species, origin and parentage. In a play with linguistic hybridity, the name of the *cultivar* is an anagram of the botanical name of the actual aloe and rose it most closely resembles (for example, the aloe named 'Echincactus grusonii' is conjoined with the rose called 'Perception' giving rise to the anagram *Perrusonii*); the family is classified as both the family the rose belongs to and that of the aloe (for example, Rosaceae x Cactaceae); the genus is an amalgam of the genera of the two plants (for example, Echinocactus and Rosa form *Echinocacturosa*); the origin is the actual origin of the rose (for example, Harkness rose, Britain); and the parentage is the actual parentage of the rose, as listed in botanical reference books (Quest-Ritson & Quest-Ritson 2003; G Smith 2005; Van Wyk & Smith 2005). Whenever possible, I took care to select roses that originated in the nineteenth century.

Each plant of the *Cultivar* series is housed in a perspex vitrine, supported by a wooden plinth. Murray (2008:55) reads the perspex boxes (which she likens to a miniature version of the Victorian conservatory) as contemporary renditions of the 'Wardian case'. Developed by Nathaniel Ward in 1833, the Wardian case was a portable wooden-based and glass-topped tent structure or herbarium used to protect plants on board in their passage from the place of origin to Kew Gardens (De Almeida 2004:121). The vitrines also evoke associations with Victorian glass bell jars used to protect precious objects. Although they have a similar function to the bell jar, in that they protect the fragile *cultivars* from handling and dust, the vitrines also promote distance between the materiality of the artwork and the viewer. Because viewers cannot touch the artwork, they are prompted to view it as an 'othered object'. By presenting the sculptures in this intimate yet distanced way, I attempted to play with the idea of the *cultivar* as botanical 'specimen', usually offered as a 'spectacle' for the scientific or biological gaze. The *cultivars* might be viewed as bizarre conflations of colonial and indigenous botanical novelties — 'exotic curiosities' or 'grotesqueries'. In this sense, they carry reminders of the Victorian culture of the spectacle[83] in which the viewing of all that was deemed 'exotic', 'strange', 'deformed' or other was privileged.

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[82] Marion Arnold (1992:11, 12) explains that the depiction of flowers, whether in a botanical sense or as images for viewing pleasure, was an activity introduced to southern Africa by the colonialists. Painted by women primarily in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, botanical studies functioned as a means of cataloguing plants and generating interest in foreign landscapes for anthropologists, geologists and colonialists in England. Systems of classification and conventions of natural historical illustration provided compatibility between standard protocols for naming and depicting specimens (Miller 1996:24). The selection of plants deemed valuable, and description of them through so-called dispassionate, 'objective' 'scientific' mimesis for colonial purposes, legitimised the depictions from a colonial perspective (Duncan 1993:40, 41).

[83] The culture of the spectacle has its roots in the virtuoso cabinet (*Wunderkamer*) popular in aristocratic houses during the late eighteenth century. These were filled with 'curiosities' and 'exotica' brought back from the South Pacific and India (De Almeida 2004:126). The urge to collect extended not only to plants, animals and artefacts but also to humans, as the story of Sarah Baartman attests (Duncan 1993:42). De Almeida (2004:128) observes that at the start of the nineteenth century, all major scientific collections devoted an area to *lusus naturae* or the "unusual, sportive, malformed, or imperfect conceptions of nature" and that by the Victorian era these curiosities formed part of every natural history museum and travelling freak show.

Figure 5: Glass flower models, the Archives of Rudolph and Leopold Blaschka
and the Ware Collection of Blaschka Glass Models of Plants.
Courtesy of the Harvard Museum of Natural History. (Bowen 2012).

A reading of the *cultivars* as 'botanical specimens' is supported by reference to the Ware Collection of Blaschka Glass Models of Plants permanently on display at the Harvard Museum of Natural History in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Figures 5, 7a & 7b, 8). Similarly displayed under glass, the Ware Collection of Blaschka Glass Models of Plants comprises 847 models of plant species, crafted from glass by the glassmakers Leopold and Rudolph Blaschka. Totalling 3 000 glass flowers, made over five decades between 1886 and 1936, the collection was used in the teaching of botany to Harvard University students and the public (The archives of Rudolph and Leopold Blaschka [sa]). Although the models are life-sized and scientifically accurate, their translation into the unexpected medium of glass renders them fascinatingly other. Not quite grotesqueries nor deformed medico-botanical specimens, in their exquisite attention to detail and fragility they are nevertheless, like the *cultivars* (Figures 6a, 6b & 6c), 'curiosities' that invite close scrutiny.

2.9 Conclusion

In drawing together the diverse threads of this chapter, the violent undercurrent of cultural contestation that underpins the *Aloerosa* and *Cultivar* series resonates strongly for me. In both series, violence has its origins in the traumatic incision of the cut that slices across dichotomous categorisations of difference, asserting the contestation of cultural fusion and the forcing of incompatible entities to grow together. Displacement, often involuntary, is itself underpinned by violence, trauma and cultural conflict. The bodily violation of the cut evokes associations with the "violent, alienating, colonial practice of uprooting and transplanting" that, as Isabel Hoving (2002:131) suggests, signified "complex, layered, violent histories of ripping away and abduction". For Hoving (2002:131) the newly formed landscapes in which these plants featured were "not just pleasurable places, but complex knots in transnational power relations".

The process by which the violence of the cut is realised in the artwork is one of simulation; I used the *artifice* of horror in an attempt to effect a suspension of disbelief. Although no literal damage was done to the body, wounding and rupture are suggested, possibly evoking traces of the literal and figurative violence of colonialism and its history of subjugation in southern Africa as well as the haunting legacy of apartheid. In the *Aloerosa* series the cut, which precipitates the graft, opens the protagonist to the registers of the traumatic, the uncanny, the abject, the estranged and the grotesque. As Richards (1997:234) comments, "Even when [the graft] fails, it succeeds in showing us its rootedness in 'cross-cultural' fantasies oftengrounded [*sic*] in an often colonial imaginary … Grafts can seem monstrous misfits attesting to the effects of our most well-intended 'cross-cultural' contacts". In inducing the graft, Bertha Marks's intentions hover ambivalently
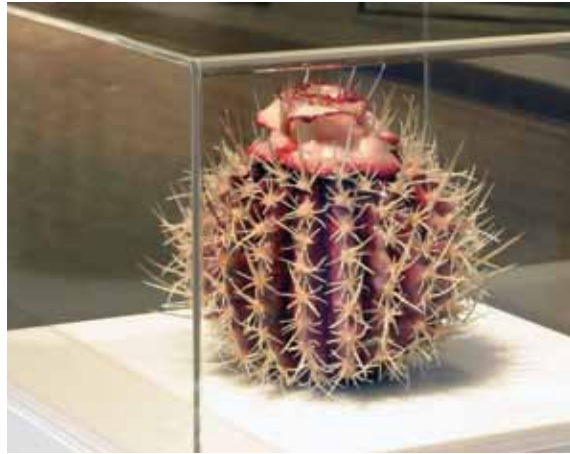
Figure 6a: Leora Farber, *Cultivars: Perrusonii*. 2006-2007.
Wax, plastic, fabric, plant material, plant size: 18 x 20 x 20 cm,
stand size: 32 x 32 cm, total height with perspex cover: 119 cm.
Photograph by George Hugo.

Figure 6b (above): Leora Farber, *Cultivars: Braithwaiterox*. 2006-2007.
Wax, fabric, plastic, wire, plant material, Plant size: 31 x 13 x 14 cm,
stand size: 32 x 32 cm, total height with perspex cover: 107 cm.
Photograph by Angela Buckland.

Figure 6c (below): Leora Farber, *Cultivars: Lairboretung*. 2006-2007.
Wax, plastic, porcelain, plant material, plant size: 13 x 24 x 27 cm,
stand size: 32 x 32 cm, total height with perspex cover: 108 cm
Photograph by Angela Buckland.

between derision and desire, manifest in internal schisms, friction and dissent, while the postcolonial protagonist bases her enactment of the graft on a desire to welcome and embrace the other-within. Yet, for both personae, the horror of self-mutilation, the implication of pain and the resulting disfigurement of the body that signifies the "violent aesthetic of the imperfect fit" (Richards 1997:234) shadow their intentions. Tension, antagonism, contestation and conflict mark the protagonist's move into a cross-cultural space.

And yet, it is "out of a cut, a slice, an incision, a wound, a repetition, a combination … monstrously [that] newness enters the world (Bishop 2008:113). Despite its violence, the cut allows for an unexpected fecundity; it marks the beginnings of the graft that enables hybridity. This is the hybridity of Bakhtin's organic and intentional, double-voiced utterances wherein two belief systems intersect as a

hybrid construction and give rise to Bhabha's displacing Third Space that develops in the interaction between the indigenous and colonial culture. The cut opens the protagonist to the address of the other: it is the "'inter' — the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space — that carries the burden of meaning in culture … by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as others of our selves" (Bhabha 1994:56). The work of the graft in conjoining individual and collective immigrant experiences across cross-cultural space and time, and against the backdrop of the violent legacies of colonialism and apartheid, provides my entry point into the chapters that follow.

Figure 8: Glass flower models, the archives of Rudolph and Leopold Blaschka
and the Ware Collection of Blaschka Glass Models of Plants.
Courtesy of the Harvard Museum of Natural History. (2.22. Art Glass for Science [sa]).

Figures 7a & 7b: Glass flower models, the archives of Rudolph and Leopold Blaschka
and the Ware Collection of Blaschka Glass Models of Plants.
Photographs by Hillel Burger.
Courtesy of the Harvard Museum of Natural History. (The archives … [sa]).

CHAPTER THREE
TIES THAT BIND HER

> It is what lies in that gap between the no-place and the good place that is of most significance; the gap between freedom associated with the 'good place' and the invisible and all pervasive 'nowhere' and yet everywhere of the social order (Hetherington 1997:13).

3.1 Introduction

> [I]dentity is no longer inherited but forged within the fray of culture wars. The ties that bind are not ontological, but contractual, and therefore susceptible to endless renegotiation (Morgan 1996:42).

In the *Ties that Bind Her* series of photographic prints that form the second narrative of the exhibition, the protagonist's white, female body is the surface upon which narratives of migrant dislocation and processes of adaptation to the new environment are inscribed. Underpinning the nine-part series is the protagonist's desire to graft newness onto her body to create a hybrid lifeform, but preceding this is the need to preserve certain Anglo-Saxon values, customs and attitudes that she believes are necessary to maintain the integrity of her identity. I draw an analogy between the three phases of transition that the protagonist passes through during her transformation into hybridity and Dutch anthropologist Arnold van Gennep's (1960 [1908]) three phases of transition encountered in entering and leaving a state of liminality when undergoing rites of passage during rituals in small-scale societies.

In Chapters Four and Five, Zwartkoppies is proposed as a heterotopia; I suggest that the home forms a doubly dislocated space, given that it is what Mendelsohn (1991:103) calls "an English country home on the Highveld".[84] As a precursor to these chapters, I show how the garden of the Sammy Marks Museum, the bedroom, the mirror and the body — in actuality and as imaged in the series — might be considered as examples of material heterotopias; real sites of displacement that contain a multiplicity of differences and ambivalences. Although these sites have been singled out in my analysis of the *Ties that Bind Her* series, similar material sites of displacement can be identified throughout the other two narrative series that make up the exhibition. Foucault's (1986 [1967]:25) third principle of heterotopias, namely, "the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible", underpins my discussion.

The abovementioned sites have a relational aspect to each other. Relationships are formed within the heterotopia and between other heterotopias located within the site; each site reflects, incorporates, and reverberates against others, and against external sites. In this case, the bedroom contains the mirror and the body; the garden, although exterior to it, forms an extension of the main bedroom, given that one can walk through the bedroom doors into the rose garden, which is visible whenever the curtains and shutters are open. As heterotopias, these sites

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[84] Perhaps in response to Bertha Marks's homesickness and Sammy Marks's Anglophilia, not only the rose garden but also the house was created according to English conventions. Like other upwardly mobile Victorians who had made their money in South Africa, Marks emulated the lifestyle of the English upper classes and was keen to acquire the trappings of gentility (Mendelsohn 1991:103). Most of the Markses' furniture and household goods were bought in England and further items were either imported directly or via shops run by English shopkeepers in Pretoria (Mendelsohn 2008:30).

form spaces of otherness that encompass both interior and exterior owing to their interrelations with each other. In the series the heterotopias of the garden, the bedroom and the mirror are at once familiar and strange; they are "fundamentally disturbing places" (Johnson 2006:84) because, as Hetherington (1997:50) notes, the heterotopia's operations through similitude foreground "the out-of-place … offer[ing] it up as a basis for alternative perspectives and orderings". Hetherington (1997:9) explains the sense of unsettledness that similitude generates as follows:

> [T]he ordering represented by resemblance is a familiar one, social expectations developed over time assume that certain things go together in a certain order. These representations act as signs where what is being signified refers to a known referent. Similitude, however, is all about an ordering that takes place through a juxtaposition of signs that culturally are seen as not going together, either because their relationship is new or because it is unexpected. What is being signified cannot be easily attached to a referent.

In undermining stable relationships between signified and signifier, a slippage between the familiar and unfamiliar occurs: "Heterotopic sites seem familiar, as they are subsumed within a society's conventional ordering system that links them to other sites, yet they are unfamiliar in that they simultaneously contradict the premises by which these relationships are sustained" (Manning 2008:1). Danielle Manning (2008:1) relates the slippage between the familiar and unfamiliar in the heterotopia to the uncanny since both disrupt preconceptions. Owing to their association with the uncanny, heterotopias have the potential to dissolve ego boundaries, thereby establishing a close relation to the realm of the semiotic. However, because heterotopias "exist out of step and meddle with our sense of interiority", they also alienate the subject from lived experience of the body, and in so doing, may create a sense of disembodiment (Johnson 2006:84).

Put differently, heterotopias are uncanny in their ability to "display and inaugurate a difference and challenge the space in which we may feel at home" (Johnson 2006:84).[85]

3.2   The garden, bedroom, mirror and body as heterotopias

3.2.1   The garden

> [T]he traditional garden of the Persians was a sacred space that was supposed to bring together inside its rectangle four parts representing the four parts of the world … all the vegetation of the garden was supposed to come together in this space, in this sort of microcosm … The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and … the totality of the world (Foucault 1986 [1967]:25, 26).

In the discussion to follow I draw an analogy between the colonial garden and the heterotopia, with reference to the Victorian rose garden that Bertha Marks established at Zwartkoppies in 1906 (Figures 9 & 10).[86] I align my argument with that of Claire Jorgensen (2010:4), who applies the concept of the heterotopia as a site of displacement to the relocation of the European garden in a colonial setting. She proposes that the otherness of the European garden is foregrounded when the garden is transplanted into the colony: "its displaced and displacing qualities only become visible … when the Otherness of a Heterotopia [*sic*], and

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85   In Chapter Two I note that although the heterotopia may be considered a liminal space, for the purposes of my argument I do not consider it as such, but rather as an internal site of otherness located *within* (as opposed to *in-between*) other external sites. I also recognise the uncanny as an order of the liminal. In making connections between the uncanny as a liminal state and the heterotopia, my intention is not to suggest that the heterotopia is a liminal space, but rather that the liminality of the uncanny may be *operative within it*.

86   The garden itself may be considered heterotopic, in that it usually operates as an aestheticised site, 'set apart' by fences and hedges from that which is external to it. It provides a refuge from society and in its otherness reflects society, becoming a means of examining one's relation to the surrounding environment (Jorgensen 2010:4).

the Othering narrative of the garden, finds ... a kind of concrete form as a colonial garden" (Jorgensen 2010:5). Jorgensen (2010:3) proposes that the colonial garden, which ambivalently functioned as an expression of European ideals but was translated against a different nature and context from that of the European, is characteristically heterotopic.

In constructing her Victorian English garden on the Highveld, Bertha Marks propagated one of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century explorers' representations of the southern African landscape, the Edenic garden myth — a pastoral mode nostalgically reminiscent of Edenic landscapes in preindustrial England (see Jorgensen 2010:3; Coetzee 1988:4; Van der Watt 2003:63).[87] In Edenic discourse, territories are characterised by references to their green lushness or sublime intensity (Coetzee 1988:58). However, Coetzee (1988:49-51) notes that in colonial discourses on the Cape Colony and the interior of southern Africa, there are few references to Eden; the dry African lands seemed "dead and lacking in lustre", resembling a "withered Eden that needed to be reclaimed and remade". In Edenic mythology, the native land is represented as a threatening wilderness that has to be tamed and changed into a harmless, fertile garden (Hoving 2002:132); colonists approached Africa with the hope of recreating the English garden in Africa's "vast moral wastes" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:80).[88]

Figure 9: View of the rose garden and house, Sammy Marks Museum, Pretoria. Photograph by Phillipe Schockaert. (Panoramio [sa]).

Figure 10: Layout of the rose garden, Sammy Marks Museum, Pretoria, 2010. (Spiglord's World Cup 2010).

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[87] Gardens offered a space wherein these myths and desires could be played out (Jorgensen 2010:3). In the second myth, the African landscape is represented as 'Black Africa': a dry desert in which Europeans could cultivate pastoral gardens containing 'desirable vegetation' (Jorgensen 2010:3). By contrast, the Edenic garden myth (or Arcadian analysis) signifies a return to a state of innocence, the home of earthly paradise (Jorgensen 2010:5). As John Rennie Short (1991:96) observes, "Being threatened and requiring preservation, and appearing threatening through the threat of failure, the garden was used as an analogy for lands of difference and Otherness requiring colonisation."

[88] References to irrigation and cultivation are prevalent throughout colonial discourse. This is most likely because the dry African land had to be watered and nourished to sustain

In this context, Bertha Marks's construction of the formal English rose garden on the 'moral wastes' of the Highveld could be recognised as part of a broader colonial project to 'civilise' the 'barbaric' African land.[89] Her rose garden might also be construed as nostalgic because, as Jeremy Foster (2008:168) points out, for the colonists garden-making was usually bound up with sentimental memories of 'home' and the desire to recreate 'home' away from 'home'.

In much the same way as she herself had been 'imported' into an environment in which she felt 'out of place', Bertha Marks imported plant specimens that were often unsuited to the local conditions. Her sense of displacement was due to her immigrant status, but it is also likely that her adherence to the politics of exclusion and its attendant codes of respectability prompted in her a deep sense of subjective dissonance. Hence, in both her case and that of the transplanted garden, Self/Other relations were inverted: it was the *colonialist* and the *colonial* garden that constituted "site[s] of difference"; the garden was a space that contained the coloniser's ideals, "whilst revealing [the colonisers] as displaced against an environment that [was] foreign and sometimes unsympathetic" (Jorgensen 2010:4).

Bertha Marks put in orders for plants, bulbs and seeds from Kent to be shipped to South Africa in weekly batches (Mendelsohn 1991:188). Varieties included typically English Victorian rose species such as Baroness Rothschild, Sultan Zanzibar and Anna de Diesbach. Her appropriation of the indigenous plants by replacing them with English ones parallels the colonial appropriation of the land and its indigenous peoples in that both reflect a desire to own, control, and subjugate the Other. Furthermore, Bertha Marks's attempts to graft a version of her culture onto her new environment through the garden can be regarded as analogous to ways in which English culture was enacted as an invasive species that took over by replacing indigenous growth and forcing the latter to adopt its patterns and conventions. In this sense, the garden became a site into which English moral values were instilled, or were literally planted in the earth, from whence they might propagate.

The English rose garden at Zwartkoppies, as it has at the time of writing been revived, is characteristically heterotopic in that it encompasses a range of ambivalences. Transposed into a foreign landscape, it is a doubly displaced site; dislodged from its original environment, it has been transplanted to the Highveld, where it remains "invested with the values of the colonial society from which it originated" (Pugh 1988:13).[90] The garden forms an intermediary zone between the

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life, necessitating European control and appropriation of water sources for the purposes of irrigating the colonial garden (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:207). Water and its associations with cleanliness, goodness and light (reflected in the injunction 'cleanliness is next to godliness' [Steyn 2001:13]) was positioned in opposition to the dark, dirty, unhygienic, 'sinful' black bodies of the local 'savages'. Given that water carried associations of purity, clarity and whiteness, irrigation became a metaphor for strategies of 'whitening' the landscape and a means by which colonial legitimacy was exercised (Garner 2007:91; Jorgensen 2010:40).

[89] The road leading to the eastern gate of Zwartkoppies is lined with Eucalyptus trees planted by Sammy Marks. Rather as in his wife's attempt to create her formal rose garden in her new surroundings and in so doing to 'tame' nature, Sammy Marks embarked on an ambitious campaign to "reclaim" and "green" Zwartkoppies, "creating a civilised landscape out of what his secretary called a wilderness" (Mendelsohn 1991:104). Thousands of trees were planted, mainly exotic varieties such as pines and blue gums, as well as orchards and vineyards (Mendelsohn 1991:104).

[90] Colonists' attitudes towards native species and indigenous plants in southern Africa varied considerably according to temporal and geographic contexts. While it is currently considered water-wise to plant indigenous species and many indigenous plants are highly regarded, in the nineteenth century common English plants such as carnations, hollyhocks, tulips and hyacinths were highly valued by the colonists, while indigenous plants as in fynbos "were uprooted as 'mere weeds'" (Burchell 1953 [1822]:21, 22). Jeremy Foster (2008:168) comments that although indigenous flowers could be bought in Cape Town in the 1880s, and by the turn of the century the educated white elite in southern Africa showed an interest in native plants, these plants were not grown in a horticultural context until several decades later. However, in late eighteenth-century Britain, garden and conservatory owners considered particular exotics

home, which represents a replica of 'England', and an alien 'Africa' outside and is thus part of, yet separated from, the surrounding landscape. Yet, inasmuch as the garden is dislocated from its environment, its borders, demarcated by rows of bricks, are potentially permeable. Slippages between inside and outside (for example, in the form of weeds) are inevitable, necessitating the need to maintain nature[91] through artifice or culture.

As was characteristic of the Victorian era, the rose garden at Zwartkoppies was initially laid out according to a classical geometric design incorporating Italianate ornaments, garden furniture and fountains (Malan [sa]:2). Given that the rose garden was initially formally constructed according to neoclassical principles, artifice played, and still plays, a significant role in controlling nature and maintaining its 'tamed' state. The rose garden is characteristically heterotopic in that it is a "sit[e] that [is] defined by ... absolute perfection, surrounded by spaces that are not so clearly defined as such" (Hetherington 1997:41). In it, the ordering of relations between components is carefully orchestrated: the garden is divided into formal flowerbeds, avenues and sections of lawn that are mirrored symmetrically on either side. The various components are separated by low, trimmed hedges. Therefore, like the colony garden, being sustained by artificial means, the rose garden

> seems caught between the imaginings of a man-made utopia, and the 'natural', ideal space of Arcadia. Utopia signals a nature regulated by artifice, as opposed to Arcadia, that resembles an ideal natural space located in the past, occupied by people who are innocent, noble and savage, and therefore apparently 'untouched' (Jorgensen 2010:9).

The rose garden thus assumes an artificially controlled identity, counterpoised against an insurgent Nature that if not attended to would revert to a wild, chaotic state of being. Harmony, structure and unity are won by domination and control over Nature and therefore, as Hoving (2002:132) observes, "the notion of a harmonious, well structured Garden of Eden is ... a colonial dream". The rose garden is utopian in its idealist aspirations towards a preindustrial Arcadian paradise and in its striving for perfection established through symmetry and order. Although it is a real space, and therefore heterotopic, it represents a utopia wherein "ideas and practices that represent the good life can come into being ... even if they never actually achieve what they set out to achieve — social order, or control and freedom" (Hetherington 1997:ix). Yet the freedom and liberation the utopian rose garden embodies contrasts with, and is undermined by, its existence as a heterotopia, given that the heterotopia, which in itself offers no form of resistance or freedom, contests utopian forms of resistance and transgression based on principles of liberation (Johnson 2006:884).

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such as the indigenous South African strelitzia to be highly desirable (Browne 1996:166). In their gardens exotics intermingled with indigenous plants, breaking geographical boundaries. This, according to Janet Browne (1996:166), "conjured up notions of an untrammeled, fecund world ... for some ... almost literally a 'garden of Eden' ... for others, a representation of organisms living in a state somehow beyond or outside the conventional laws of nature". In the terraced gardens of the houses designed by Sir Herbert Baker on Johannesburg's Parktown Ridge in the first decade of the twentieth century, indigenous plants were similarly encouraged to grow freely among imported varieties (Foster 2008:168). Baker's gardens contrasted with the artificiality and eclecticism of the Victorian 'gardenesque' style, as they allowed for a naturalistic formalism that, "posited a more constructive relationship between culture and nature, bringing garden and veld into a dialogue with each other" (Foster 2008:168).

[91] The word 'nature' is used here to signify all that exists independently of human activity and artifice, while 'Nature' is the ontologisation of the natural as an essential, primordial, unchanging, universal entity (Venn 2012/03/03).

3.2.2 The bedroom

The first print of the *Ties that Bind Her* narrative, *Preservation* and its close-up counterpart, *Preservation (detail),* are pivotal works in the series. The former is a self-portrait of the protagonist, seated in the main bedroom of the Sammy Marks Museum (Figure 11) at what was Bertha Marks's dressing table. Looking into the mirror, which previously reflected Bertha Marks's image and now reflects mine, the protagonist holds a small bone-handled pocket knife that she has used to make an incision into her left breast. She inserts a rose cameo made from wax into the cut flesh. The cameo is intended as a metonym for her Anglo-Saxon values, behaviours and beliefs that she attempts to 'preserve' through metaphoric transplantation into her body, keeping them close to her heart (Figure 11). For Bertha Marks, these received inheritances relate directly to her colonial white identity that she fears losing in her new environment; in my case, they comprise personal aspects of my whiteness that have been subject to processes of scrutiny, criticality and evaluation.

Figure 11: Leora Farber, detail of insertion. 2006.

Unprinted image not included in exhibition.

Photograph by Hannelie Coetzee.

In the chronology of photographing the three narratives, the move from the exterior context of the rose garden in the *Aloerosa* series to the main bedroom of the Sammy Marks Museum was strategic. As Beth Snyder-Rheingold (2003 [1999]) notes, in Victorian architecture the bedroom signifies an innermost sanctum within an architectural hierarchy of privacy. In the artwork I extend this association between the bedroom and privacy to the 'interior' of the body, as well as a psychological state of introspection. A sense of interiority in the actual main bedroom is created by the heavy drapery on the windows that can be drawn to shut out the exterior. The sense of insularity can be heightened by closing the wooden shutters outside the windows to create a darkened, intimate space. It is this space that the protagonist considers a personal haven,[92] a place in which illicit practices can be enacted. These comprise a series of physically and psychologically transformative acts that she performs on her body, again using the historically gendered activity of needlework as her medium. As in the *Aloerosa* series, these acts — insertion of the cameo, and the stitched conjoining of white flesh, pearls and white African trade beads — suggest the creation of new subjectivities: Bakhtinian intentional and unconscious hybrid identities that are the product of grafting signifiers of Europe and Africa. Her various insertions into the body are shown to 'take' and transform into beaded flowers and scarification markings.

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[92] Although Sammy and Bertha Marks shared the main bedroom, Sammy Marks had a separate room next to it where he slept before leaving for, or when returning from, a business trip so as not to awaken his wife. It is therefore feasible to think of the main bedroom as a space that Bertha Marks might have considered private and personal.

Figure 12: The main bedroom in the Sammy Marks Museum, Pretoria, 2006.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.
Courtesy of the Sammy Marks Museum.

The bedroom, as it features in the *Ties that Bind Her* series, may be thought of as a heterotopic space of crisis *and* deviance: it is a sacred, secret and forbidden site as well as a space for illicit, clandestine relations and transgressions. The bedroom conforms to three of the six characteristics Hetherington (1997:41) identifies as being commonly associated with heterotopias:[93] first, its inherent incongruity is constituted by the enactment of socially transgressive practices

within it; secondly, as a relational site, it can be differentiated from others in that it contains elements which make it an "obligatory point of passage"; and thirdly, it is a site of uncertainty owing to the multiplicity of social meanings attached to it.

According to Foucault's (1986:26) fifth principle, heterotopias "presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable"; they contain a system of ordering that excludes those without the necessary permission to enter. Rites of passage, such as ritual or purification for religious or hygienic reasons, may be needed to gain access to these heterotopias. In this sense, the bedroom is a hermetic enclosure that disallows the social element and functions as a site where change and transition can be negotiated. In Foucault's (1986:26) fourth principle, heterotopias (or heterochronies) are "linked to slices in time" — contexts wherein the past is represented by a display of artefacts in one place. In these 'slices', a "perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time" occurs (Foucault 1986:26). The past escalates: it "never stops building up and topping its own summit" (Foucault 1986:26). As a room in a museum filled with period furniture and artefacts, and as an archive, temporally, the bedroom constitutes a quasi-eternity — it represents an "absolute break with … traditional time" (Foucault 1986:26). Thus, as heterochronies, both the Sammy Marks Museum and the bedroom contained within it constitute places "of all times that [are themselves] outside of time" (Foucault 1986:26).

Yet, despite its numerous correlations with the heterotopia, the bedroom, as it features in the series, may also be regarded as a liminal, in-between space. In anthropological rituals, liminal spaces are those in which "the normal rules and mores of society are suspended, thus allowing for transformation and new confluences to happen" (Sey 2011:6). As a site of both crisis and deviance, the

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93   The remaining three characteristics are: "Sites that are defined by their absolute perfection, surrounded by spaces that are not so clearly defined as such … Sites that are marginalized within the dominant social spatialization … Incongruous forms of writing and text that challenge and make impossible discursive statements" (Hetherington 1997:41).

bedroom becomes a space in which rites of passage, or initiation rituals that enable transition from one state to another, take place; a 'transitional' or 'marginal' space in which unpredictable outcomes emerge from the grafting of diverse materials and cultures, giving rise to new identity formations. The rites of passage, or rituals of self-transformation which the protagonist undergoes, correlate with those traditionally associated with liminality (see Van Gennep 1960; Turner 1969, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1982).[94] These rites are reiterated throughout the exhibition. In each narrative the protagonist goes through a 'rite of passage' that is not unlike the linear transitional rituals to which Van Gennep and Victor Turner refer.

Van Gennep (1960:11) uses two different sets of terms to describe the three phases of passage that encompass the subject's transformation during such rites. The first is separation, margin and reaggregation; the second is preliminal, liminal and postliminal. The first set refers to spatial conditions while the second evokes transitions within a particular space and time (Turner 1969:166). Stephen Greenblatt's (1995:28) description of Van Gennep's 'liminal period' that constitutes the duration of the ritual seems particularly pertinent to the protagonist's experience of transformation:

Something is extinguished, something becomes extinct: if not you yourself, in your bodily being, then something you are, a status or position in which you have been fixed, from which you have drawn your identity, to which you referred your experiences in order to give them some coherence and meaning. And then, either through choice or through something over which you have no control, the status crumbles, the position disappears, the identity is no longer your own.

As is the case for the protagonist, during the ritual 'ordinary' social life temporarily ceases. Furthermore, the protagonist's emplacement in the secrecy of her bedroom is characteristic of rituals, which usually take place out of sight or 'elsewhere' (Johnson 2006:79). The first phase of the protagonist's rite of passage, shown in *Preservation* and *Preservation (detail)*, in which she inserts the cameo into her body, may be likened to the first stage of symbolic transition (separation). The import of this action is overwhelming for her: in the second image of the series, *Debilitation*, lace handkerchief in hand and bodice unlaced, she has fainted onto the 'fainting couch' (*chaise longue*) alongside the bed.

The second phase, or the transgressive stage of a rite, is often marked as a threshold at which conditions are most uncertain and in which the normative structure of society is temporarily suspended or overturned (Hetherington 1997:32). In this liminal state subjects undergo rituals that mark the in-betweenness of their non-identity; they become what Turner (1969:95) refers to as "threshold people". This phase is characterised by acts of transgression that subvert everyday, mundane practices (Hetherington 1997:33). The second stage of the protagonist's self-transformation ritual is shown in the close-up *Reparation (detail)*. When compared with its 'mirror' reflection, *Preservation (detail)*, the pearl choker in *Preservation (detail)* now appears to be 'under her skin', taking on forms that resemble West African cicatrisation (see Fisher 1984:108) as well as the beaded rings that Ndebele

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[94] While the protagonist's rites of passage correlate with Van Gennep's three phases in that they affect the individual, they differ because societal rites of passage are usually not private; the significance of the transition is dependent on collective understandings of the performed acts (Greenblatt 1995:28). There are further similarities between social rituals and those of the protagonist in that they are often focused on the body, involve modification of the skin and, among other actions, may necessitate the subject wandering in the wilderness (Greenblatt 1995:28).

women wear as part of their traditional dress. White African trade beads held in place by mother-of-pearl buttons replace the strands of pearls below the choker; the strand that cascades onto her breast has been subsumed into her body — the pearls read as lying under the skin. The graft of skin and cameo has 'taken', leaving a raised scar at the place of insertion. In *Reparation,* the protagonist is in the process of stitching, penetrating the margin of skin between inside and outside the body, repetitively, in ritualistic motion, thereby subverting the banal practice of needlework by using it to perform a transgressive act. In a similar state to that which Turner (1969:95) describes as being "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention", she has entered into an interstitial space, hovering at a threshold between her previous Anglo-Saxon self and full transformation into a new, hybrid cultural being. While she is in this state of in-betweenness, as Betterton (1996:133) observes in relation to bodily boundaries, that which lies "at the borderlines or indeterminate is potentially dangerous, because it is ambiguous". The threshold, according to Bal (2011:14), is the blurred space in which an encounter is imminent. In the *Ties that Bind Her* series, this 'encounter' takes place between self (inside) and other (outside); the 'danger' lies at the threshold between insiderness and outsiderness as it is here that the self-sufficient meaning and demarcatable boundaries of subject/object or self/other binaries are threatened.

A move towards reaggregation, the final phase of a rite of passage when the transformed subject is reincorporated into society (Turner 1969:95), is signified by the new growth of a butterfly-shaped 'Africanised' flower made of white African trade beads that sprouts from the scar of the cameo in *Regeneration* and *Regeneration* (detail). In these images, the pearls are fully subsumed under the skin, and the full effect of cicatrisation is evident; the protagonist's closed eyes and

serene facial expression suggest a state of rapture. Hetherington (1997:34, citing Turner [1969]) notes that in small-scale societies liminal rituals exist as a means towards self-understanding by an individual in a particular society and as a means of renewal of that society through a process of restructuring. As Hetherington (1997:34, paraphrasing Turner) puts it, "The structure of a society is symbolically inverted through the transgression of its moral codes, a period of anti-structure, such that a process of renewal and regeneration can occur. Liminality is associated with anti-structure, passing moments of release." After undergoing a period of 'anti-structure', the protagonist's hybridity appears to have induced in her a new kind of self-understanding and self-transformation: she has entered a Third Space wherein identity is "conceived of in the 'twixt of displacement and reinvention" (Papastergiadis 1995:17).

3.2.3   The mirror

Figures 13a & 13b: Leora Farber, *Ties that Bind Her*. 2006.
Details of unprinted image not included in exhibition.
Photographs by Michael Meyersfeld.

Figure 14: Leora Farber, *Ties that Bind Her*. 2006.
Unprinted image not included in exhibition.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

The mirror is a leitmotif throughout the actual bedroom, as in the *Ties that Bind Her* series. Mirrors line the room. Two small side mirrors flank the central over-mantle mirror to the right-hand side when entering the bedroom; the wardrobe opposite the bed has an oval mirror in its outer door; a cheval mirror stands between the dressing table and the wardrobe; and the central mirror is a main feature of the dressing table. In the series the leitmotif is carried through from the first (*Preservation*) to the last (*Regeneration*) images, in which the protagonist's face and upper body are reflected in the dressing-table mirror. In both images, a vignette of her body is reflected in the mirrors of the 'toilette boxes' on the dressing table (Figure 13a); in *Debilitation,* her face is reflected in the dressing-

table mirror, and the three close-up details photographed into the mirror reflect back to the viewer the actual image which was, at the time of photographing, reflected in the mirror itself.

For Foucault (1986:24), the mirror is a site in which the fictive space of the utopia and the real space of the heterotopia converge to provide a "mixed, joint experience":

> The mirror is ... a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there ... a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent ... But, it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed back at me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look in the glass ... absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.

As Johnson (2006:80) summarises: although the mirror is, like a utopia, a "placeless place", and despite its projection of a virtual space behind its surface in which the observer is misperceived as being present, it is also an actual site that obliquely affirms the observer's position in real space. However, paradoxically, it is also a dystopic site, since the act of looking is solipsistic as opposed to teleological. The space occupied in the mirror is ambivalently real and unreal; it is a dislocated space in which time and space are disrupted. In a similar manner

to the way heterotopias reconstitute knowledge by revealing its usually hidden structural formation, the reflection realigns the viewer's visibility, allowing for "a way of seeing one's image in a new way, from a new site" (Topinka 2010:60, 61).

The staging of the series alludes to the iconographical tradition of 'Venus at the mirror' (the trope of the female subject looking into and being reflected in the mirror) and the historical genre of painting known as the 'boudoir portrait' (Law-Viljoen 2008:4). Among many possible examples of these genres, Bronwyn Law-Viljoen (2008:4) cites Tintoretto's *Susanna and the Elders* (c. 1555), Titian's *Venus with a Mirror* (1647-1651), Diego Velázquez's *The Rokeby Venus* (1649-1650), Berthe Morisot's *The Cheval Glass* (1876), and Edgar Degas's *Woman Combing her Hair before a Mirror* (c. 1877). Dorothy Kay's *Eye of the Beholder* (1953) and Tracey Emin's empty tent 'boudoir' titled *Everyone I have Ever Slept With, 1963-1965* (1995) are pertinent examples in a South African and contemporary art context respectively (Law-Viljoen 2008:4). The Venus at the mirror trope finds its photographic counterpart in Lady Harwarden's *Clementina by a Mirror* (c. 1860) and *Seated in Reflection* (c. 1860).

In the *Ties that Bind Her* series, the boudoir functions as a type of "primal space" (Law-Viljoen 2008:4) in which, as the examples above demonstrate, throughout western art history the female subject has had to negotiate the dynamics between the power of the (male) gaze in relation to her own agency. Sitting at what was Bertha Marks's dressing table, looking into the mirror that once reflected her image, afforded me an intense experience of 'being Bertha' — emplacing myself into what was her place in the bedroom allowed for a deep sense of identification or "empathic unsettlement" (LaCapra 2001:87) with her. During the shoot I found myself observing myself (in the camera lens, in the mirror, through the eyes of others in the room, on the computer screen) while simultaneously 'seeing' Bertha Marks in my reflected image. I was thus placed in the ambivalent position of knowing that I was a spectacle 'to-be-looked-at' yet also being an active agent who returned the gaze. Jacques Lacan (cited in Snyder-Rheingold 2003) speaks of being in a similar position: "I can feel myself under the gaze of someone whose eyes I do not even see … From the moment this gaze exists, I am already something other, in that I feel myself becoming an object for the gaze of others. But [in] this position, which is a reciprocal one, others also know that I am an object who knows himself to be seen".

I approximate the female subject of the 'Venus at the mirror' genre, but subvert the historical figure's lack of agency by becoming what Law-Viljoen (2008:4) terms, "the interrogator of the very act of observing" and by consciously setting my body up as objectified spectacle for the (male) gaze. The protagonist's sexuality is highlighted by the garments she wears, which are made from semitransparent parachute fabric. The protagonist is dressed in a flimsy, camisole that forms an undergarment over which a soft fabric corset with an embossed pattern of roses is laced, as opposed to the severe leather corset she wears in the *Aloerosa* series. In contrast to prudish Victorian attitudes towards the body that were expressed by heavy draping and multiple layers of clothing, the lightweight parachute fabric renders the wearer's body semivisible. By the end of the nineteenth century, the female body was concealed to the point where erotic attention was transferred to "its coverings, which became a matter of furtive pre-occupation" (Entwhisle 2000:202). As underwear came to be associated with hidden parts of the body, it also began to gather erotic connotations, becoming a focus of sexual interest (Abigail Willet & Marmaduke Cunningham cited in Entwhisle 2000:202). Thus, by the protagonist wearing Victorian undergarments as contemporary outer

garments, a play on concealing and revealing the female body is set up, parodying repressive Victorian codes of sexuality. With her body faintly visible through the fabric, her breasts partially exposed, her ankles (a signifier of eroticism in the repressive lexicon of Victorian sexuality) revealed and her reflection mirrored back to the (male) viewer, the protagonist takes up the position of 'active observer'. Conversely, the viewer is invited to be an 'intimate voyeur' — in other words, looking inward on her, yet perhaps observing with a sense of empathy as opposed to distanced objectification. By 'looking into' the privacy of her space and observing her actions without directly engaging with the subject, the viewer retains a mediated, distant-yet-close, interpersonal relationship with the protagonist. This 'nearly-related yet distant viewing' might allow for activation of 'imaginative projection' — a term that can be traced to early nineteenth-century idealist notions of historiography, where it was used as a way of activating empathy for a person in another, temporally removed situation (Bishop 2007). Placing oneself there is with the "understanding that attempts to close this gap between self and imaged other, only reveal that this gap is ever placed in action to that end" (Bishop 2007).

As a paradoxically real and virtual heterotopia, the mirror represents a dislocated space in which temporal and spatial relations are disrupted by the simultaneous reflection of the past and the present. My engagement with the past is represented within the present, rendering the artwork chronotopic; my identity is constituted not by, to use Hall's (2000:23) words, a "mere 'recovery' of the past" but rather through "the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past". I am positioned by my inherited Eurocentric, and particularly Anglo-Saxon, legacies, and analyse my position within these legacies through processes of self-reflection and introspection. Bertha Marks is 'present'

in the series in the sense that I represent her; I engage with the past by living it in the present. To borrow Norman Denzin's (2006:423) words spoken in relation to autoethnographic writing, "In bringing the past into the autobiographical present, I insert myself into the past and create the conditions for rewriting and hence re-experiencing it." My reflections on Bertha Marks's life experiences in the series are therefore a way of mirroring my own historical legacies. By refracting my experiences of displacement through those of Bertha Marks's, I attempt to position myself in relation to the colonial narratives of my past so as better to understand my cultural identity within the present. As Bishop (2008:117) puts it in relation to the *Ties that Bind Her* series, "The foreground [is] drawn into relief only because the background exists."

3.2.4 *The body: performing heterotopia*

Throughout *Dis-Location,* my body is used to represent the "staging of identities-in-process" (Venn 2010:334); it is the visual marker of all three personae. In contemporary feminist art and art dealing with identity politics, many artists represent themselves using their bodies as an 'image' or 'persona' (Siopis cited in Nuttall 2010:458). In this 'genre' the artist usually deploys the photographic medium to call attention to the construction of personal identity. The body is used to critique the power relations (colonial, gender, class) inscribed in representation or as a means of destabilising notions of fixed selfhood. The latter approach might include mimetic imaging through the performance of multiple subjectivities, as evident, for example, in Cindy Sherman's photographic film-stills from 1977 to 1984. Examples of critiques of power-relations inherent in representation include Sherman's photographic 'takes' on historical paintings (1989-1990), Yinka Shonibare's *Diary of a Victorian Dandy* series (1989) and Aimé Ntakiyica's *WIR*

(2003) photographs. In a South African context, Tracey Rose's *Ciao Bella* video and accompanying photographs (2001) and Zanele Muholi's series titled *Miss D'vine* (2007-2008) come to mind. What is of importance here is the so-called 'veracity' of the photograph — its ability to simulate 'reality' and effect a suspension of disbelief on the one hand and, on the other, to call attention to the fact that as a representation the image is itself a construct.

Similarly, in autoethnographic narratives, as Catherine Russell (1999) states, "identity is ... a representation of self as a performance. In the politicization of the personal, identities are frequently played out among several cultural discourses." In *Dis-Location*, as in many autoethnographic texts, identity is split, plural and unstable; the artwork offers a space for the "staging of subjectivity" wherein the self-reflexive self, constituted through intersubjectivity and intercorporeality, is performed (Russell 1999). At the core of the work on *Dis-Location* lies the conception of the performative body as embodied subject — how I, as postcolonial, speaking subject negotiate a sense of self or agency in relation to the body.

Bertha Marks's and my subjectivities are shown to be constructs of role-play, masquerade and performance, embodying processes of my 'putting on' and 'taking off' our identities in relation to our respective gendered and cultural contexts. The artwork may therefore be understood to be what Van der Watt (2005:26) terms a "performative response to the traumatic events that mark South Africa's history". Van der Watt (2005:26) describes a performative (as opposed to a representational or documentary) response as one that entails the artist actively trying to *engage with* and *work through* inherited legacies. I perform Bertha Marks's character from

within domestic environment as part of a personal inherited legacy in critical and self-reflective ways, while simultaneously grappling with the complexities of my identity as a white woman living in postapartheid South Africa.

Figure 15: Johannes Vermeer, *Woman Holding a Balance*. c. 1664. Oil on canvas, 39.7 x 35.5 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, Widener Collection. (National Gallery 2012).

In *Ties that Bind Her*, a sense of theatricality is present in the stage-like dressing table, with its two wooden supports flanking the mirror. Theatricality is enhanced through use of dramatic contrasts of light and dark throughout the series, in a manner reminiscent of the *chiaroscuro* used in seventeenth-century Dutch portrait and still-life paintings (Figure 15). For example, in *Preservation and Preservation (detail)* the blade of the knife reflects rays of bright light, in contrast to the dark tones of the background; as Bishop (2008:115) muses, "a single sharp ray of light pierces the pitch black ... the light is the needle, the cut, the wound, the incision, the thought, the pollen, the trace, the mark — the way in". Use of still photography as medium in these works is strategic in that, first of all, photography allows for digital manipulation of the image in postproduction so that painterly

characteristics (such as heightened *chiaroscuro*) can be recreated and, secondly, because it allows for the construction of 'staged' narrative scenes within specific locations: fictions of photography take up the category of illusionistic fantasy.

These aspects of theatricality and performativity resonate with Foucault's (1986:25) third principle of heterotopias. According to Topinka (2010:57), the theatre, as a space where "diverse worlds, norms and customs converge on the stage", represents "a heterotopia of many spaces combined in one". In the series, it is in the heterotopia of the body that Bertha Marks's colonial existence (her physical and mental space, attitudes, values and customs) converge with my postcolonial interactions with the lifeworld. As a single, real site of dislocation, the body-out-of-place includes both physical and imaginative dimensions. Juxtaposition of the colonial past in relation to the postcolonial present and juxtaposition of the 'real' and fictional in the figure of a single persona give way to confusion, as multiple systems of ordering amalgamate yet resist one another, creating unexpected interplays between apparently oppositional and asymmetrically related subjectivities. Through intersection of the two space-time configurations, the underlying structures of both cultural orders are made visible.

The body, as a physical manifestation of a heterotopia, becomes a site that can facilitate transgression; it operates as space of alternative knowledge that, in its potential to generate new identity formations, in Charles Merewether's (2006:14) words, "harbours the possibility of an unexpected utopian dimension".

Throughout *Dis-Location*, the protagonist performs her white, feminine and colonial identity. Within constructivist identity theories, identity itself is regarded as performative; as Hall (2000:21; 1996:2) has it, "identification" is a "production" that is "never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation". Hall's model suggests that processes of identification come into existence by the *act* of being; identity itself is a performance (Distiller & Steyn 2004:4). As Handel Kashope Wright (2002:12) reiterates, "identity … does not have a single point or moment of origin but is always already being constructed … identity is not given and fixed but rather is constantly (re)produced in and as performance". Building on constructivist premises, Butler (1990) posits that as opposed to being a fixed attribute, gender is a variable that shifts and changes in different geographic and temporal contexts. She argues that the construction of femininity is a performance through which the concept of gender becomes "an incessant activity performed … outside oneself, beyond oneself in a sociality that has no single author" (Butler 2004:1; 1990:178, 179). However, Butler (1993:95) does concede that the performance of gender through repetitive action may reinforce heteronormative gender constructions, thereby serving as a force of constraint:

> Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms … This repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or 'event', but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo.

Butler's theories originate in Riviere's (1986 [1929]) writings which analyse the masquerade of intellectual women in the 1920s that trespassed into the masculine (or public) domain. Riviere (1986:38) views femininity as an act: "Womanliness could … be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if [a woman] were found to possess it." Put differently, femininity is a psychological defense against an 'unconscious masculinity' for which a woman fears she will be punished (Andermahr, Lovell & Wolkowitz 1997:129). Tracing the act back to constructs of femininity in late-

imperial English society, Riviere (cited in Horrell 2004:767) proposes that women construct "fully developed femininity" as a "guilty and fearful renunciation of 'sadistic castration-wishes'". Riviere compares women's passivity, as well as the anxiety and guilt associated with acts of female authority and agency, to an "elaborate, guilty charade aimed at placating and appeasing male authority figures" (Horrell 2004:768), and concludes that the capacity for feminine "self-sacrifice, devotion, self-abnegation … expresses [women's] efforts to restore and make good" (Riviere cited in Horrell 2004:768). Extending Riviere's thinking, Simone de Beauvoir (1953:557) suggests that masquerade is a game played by all women, not only those who are afraid of retribution:

> Confronting man, a woman is always play acting: she lies when she makes believe she accepts her status as the inessential other, she lies when she presents to him an imaginary personage through mimicry, costumery, studied phrases. These histrionics require a constant tension … every woman is more or less conscious of the thought 'I am not being myself'.

Tropes of the artifice of femininity feature throughout the series. For instance, in the foreground of each image hazy, soft-focus qualities suggest a sense of sentimentality that in a Victorian context may be read as feminine. Associations with femininity are echoed in the boudoir itself, the dressing table and the mirror, and are enhanced by the array of perfume bottles, sewing implements, lace, jewellery boxes, pearl necklaces, hairbrushes and a vase of roses arranged on the surface of the dressing table (Figure 16). The protagonist's eroticised attire, signified by the half-open corset and the skirt trimmed with strips of leather that

form vagina-like shapes around an inner zipper, is part of her masquerade of femininity, as is her performing her 'toilette' at the mirror, and the act of fainting through which she plays out the Victorian ideal of delicate, helpless womanhood.[95]

Figure 16: Detail of the dressing table arranged for the
Ties that Bind Her photographic shoot, Sammy Marks Museum, Pretoria, 2006.
Photograph by Shannin Antonopoulo.
Courtesy of the Sammy Marks Museum.

The protagonist's whiteness is accentuated by her clothing "whose luminous whiteness threatens to bleach out all other colour" (Murray 2008:51). Yet, as Murray (2008:51) comments, "the pure, radiant whiteness of the fabric cannot but heighten the blinding official short-sightedness that insisted on the 'whiteness' of European skin". In one respect, as Venn (2010:331) and Murray (2008:52) suggest,

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[95]   Victorian ladies were expected to show refinement in both mind and body, which they often demonstrated by adopting a pose of fragility and ill health: "To be 'delicate' was to be interesting and to lie on a sofa was a mark of status" (Nicholson 1998:36). Fainting, which was often caused by the constricting effect of tight-lacing, reiterated the Victorian woman's association with weakness, illness and hysteria.

the absence of the other could be read as a reiteration of Bertha Marks's colonial mindset in which all that is not European is excluded. Another possible reading is that whiteness is "feminised, denuded of authority, made vulnerable and supine" (Murray 2008:52). A third reading which Murray (2008:52) suggests is that "the white woman's body is suggestively positioned as a potentially productive mediation between Africa as a place and people". Although Murray (2008:51) notes that the works on *Dis-Location* omit race, I suggest that it is present in the politically incorrect, yet insistent, reification of the protagonist's white body and in the unrelenting focus on her skin. Blackness is implicit by its absence; it is as though, as Venn (2010:331) puts it, "the trace of other presences weighs upon the scenes, reminding one of the invisibilities and losses that crowd the colonial imaginary".

Sarah Mills (2005:114) observes that colonial subjectivity was itself performative, governed by the necessity to always power relations in every context. Partly because of its precariousness, colonial superiority had to be on constant display, not only in business or industry but also in terms of more mundane acts such as cooking, eating and relaxing. As Mills (2005:114) notes, houses in the colonies were for "the display of a particular kind of colonial sensibility". The incessant need to perform one's colonial identity resulted in a degree of blurring between the usually distinctly divided public and private domains — private life was lived as if in public; inhabitants of the home 'acted' as if always being watched and seen by others (Mills 2005:114). In the series, Bertha Marks performs a similar form of colonial subjectivity. Even though she is 'alone' in the 'privacy' of her bedroom, performing illicit acts, she retains a sense of propriety, as if she has internalised the need to constantly uphold that which is 'right and proper' for a lady in both public and private contexts.

3.3 Conclusion

In outlining the three stages of a liminal rite of passage that the protagonist undergoes in her transformation into hybridity, I have portrayed the garden, the bedroom, the mirror and the body as examples of material, physical heterotopias. In each of these heterotopias, ambivalent and/or incongruous elements engage in spatial play. Aside from the generic elements that render these sites characteristically heterotopic, in the series each of the sites discussed contains several additional juxtapositions of difference. These juxtapositions include those of artifice and Nature, indigenous and alien, disintegration and delineation, blurring and clarity, active and passive. Implicit representation of the other by the presence of what it is not and its visual absence, the performance of private life as if in public and public life in private, as well as colonial and postcolonial temporalities, combine in the figure of a single persona. The collision of these contradictory elements challenges principles of order, fixity and certainty, making things seem 'out-of-place', displaced. The four heterotopias discussed are inherently *Heimlich*, as they represent elements or objects usually found in the home, and the phenomenological body itself is a form of 'home'. The garden and bedroom conventionally function as familiar spaces of solace, rest, comfort or solitude; to be 'at home in the body' is to be 'comfortable in one's skin'. Yet, in these heterotopias, evocation of the uncanny gives rise to a profound sense of 'not-at-homeness'. As the uncanny brings the "disquieting figure of the other" (Venn 2010:332) to the fore, it creates an unnerving sense of 'out-of-jointness' in the subject. As I explore in the following chapter, the strange and estranging qualities of these material heterotopias are echoed in the immaterial heterotopias located within the disjunctures created by each persona's experiences of displacement.

CHAPTER FOUR
(IN)*BETWEEN CUP AND LIP, THOUGHT AND ACTION*

> What does it mean to 'be at home'? In the body, in a country, in a web of relationships? Home, *heim,* as much a personal as a national space, is a complex form of affiliation that entails self-sacrifice and difficult accommodation (Murray 2008:53).

4.1 Introduction

Using the artwork *Between Cup and Lip, Thought and Action*[96] and the second narration on the soundtrack of the video *A Room of Her Own* as departure points, I explore the disjunctures of identity arising from displacement, setting these within an historical framework pertinent to each persona. Drawing on Foucault's (1986 [1967]) assertion of the heterotopia as a site of otherness, I consider the three personae's experiences of physical and psychological displacement as heterotopias of crisis. Each heterotopia embodies multiple, turbulent ambivalences and ambiguities arising from being the subject having been an 'other place' that is an unhomely new home. These heterotopias encompass constant slippages between positions of inclusion and exclusion; insider (inhabitant) and outsider (immigrant); alienation and belonging; placelessness and locatedness that the experience of uprooting and (trans)planting brings to the fore.

The concept of the heterotopia is carried through in an exploration of how it is realised in four immaterial (conceptual and imaginary) sites. First, I consider Bertha Marks's life experiences, letters and diary entries that make up the work *Between Cup and Lip* as heterotopias of crisis: 'spaces of alternate ordering', in which ambivalences of acceptance and complicity are juxtaposed with resistance and transgression. The second heterotopia encapsulates two paradoxes that characterised Freda Farber's immigrant experience: the double-consciousness of diaspora (being simultaneously *here* and *there*) and complicity in her position as a member of the South African Jewish community and as part of the white minority in relation to apartheid policies. These two forms of ambivalence are proposed as means of adaptation to her new environment. Freda Farber's memories of leaving Latvia and her childhood in South Africa form the basis from which a broader discussion around historical diaspora, attendant on nostalgia, unfolds. As she was too young to experience nostalgia for her previous home in Eastern Europe at the time of immigrating, the immigrant experience of nostalgia is recounted through memories of her father's longing for *Der Heim*.[97]

My sense of ambiguity, located as it was in a liminal space in-between dislocation and belonging in postapartheid South Africa, and specifically in the African metropolis of Johannesburg, is the third heterotopia of crisis presented. This personal sense of displacement is extended to a discussion on collective forms of WESSA dislocation between the years 2000 and 2006, experienced in relation to the uncertainty of WESSAs' subject positions in postapartheid South Africa — this site of dislocation forms the fourth heterotopia of crisis. In the final section, I return to the third phase of the *Ties that Bind Her* series discussed in Chapter Three, wherein the protagonist is shown to be in a Third Space of cultural hybridity. I draw tentative analogies between this liminal state and the form of hybridity Steyn (2001:127-147) refers to in her final sub-narrative titled 'Hybridisation, that's

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[96] Hereafter referred to as *Between Cup and Lip*.

[97] Yiddish term denoting place of origin for diasporic Jewish immigrants; literally translated means 'the home' but can also refer to 'the homeland' or 'motherland'. The term carries associations of nostalgia, (be)longing and loss.

the name of the game'. Ways in which the protagonist's hybridity and the hybridity of those who expounded this sub-narrative are explored in terms of their shared condition of *being displaced*.

4.2 Bertha Marks

Figure 17: Portrait of Bertha Marks, c. 1900.
Sammy Marks Collection of Photographs, Pretoria, SM 2998.
Courtesy of the Sammy Marks Museum.

Bertha Marks's life experiences in southern Africa were characterised by the fundamental ambivalence of having occupied the gendered position of being subject to patriarchal restrictions yet, paradoxically, having been complicit in maintaining the inequalities of colonialism by virtue of her privileged whiteness. The heterotopic nature of her life experiences is reflected in the diary extracts that constitute the work *Between Cup and Lip*, in which she is shown to have been accepting of, yet resistant to, the constraints of Victorian gender constructions

and as having collaborated in colonial injustices and exploitation. In addition to her life experiences and diary, I suggest that her letters, insofar as they represent her experiences, might also be understood as heterotopias of crisis.

Between Cup and Lip consists of a framed series of ten A5 pages. Care was taken to select an ivory-coloured paper that appears as if slightly yellowed through aging. The transparency of the pages is intended to suggest skeins of Caucasian skin. Coloured pink and delicately edged with printed lace, the 'look' of the pages may be construed as feminine given Bertha Marks's Victorian context. Printed in a script-like font that simulates handwriting, the excerpts are either paraphrased extracts or direct quotations from Bertha Marks's original letters to her husband, written while s/he was away. When I read these letters, her words, intimate and personal as they are, written in her hand, struck me as particularly poignant. In them, she not only gives voice to her frustrations as a Victorian wife, woman and mother but also reveals much about her husband's patriarchal views as well as her own colonial prejudices. Upon looking closely at her letters, it became evident that they might have been written as a means of expressing private, reflective thoughts. This observation prompted me to compose the text and design the layout of the pages so as to resemble a Victorian woman's diary entries.[98] At the top of each extract is a small printed image. These images include aloe leaves stitched into a woman's flesh, a small Victorian sewing kit, a hand holding a pair of embroidery scissors, and different angles of the rose cameo (used in the *Ties that*

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[98] Although keeping a diary was considered to be a sign of self-centredness (see 4.2.2), it was also a fashionable pursuit for colonial women. For some, it served as a means of reinforcing their identity as a Victorian lady, particularly when the writer "feared loss of that identity in the wild" (Davis 1987:5).

Bind Her series) being inserted into a cut in a woman's breast. The diary extracts are enclosed in a single frame in order to convey the totalising nature of utopian (ordered, controlled), colonial (bounded) and Victorian (closed) frames of mind.

4.2.1 Dislocation and alienation

Bertha Marks's experiences of dislocation and alienation from, and ambivalence towards, her new environment are echoed in the diary entries and letters of many settler wives.[99] Settler women experienced isolation as a result of their physical location on remote farms and the self-imposed segregation many chose in order to maintain race and class divisions (Dampier 2000:118). The expressions of loneliness found in their diaries and letters indicate not just their lack of companionship but also their cultural isolation and need for interaction with like-minded, fellow white settlers (Dampier 2000:118). These interactions were an important means of reinforcing their self-images as civilised, respectable and moral citizens and provided white settlers with a coherent group identity in the face of a black majority. Feelings of isolation also served to heighten their desire for familiarity and sameness, which they realised by replicating British customs and values in Africa (Dampier 2000:118).

As Van Heyningen (1993:23) comments, isolation was not just a physical state that gave women the leisure and desire to record their experiences: it also contributed to the making of those experiences and provided a space in which subconscious tensions and fears as well as feelings of loss and longing could be articulated. Consider, for example, Susanna Moodie's (cited in Mills 2005:114) account of settling in Canada, written in 1852: "I was a stranger in a strange land; my heart yearned intensely for my absent home. Home! The word had ceased to belong to my present — it was doomed to live forever in the *past*; for what emigrant ever regarded the country of his exile as *home*? … the heart acknowledges no other home than the land of its birth."

Similarly, a settler wife in Southern Rhodesia, Hylda Richards (cited in Kirkwood 1984:152) writes: "I did not like Rhodesia. My heart was in England, but instead of trying to understand the people I was angry because they were not like those I had left behind." Like Bertha Marks, wives of miners in Rhodesia experienced isolation because their husbands were frequently away on business, as this reminiscence by Mrs Coe (cited in Kirkwood 1984:152), talking of her daughter, indicates: "[She] had never been accustomed to such hard living conditions. The African women were primitive, the nearest white woman was miles away, and her husband was busy all day at the mine or prospecting." Deborah Kirkwood (1984:155) notes that while physical space in Rhodesia, like that of the Highveld, was wide and relatively unconfined, social space for women had clear limitations. For many, the wide open spaces seemed 'void' as opposed to inviting freedom. In Gertrude Page's novel *Love in the wilderness* (1907), the heroine, while still in England, imagined "glorious morning gallops across the windswept veld" but found that in actuality farm life reminded her of "one of those terrible prisons of the Inquisition that closed in a little more each day" (Kirkwood 1984:155). Although the monotonous

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[99] Susan Bailey (1983:73) notes that whether they left England in 1690 or 1830, bound for North America, Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand or elsewhere, settler women most likely faced emigration with trepidation. The disruption of ties with family and friends was difficult and breaking networks of female friendships that formed a support base, with little prospect of forming new ones, might have caused great sadness. In writing about women settlers in the American West, Lillian Schlissel (cited in Bailey 1983:73) concludes that, "migration was a major dislocation in the emotional fabric of women's lives".

routine of daily life and a sense of being confined were not particular to colonial women, their isolation on farms exacerbated this predicament; as Tawse Jollie (cited in Kirkwood 1984:156) writes in 1924 with reference to newly arrived young women in the colonies, "when they find themselves hemmed in by the inexorable conditions from which there seems to be no escape, and in which there is little variety, they have the feeling of caged birds".

Mendelsohn (1991:34) speculates on Bertha Marks's sense of displacement upon arrival in southern Africa in these words: "The inevitable culture shock for a young girl from a great industrial city and a protected, middle-class, Anglo-Jewish environment arriving at a remote farm in an alien countryside can only be imagined. Her reactions, unfortunately, are not recorded." One aspect of Bertha Marks's sense of displacement was physical, given that, like the seedling roses she imported weekly from Kent (Mendelsohn 1991:188) and not unlike the medical reference to the heterotopia as a bodily site onto which 'alien' elements have been transplanted, she herself had been grafted onto African soil. Having moved from a Jewish family in Sheffield where as the daughter of an affluent businessman she had enjoyed an active social life and the support of a community she found herself isolated at Zwartkoppies (Mendelsohn 2008:35). Mendelsohn (1991:187) emphasises that despite the luxurious comforts of her surroundings, Zwartkoppies remained a "gilded cage" for Bertha Marks, in which "her husband left her 'so much alone'". From the start of their marriage, Sammy Marks was often away on business for weeks at a time. Her isolation deepened after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) owing to his frequent absences — from 1903 to 1908 he spent most of the working week in Johannesburg, returning to Zwartkoppies only for weekends (Mendelsohn 1991:189). To counteract her homesickness and

loneliness, she frequently travelled 'home' to England and extended her annual holidays at the coast, either in Durban or at the family holiday house, Hatherley Hall, in Muizenberg, Cape Town (Mendelsohn 1991:187).

Bertha Marks's heterotopias of crisis are located in the various spatial, cultural and social disjunctures between her utopian vision of England as home and her lived reality on the Highveld. In order to articulate her sense of displacement, in diary entry six of *Between Cup and Lip* I narrativised Mendelsohn's (1991:34) words, attempting to convey her experience through empathetic unsettlement:

> I remember coming here in March 1885. How strange it was leaving Sheffield and my family to come to a remote farm in this alien country. There was nothing here but an old farmhouse; we had to ship all our furniture and household goods from England including my brass French bedstead with its patent woven wire mattress and feather bolster ... the agents also had to dispatch my treadle-operated sewing machine together with a liberal supply of needles, as these could not be obtained in Pretoria. I still have to put in weekly orders for groceries and household necessities from Durban, including tins of salmon, sardines and lobsters, cotton reels and Pears soap.

In diary entry four, I combined factual information gained from her letters and Mendelsohn's (1991:181-196) chapter with imaginative projection to translate her experience of having lived in a space that was luxurious yet physically and psychologically restricting:

> For all the crowds that come every Sunday and the servants around me, I am so much alone at Zwartkoppies. Sammy is away on business most of the time, it takes two hours to do the 12-mile carriage drive to Pretoria, so trips to town cannot be undertaken every day ... There are seldom visitors during the week ... it is so awfully quiet here! I long to have a conversation with just anyone, even one of the servants, but that would not be right and proper! I cannot wait for another trip home ... it is so hard to bring myself to come back here after being with people of my own kind.

Bertha Marks's heterotopias of crisis (her life experiences, diary and letters) each evince an unsettling juxtaposition of paradoxical, ambivalent and incompatible elements, all of which interact in relationships of difference among themselves and with other, external sites. For instance, the disjuncture between the real social space of her life in South Africa (*here*) and her ideal of 'home' (*there*) was borne out in her various attempts to recreate 'England in Africa'. John Plotz (2007:660, 661) explains that the Victorians were concerned with ways in which property, objects and cultural practices could function as repositories of memory. The portability of objects and cultural practices from Britain to the colonies was a way of constructing self, community and nation and establishing a sense of national culture and identity in an otherwise unfamiliar, often alienating, environment. For the colonists, even one of these resonant culturally "portable object[s] or practice[s] might have allowed for the imaginative reconstruction of an entire absent realm; a 'home' away from home" (Plotz 2007:661). Thus, for Bertha Marks, Zwartkoppies might have constituted a 'container of memory'; the house, its furnishings, the rose garden and living a colonial lifestyle strengthened her bond with her former 'home' while paradoxically acting as reminders of her distance from it and intensifying her sense of dissonance and loss.

While the opulent mansion of Zwartkoppies could be viewed as a utopia, it was a dystopia for Bertha Marks — a place of entrapment and isolation; although encompassed by the vastness of the surrounding veld, she felt constrained, like a caged bird. Even though servants formed an integral part of her milieu, she felt isolated and lonely; yet her loneliness and isolation were partially self-inflicted, owing to her adherence to the politics of exclusion. Furthermore, Bertha Marks's

position as a Jewish outsider — and therefore other — set her apart from the English- and Afrikaans- (Dutch) speaking communities in the Pretoria district, and might therefore have exacerbated her feelings of alienation.

4.2.2 *Acceptance, resentment and resistance*

> If the skin were parchment and the blows you gave me were ink (Dromio of Ephesus to his master Antipholus of Ephesus, in Shakespeare's *Comedy of errors*) (cited in Grosz 1994:115).

Bertha Marks's sense of physical isolation was coupled with the constraining Victorian gender constructs that dictated her life as a Jewish wife,[100] mother and woman. Respectability, and its attendant morality, was deemed essential to the civilising of an 'imperfectly organised' and newly urbanised society (Seaman 1973:12). Victorian culture was structured around gender hierarchies, wherein women were economically, socially, sexually and creatively placed in the lesser position (Malan 1996:12). In the Victorian paradigm of separate spheres (a rigid framework demarcating men's and women's spaces), women were inextricably associated with domesticity and the home while men engaged with the public

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[100] Mendelsohn (1991:197) notes that Bertha Marks practised an acculturated, secular form of orthodoxy characteristic of the Jewish elite in Victorian England. Jewish dietary laws were loosely observed in her kitchen, with grocery lists having included shellfish such as lobster and crayfish, forbidden by Jewish law, and there were regular deliveries from the Connaught butchery in Pretoria which supplied only non-kosher meat (Mendelsohn 1991:198). Like many of her Anglo-Jewish contemporaries, Bertha Marks celebrated Christmas by hosting annual parties at Zwartkoppies. The Marks family did, however, celebrate the Jewish High Festivals and Passover. These, together with the rites of passage (such as male circumcision and bar-mitzvahs), were the most enduring of their Jewish observances. As Mendelsohn (1991:198) notes, "When all else was left behind, these were retained, even if only in a modified form, perhaps more as symbols of Jewish identity than for religious content. For Marks and many other Anglicised Jews, Judaism had become more a matter of personal integrity than of religious conviction."

sphere of business, politics and finance (Lemmer 2007:48). The home, of which the wife was the religious and moral centre, represented a site of order — a 'haven' from the outside world (Mills 2005:58, 128).

The moral theme of woman as 'ministering angel', sweet, gentle, domestic, modest, patient and unassuming, bound women to the codes of respectability and instilled in them a sense of duty to their husbands, families and homes (Lemmer 2007:32). Most Victorian women, both working- and middle-class, aspired to fit the ideal of the 'perfect lady', with her attributes of refinement, gentility and grace (Bordo 1997:243). The husband was the authority in the marriage; the 'true woman' was expected to honour, obey and occasionally amuse him, act as mistress of his household, rear his children and entertain his friends (Malan 1996:12). Lynda Nead (1988:28, 29) observes that in keeping with Victorian conceptions of sexuality that were founded on theories of natural or biological difference, "the notion of dependency was believed to be a natural and gratifying component of respectable femininity"; "independence was unnatural, [as] it signified boldness and sexual deviancy".

Given her social position and gender, Bertha Marks was expected to adhere to these powerful constraints imposed upon her (Mendelsohn 1991:183).[101] As Mendelsohn (1991:181) observes, although the Marks's marriage was solid and enduring, "it

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[101] As explained in diary entry three of *Between Cup and Lip,* the Markses' move to Johannesburg in 1909 enabled Bertha Marks to interact with women of her own class and background and provided the opportunity to exercise her organisational abilities in a broader context than that of the home. These opportunities coincided with the emergence of what Riva Krut (1985:224) calls 'domestic feminism' — a tacit, cautious form of feminism practised by women who did not share the views of the militant feminists and suffragettes of their time. Domestic feminism still foregrounded domesticity and the household but allowed a lady to enter public life, albeit on a limited and non-profit basis.

was very much a marriage of its time". Sammy Marks, who was 18 years older than his wife, "was a Victorian *paterfamilias*, continually chiding, instructing and exhorting" her (Mendelsohn 1991:181). For instance, when Bertha Marks fired a nurse she had hired against his wishes, he retorted: "I should like you to bear in mind … that when I tell you anything especially as to people's characters, you will allow me to be a better judge than you are, and it is only natural I should be so when you will consider the difference in years there is between us" (Samuel Marks Papers, SM/B2/18: Marks-B. Marks. 24/07/1902). Sammy Marks felt that his wife spent too lavishly, and often rebuked her in this regard. For instance, his reaction to her spending while on holiday in Europe in 1902 was, "[I]t is no doubt needless for me to point out to you that you have spent a lot of money … Do you expect to open a retail shop at Zwartkoppies, or are you afraid that the manufacturers will cease making more things?" (Samuel Marks Papers, SM/B2/19: Marks-B. Marks. 04/10/1902).

In the diary entries that constitute *Between Cup and Lip,* I articulate many of Bertha Marks's probable and actual frustrations around her husband's condescending and paternalistic attitudes towards her. The following quote selected from diary extract eight epitomises these frustrations:

> I went to the trouble of writing him a 24-page letter and do you know what his response was? 'There are certainly some amusing little things in it, but of course being a woman you must be excused!!' I often wonder if he really reads my letters? Perhaps I need only write short ones in the future (Samuel Marks Papers, SM/B2/18: Marks-B. Marks. 16/08/1902, see also Mendelsohn 1991:182).

Sammy Marks clearly thought of his wife as belonging to a weaker sex, typically prone to idle chatter and preoccupied with trivialities (Mendelsohn 1991:182). He flippantly dismissed the 'amusing little things' as "what you would call

women's talk" (Samuel Marks Papers, SM/B2/18: Marks-B. Marks. 16/08/1902). In this quotation, through empathetic projection I tried to convey a sense of Bertha Marks's frustration and hurt at not being acknowledged by her husband, at being infantilised on account of her gender, and a sense of her unfulfilled desire, pointing to what she may have perceived as the futility of investment in her marriage.

Given Sammy Marks's frequent absences, Bertha Marks had to make many decisions about the children independently (Mendelsohn 1991:183). This, in addition to her aversion to her husband's generous lunches held at Zwartkoppies every Sunday for business partners and politicians ("I myself am sick of those Sunday Parties, as few of them were of any interest to me but it meant work worry and plenty of extra money to Pay at the end of the month"[102] [Bertha Marks cited in Mendelsohn 1991:185]), led her to chastise her husband for having put business above family life and also for his continual attempts to exercise control over her. Her admonitions are cited in diary entry ten:

> [I]t is a great pity that there is really nothing that you do take pleasure in besides business. After all, one has one life only, it is quite right to work hard, but at the same time there is not a man who does not sometimes enjoy a little mild recreation ... I have just sent you a note saying that as you object to my taking a little mild recreation, I give up so much that other women of my age enjoy. You are too hard ... there is really no reason why I cannot go to a theatre now and again or to look on at a dance (Samuel Marks Papers, SM/B2/19: B. Marks-Marks. 08/07/1907).

In contrast to most Victorian women's diaries and letters that seldom mention marital conflict or dissatisfaction with life (Van Heyningen 1993:17), the above quotation reveals that Bertha Marks saw letters to her husband as a means of voicing thoughts that in a Victorian context would have been 'inappropriate' to, and even transgressive of, her female nature. For her, the letter was occasionally used as a space in which 'unfeminine' emotions such as resentment, resistance and a desire for autonomy could be expressed. As Natasha Erlank (1996:85) observes with reference to the letters of middle-class women in Cape Town from 1825 to 1845: "the very personal nature of letter writing allows it to be used to say things that cannot be expressed in more public forms of discourse ... For this reason, letters are ideally suited for the asking of questions about the construction of personal identity, as well as the negotiation of broader social and political issues on a personal level."

For instance, in 1906 Bertha Marks reacted with fury to her husband's attitude towards her allegedly extravagant spending while she was in England. As Mendelsohn (2008:35) notes, this unusually volatile outpouring of pent-up anger and frustration showed her intense but impotent resentment of her dependence on her husband:

> I regret very much that you ... will not reply to my question re Money. How am I to pay my way and who is to pay all the bills ... It is absurd that you ignore the subject as to whom shall I look to for it if not you. Have you any idea what a hundred and one little expenses crop up during a month besides bare living and hotel bills ... Believe me I can *prove* that none of the money that you gave me when we came home last March has been spent *on myself* up until now ... If you only knew how tired and worried I am over such unsatisfactory affairs, you would be more reasonable and see matters in a proper way and as most husbands do to their wives ... I have no idea where to get my next shilling if it does not come from you and I think if you will only reason the matter out you will agree with me that I am placed in a very unpleasant and unsatisfactory position (Samuel Marks Papers, SM/B5: B. Marks-Marks. 13/07/1906).

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[102] Extracts from Bertha Marks's letters are cited verbatim.

Helen Dampier (2000:20) notes that although diary-keeping was a common activity for Victorian women, the very existence of a diary indicated a private self, in contradiction to the ideal of the selfless Victorian lady who was expected to be devoted to her husband and family. Furthermore, such an expression of anger and resentment would have transgressed Victorian codes of respectability, particularly those that inscribed the ideal of the obedient, self-sacrificing and submissive wife. As individual yet interrelated heterotopias, Bertha Marks's life experiences, letters and diary therefore contain conflicting positions of acceptance counterpoised against 'disobedient' assertions of dissatisfaction with her position. Following Hetherington's (1997:36, 46; see also Topinka 2010:56) argument that, because heterotopic sites rupture and destabilise established orders, they have the potential to *facilitate* acts of resistance and transgression, it may be concluded that Bertha Marks's heterotopias problematise the Victorian codes of respectability by inversely mirroring their values. In so doing, her heterotopias can be said to unmask and disrupt the discriminatory gendered foundations upon which these codes were established.

4.2.3   *Subjugation and complicity*

Although she was subjugated under patriarchal conceptions of femininity, as a colonial woman Bertha Marks was also complicit in maintaining the politics of exclusion. This heterotopic condition informed most colonial and settler women's epistemological realities. For, as McClintock (1995:6) observes, although barred from formal power, colonial women experienced both the privileges and social contradictions of imperialism:

> marital laws, property laws, land laws and the intractable violence of male decree bound them in gendered patterns of disadvantage and frustration … the rationed privileges of race all too often put white women in positions of decided — if borrowed — power, not only over colonized women but also over colonized men. As such, white women were not the hapless onlookers of empire but were ambiguously complicit both as colonizers and colonized, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting.[103]

Janice Brownfoot (1984:189, 190) and Stoler (1989a) outline ways in which colonial women played a critical role in establishing, maintaining and enforcing the discriminatory policies of Empire. Their contributions centred on introducing civilising influences, stability and morality to the colonies. White women were seen to promote a move towards European lifestyles that accentuated the refinements of privilege and the etiquettes of racial difference (Stoler 1989a:640). The perceived need to provide physical 'protection' for European wives gave rise to increased segregationist standards in an attempt to safeguard white prestige (Stoler 1989a:640). The community's places of residence and recreation were markers of European civilisation in a foreign world, often characterised by heat, luxuriant or dry vegetation, strange diseases and 'heathen customs'. Wives and family were thought to bring 'normality' to these sites by providing their husbands with a sense of stability and purpose (Brownfoot 1984:189). In establishing more decorous, orderly and conformist communities than those

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[103] Women occupied an ambivalent position within the colonial construction of whiteness. Vron Ware (cited in Steyn 2001:19) sums up this duality as follows:

> white women might indeed be associated with the idea that female nature is inherently uncivilised, primitive when compared to men, and lacking in self-control … [but] [i]n the context of imperialism … the dominant ideology would place white women firmly in the civilised camp, in opposition to non-European women whose lack of social and political rights are to be read as a mark of cultural savagery.

of pioneering conditions, women were regarded as stabilising influences in the community (Brownfoot 1984:189, 190). Male colonisers positioned European women as the bearers of a redefined colonial morality (Stoler 1989a:640). The significance of these 'moral and civilising influences' was intricately bound up with the assumption and maintenance of white supremacy: western civilisation and moral standards had to be defended, and in order to do this the community had to be united in its whiteness (Brownfoot 1984:190). Women tended to foster a common sense of Caucasianism and, as Brownfoot (1984:190) notes, their presence was deemed to prevent behaviour that compromised white prestige through provision of a solid family life.

Therefore, as Mills (2005:127) observes, women's work within the domestic sphere did not only support their husbands and community but also produced "a particular kind of colonial space". As recuperative historian Hilary Callan (1984:9) says, "a properly managed home [was] more than a precondition of a civilizing mission: it [was] part of it"; McClintock (1995:18) reiterates this idea in her description of the domestic space as "the Empire of the home". Her role as 'Angel of the House' afforded a wife moral prestige, if not public power (Giles 2004:12), and domestic rituals and conventions that involved interpersonal relations were often determined by women's moral influence. McClintock (1995:35) argues that the construction of a 'British' domestic space in the colonies was an exemplar of correct and civilised living. The production of domesticity was therefore central to imperialism: "imperialism suffused the Victorian cult of domesticity and the historic separation of the private and the public, which took shape around colonialism and the idea of race" (McClintock 1995:36).

Bertha Marks occupied an ambivalent position in the relations of imperial power. She conformed to, and upheld, colonial prejudices and discriminatory behaviours, perhaps not so much for the sake of acceptance and integration but because these were ingrained conventions and norms of the colonial society of which she was a part. Her prejudices are evident in the quotations reproduced in diary entry one: "What I want is a good English parlour maid, one who has been in the Country for some years preferred, also one who has no objection to coloured people, as I have two slightly coloured servants and one coloured boy … Should she object to occupying the same room as the Coloured Girls, I shall provide separate sleeping accommodation for her" (Samuel Marks Papers, SM/B2/11: B. Marks-Klegg. 20.05.1895). From these words, one may deduce that Bertha Marks associated the Victorian code of respectability and its attendant morality with white maids, specifically those from Britain. In her first sentence, she clearly differentiates the white, English servant whom she saw as a 'parlour maid' from black female servants, whom she refers to as 'girls'. Furthermore, she also acknowledges spatial separations according to race and class, as the white English parlour maid was not necessarily expected to sleep in the same space as the 'Coloured Girls'.

Callan (1984:8) observes that since colonial women were responsible for the maintenance of class distinctions within the home, they had to achieve what she calls a "suppression of perception" in order to create social distance between themselves and the indigenous peoples surrounding them. If the social distance between employee and employer were to be maintained, "certain sleights of mind" had to occur (Dagut 2000:560). These entailed a form of dehumanisation, or 'not seeing' the servant's presence, despite awareness thereof. As discussed in Chapter Two, this negation of the colonised identity and inability to fully perceive the presence of the Other forms the basis of the construction of Self/Other

that underpins colonial discourse. According to Dagut (2000:561), suppressed perception was a "psychological mechanism for the construction, maintenance and reinforcement of social distance. In turn, the construction of social distance, partial and contested though it was, played an important part in making the oppressive features of colonialism seem socially and psychologically possible — or even admirable — to the colonisers."

In Dampier's (2000:166) view, this "Othering stance" was prompted by fear of loss of racial identity. In the case of settler women in the Cape, Africans were reduced to "fixed, knowable images by means of a normalising discourse that eliminated the individuality and diversity that threatened white hegemony and domination" (Dampier 2000:166). To some extent dehumanisation, as well as an awareness of class and racial boundaries, is borne out in Bertha Marks's letters, such as this one, written to her husband while she was on a hiring campaign in England for servants. She proposes that they could not do with less than,

> A Cook and Kitchenmaid a butler and someone to help him, 2 Housemaids and 1 Housemaid and not counting the necessary Kaffirs to do all the children's quarters and wait upon them at meals etc. Then the Laundry requires people and Mostert is not certainly to see to the dairy and my Poultry … Then a Gove[erness] for Doll a nurse for Phil and a maid for myself. I have had enough inconvenience not having one with me all this time. Re a Butler you had better see if you can get one there … or I shall have to bring one out (Samuel Marks Papers, SM/B5: B. Marks-Marks. 29/04/1906).

I suggest that the perception of servants as 'dehumanised labour' reflected in this quotation may be acknowledged as an instance of suppressed perception. Adherence to Victorian codes of respectability meant that it would not be 'right and proper' for Bertha Marks to have engaged in conversations with servants that did not pertain to the employer-employee or domestic mistress-servant spheres.

Although the policing of class and race boundaries in the home was crucial to maintaining the politics of exclusion, it is nonetheless ironic that her perceived 'superiority' as a white woman defined her relations with her servants, despite any anti-Semitism she may have had to contend with in England[104] and the Transvaal, and despite her subjugated position within a patriarchal, gendered hierarchy. The ironies of upholding and fostering the colonial position of presumed innate white superiority seems to have been lost on Bertha Marks, as they were to many of her generation, position and class.

In the above discussion I have shown how the philosophical ideals of teleological human progress and rationalism upon which the Victorian structure of society was based were integral to its deeply-rooted racial and gender constructions. The hierarchic structuring of gender, racial and class relations, and the conception of the home as a site of order (Mills 2005:128), were viewed as intrinsically 'good' and hypothetically necessary to ensure an 'optimum society'. This utopian vision was underpinned by the fantasy of the 'good ending' (Frank E Manuel cited in Dreyer 2010:4). Eurocentrism, patriarchy and white supremacy were therefore aligned with a utopian ideal of destiny (predetermined by biologically gendered differences) and existential happiness (Dreyer 2010:4).

Bertha Marks's heterotopias of crisis are located in the disjunctures between the imagined utopian space of the ideal Victorian society and the real space of her social and physical environment. In each of her heterotopias, the supporting order against which separation and distinction of elements occur has been removed,

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[104] Milton Shain (1994:11) observes that in mid-Victorian England perceptions of Jews did have some negatively charged dimensions but were in the main relatively benign.

resulting in an inverse reflection of the perfectly ordered, properly governed and stable Victorian society. In the context of Bertha Marks's position in the social world of colonial southern Africa, and given her role as a Victorian woman, her life experiences, letters and diary reflect how, while maintaining the racial and social prejudices of the colonial era from within the conventions assigned to her gender, she was simultaneously constrained by yet resistant to its dictates. Her heterotopias, based as they are on this fundamental ambivalence, represent spaces of alternative ordering: by reflecting aspects of European supremacy and its concrete links to domesticity and nationhood, they expose the double standards, hypocrisy and chaos underlying colonial and Victorian ideologies by revealing their cultural arrogance and racial divides. By rupturing and destabilising the foundations upon which Victorian codes of respectability were built, her heterotopias can be said to facilitate acts of resistance and transgression.

Figure 18: The Kagan family, studio portrait, Latvia, 1935.
Left (above) to right (below): Israel Leib Kagan, Sora Rivel Kagan,
Dov Behr Kagan and Freidele Kagan.
Family photograph belonging to Freda Farber.

4.3 Freda Farber

> What marks the diasporic experience as diasporic? What shapes diasporic communities in ways unique to them, but perhaps shared by others? Perhaps a tentative answer can be found in the violence of community formation, the traumas that led to migration and the terrors of carving out a space in a new country and culture, the inevitable rending wrought by forced evacuation from and insertions into the complex webbing of geopolitical sites, the tearing of roots from the earth's surface coupled with the tenuous acts of transplanting (Bishop 2008:112).

4.3.1 Uprooting and transplanting

In the soundtrack of the performance *A Room of Her Own*[105] and the DVD-ROM (Farber 2006) of the same title produced from it, Freda Farber (Freidele Kagan) anecdotally describes her arrival in South Africa from the small *shtetl* of Yalovka (now Egliane) in Latvia (Figures 20 & 21). The primary reason her family emigrated was to escape Nazism.[106] They chose to come to South Africa because in 1935 it was one of the few countries that would admit Jews.[107] South Africa was considered to be the 'New World'; a *goldene medina* (city of gold) or 'land of opportunity'. Jewish immigrants coming to South Africa from Eastern Europe in the 1930s and 1940s faced significant challenges. Many came from impoverished peasant backgrounds; others were uneducated craftsmen and tradesmen, and as Yiddish-speakers had

Figure 19: First immigrants of the Kagan family to southern Africa, studio portrait, Latvia, c. 1902.
Family photograph belonging to Freda Farber.

a limited command of English (Sassen 2008:64). This meant that opportunities for employment were largely confined to trading, the *schmutte* industry[108] and the running of 'eating-houses' (unashamedly called *Kaffirietas*)[109] that catered to blacks working on the mines (Sassen 2008:64).[110] In contrast to those Eastern

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[105] The performance took place at The Premises Gallery, Civic Theatre, Johannesburg on 12 August 2006. The quotations used in the soundtrack are derived from a series of informal face-to-face interviews with my mother, conducted from the beginning of June to the end of July 2006.

[106] Freda Farber's parents put the education of their sons first — a good education was seen as a means to 'better oneself in life'. Therefore, a second reason for leaving Latvia was that there were no suitable nearby high schools for Freda's nine-year-old brother to attend; the nearest schools were in Riga or Dvinsk (now Daugavpils).

[107] After the passing of the Quota Act of 1930, the number of Jews entering South Africa was severely curtailed. The Act effectively halted Eastern European immigration by imposing a limit of 50 migrants per annum from each of a list of 'quota countries' that included Lithuania, Latvia and Poland (Mendelsohn & Shain 2008:103).

[108] Like many Jewish diasporic refugees, Freda Farber's father, Israel Leib Kagan, worked in the *shmutte* (rags) industry, buying and selling second-hand clothes. From a small trading store, he worked himself up to open an outfitting shop in Fairview, Johannesburg. "Jews worked very hard" Freda Farber (cited in Farber 2006) says, "as they came here with nothing."

[109] The word *kaffirieater* is a neologism whose origin lies in the pejorative English title, 'kaffir eating-house' (Sherman 1987:xi). The eating-houses were notoriously associated with the stench of offal and smoke, the presence of hundreds of flies, and bleak, crudely equipped interiors (Titlestad 1991:4). For a detailed exposé of the *kaffirieaters* and ways in which they accommodated racist norms — arguably to the point of perversity — see Joseph Sherman (2000).

[110] The *kaffirieaters* flourished from 1903 into the 1940s along the gold-mining reef of the Transvaal. With evident pride, Freda Farber (cited in Farber 2006) describes how her uncles — who had immigrated as part of the 'third wave' of approximately 40 000 impoverished

European Jews for whom emigration was an ambivalent undertaking — "an escape from ethnic and economic oppression, but also an escape from 'self' or home, a flight from shtetl orthodoxy's self-confinement in the past" (Zemel 2000:194) — Freda Farber's parents structured their new lives according to an upholding of religious and traditional values brought with them from the old country. While these values guided them in developing their economic progress and community life, they could not simply be duplicated in a new environment; as Riva Krut (1985:96, 97) notes, language and cultural baggage were not transferred unmediated into a new context. For Eastern European Jews in Johannesburg, entry into the 'new' world, even when accompanied by assimilation into public life, was not a simple process of homogenising with the dominant culture or becoming secularised. Owing to their fear of assimilation, which they felt might result in the loss of religious and traditional customs, as well as the need to bond in the face of continued threats of anti-Semitism, Freda Farber's parents forged close ties with family and the community of economically disadvantaged, Yiddish-speaking, Orthodox and Zionist[111] Eastern European Jews[112] in Johannesburg.

Figures 20 (above) & 21 (below): Landscape and remains of a *shtetl* in Eglaine (previously Yalovka), 2009.
Photographs by the author.

Eastern European Jews that came to South Africa between 1890 to 1910 (Leveson 2001:15) (Figure 19) — started out by working in the *kaffirieaters* and eventually saved enough money to buy one. As economic opportunities were largely unavailable to these Jews, many were employed for exploitatively low wages by the more established Anglo-German Jews who owned the eating-houses. Thus, in owning a *kaffirieater,* her uncles "escape[d] the bondage of being an exploitee for the freedom of becoming an exploiter" (Sherman 2000:511).

[111] Both of Freda Farber's brothers emigrated to Israel shortly after their graduation, as did Freda Farber in June 2011, aged 80.

[112] This community of Eastern European Jews from Lithuania, Poland or Russia — the areas known as the 'Jewish Pales of Settlement' — stood in contrast to the Anglo-German Jewish community in Johannesburg, who were wealthier, more established, English-speaking, non-Orthodox and anti-Zionist (Krut 1985:94).

4.3.2   (Be)longing and loss

Figure 22: The Cohen (Kagan) family, Fairview, Johannesburg, c. 1955.
Left (above) to right (below): Abe Cohen, Sora Rivel Cohen,
Israel Leib Cohen, Freda Cohen and family friend.
Family photograph belonging to Freda Farber.

Despite the economic and educational opportunities available in South Africa, Freda Farber (cited in Farber 2006) emphasises her father's nostalgia for *Der Heim*: "my father never forgot *Der Heim* … everything was bigger and better in *Der Heim* … If we would be eating and we would have, for example, potatoes, he would say, *dis nie die zelbe zag as in Der Heim* [it's not the same as at home]. Although he was happy here, it was never the same as in *Der Heim*." For Israel Leib Kagan, diaspora followed the historical conception of the term as an exilic, nostalgic dislocation from the motherland (Braziel & Mannur 2003:4). Within this framework, diaspora is accepted as being grounded in the fixed, bounded foundations of an original homeland, and exile is associated with loss; privilege is given to "the geographical, political, cultural, and subjective spaces of the home-nation as an 'authentic' space

of belonging and civic participation while devaluing and bastardizing the states of displacement or dislocation, rendering them inauthentic places of residence" (Braziel & Mannur 2003:6).

For Israel Leib Kagan, Latvia represented a utopia of 'home' and 'better times past'. *Das Heim* is often spoken of in nostalgic, even sentimental, terms by Jews who left Europe during times of persecution, despite the poverty and anti-Semitism they endured there (Sassen 2008:64). Perhaps this is because, as Peter Bishop (cited in Foster 2008:5) says, nostalgia is "a human emotion that is, at root, about the desire for a fundamental sense of belonging and 'Being', a major part of which are the subjective, affective dimensions of human relations with place".[113] As Hall (2000 [1996]:32) notes, for the immigrant the New World constitutes "a narrative of displacement that gives rise … to a certain imaginary plentitude recreating the endless desire to return to 'lost origins', to be one again with the mother, to go back to the beginning". Yet this 'return' can never be fulfilled or requited (Hall 2000:32) and such a time is fictional, for, in Mark Kingwell's (cited in O'Brien 2010:5) words, "Just as the past is never a dwelling place, as much as we strive for it, home is not the place we thought we knew." 'Home' for the diasporic immigrant is an impossibility; a simulacrum of a place that does not exist in real time or space: "Home is no longer home by the time you return to it. It had not been since the moment you left … so we are left … longing for a place … which we cannot leave

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113 Wendy O'Brien (2010:5) speaks of the dangers associated with seeing home as a product of nostalgia. Nostalgia presupposes a state of being caught in-between here and there that elides the present moment, suspending time and place. Assuming the subject position of the immigrant, O'Brien (2010:5, 6) asks, "How can I truly belong to this place where I am standing, imagining myself in another world? How can I be a true dweller in this place while longing for another?" As Stephen Shaw (cited in O'Brien 2010:6) notes, in keeping critical distance from a nation, "be it the nation of your birth or that of your residence … you can never fully engage with it".

behind … 'we secretly wish to dwell in nostalgia itself' for it is here … that we … are at last at home" (Kingwell cited in O'Brien 2010:5). Similarly, nostalgia, as Susan Stewart (1984:23) describes it, is "sadness without an object … like any form of narrative, is always ideological: the past it seeks has never existed except as a narrative, and hence, always absent, that past continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack".

Given Israel Leib Kagan's nostalgia for *Das Heim*, his lifeworld in South Africa might well have been dialectic in nature, vacillating between past and present, here and there. Nicholas Mirzoeff (2000:4) cites WEB Dubois's concept of 'double-consciousness' to describe this dialectic: "One ever feels his twoness — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder." If applied to the diasporic experience, double-consciousness presents a split or bicultural perception of the world (Ang 1999: 558) — reality is seen "in terms of what had been left behind and what is actual here and now" (Edward Said cited in Foster 2008:77). Put differently, double-consciousness presents a schism in the "bipolar dichotomy of 'where you're from' and 'where you're at'" (Ang 1999:558). Similarly, Foster (2008:77) observes that the émigré's vision is of a foreign land that presents habits, expressions or activities which occur against the memory of the motherland. Such "traveling subjectivity" encourages what Foster calls "vivid" and "reflexive" perceptions of the present and absent environment, coupled with an inability to feel "truly at home in the world, and perhaps, with an underlying and perpetual state of nostalgia" (Foster 2008:77). As Foster (2008:77) continues, a reoccurring strand of émigré subjectivity is "the desire to bring together the worlds of birth and the worlds of here and now, to frame the two halves of a life completely, without disruption".

Israel Leib Kagan's nostalgia formed part of "the language of historical diasporas" that is invoked by displaced peoples who "maintain, revive, or invent" a connection with a prior home (Clifford 1997:255; see also Safran 1991:83, 84). Clifford (1997:254, emphasis added) considers diasporas as dispersed networks of peoples who share common historical experiences of dispossession and adaptation; people who occupy the heterotopic condition of "*dwelling-in-displacement*". The term 'diaspora' therefore does not only signify transnationality and movement, but speaks of political struggle to define a sense of self-identity and a distinctive community in historical contexts of displacement. The time and space before dispersal is conceptualised as the utopic ideal of a once-unified community[114] and, as a treasured cultural ideal, evokes the site of home, belonging and territorially-based nationhood (Zemel 2000:193). Carol Zemel (2000:193) notes that the longing for return is formulated in shared cultural rituals and reinforced by

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[114] Carol Zemel (2000:193) traces the etymology of the word 'diaspora' to the Greek, *diaspeirein,* meaning to spread about, with its fruitful associations of fertility, dissemination and the scattering of seeds (Braziel & Mannur 2003:4). However, as Zemel (2000:193) notes, it can also carry negative connotations, implying "a disabling fragmentation and scattering of a once-unified people". Several scholars working in the social sciences have attempted to categorise characteristics of diasporic phenomena. Examples include William Safran's (1991) and Robin Cohen's (1997) typologies. Venn (2010:333) sums up Cohen's five types of diaspora, categorising them according to whether they result from trade, labour movements or imperial expansion or are caused by factors relating to culture or to exclusion and/or persecution. Clifford (1997:247) describes the main features of diaspora as "a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship". However, as Venn (2010:333) notes, most historic diasporas have been uneven combinations of typologies such as those of Safran and Cohen. Although often held up as a model for diasporas, or taken as a starting point for a discourse that is "travelling or hybridising in new global conditions" Jewish diasporas are similarly uneven (Clifford 1997:249). For centuries, Jews have existed in the European imagination as a 'diasporic people', exiled, guest inhabitants repeatedly condemned to expulsions and wandering homelessness, yet, as Zemel (2000:193) points out, there have been countries that have been home to great Jewish cultures. For instance, within the Pales, Ashkenazi Jews developed a *shtetl* culture, practising Orthodox Judaism and following Jewish traditions. Zemel (2000:194) comments, however, that by the 1920s *shtetl* culture had been transformed by half-a-century of modernisiation, secularisation and emigration.

intercommunity ties, yet, simultaneously, diasporic conditions "acquire their own coherence and become a way of life". Unlike the condition of exile, which is tied to a still-existing homeland by memory and experience, diasporic communities become 'at home' in their dispersal, where they hover in an in-between space, vacillating between "assimilation and difference with varying degrees of comfort and unease" (Zemel 2000:193).

Zemel's observations reiterate what Clifford (1997:263) considers as the 'utopic-dystopic tension' present in all diasporic cultures. Clifford (1997:251) explains that diasporas begin with dystopic unsettlement, uprooting and loss; they are often based on the "outsider's terror", such as the *pogrom* and holocaust. Yet, simultaneously, diasporic cultures strive towards utopia by maintaining a sense of community, selectively preserving and recovering traditions, while "customizing" and "versioning" them in innovative, "hybrid, and often antagonistic" ways (Clifford 1997:263). Diasporic discourse, therefore, according to Clifford (1997:251), fuses 'roots' and 'routes' to construct the heterotopic sites that Gilroy (cited in Clifford 1997:251) describes as "alternate public spheres, forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference". In his observation that diasporic cultures "mediate, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place", Clifford (1997:255) encapsulates the multiple paradoxes and ambivalences of which diasporic heterotopias are composed. Diaspora is at once a site of otherness (displacement) and a site of othering (displacing), or to return to Marin's (1984:13) terms, an "Other place" and the "Other of Place". It is defined according to its function as a space where cultural relations are formed and contested, and is constituted in relation to other sites (the homeland; the new country) by its difference. As a site of *différence,* its presence provides an unsettling of spatial and social relations, *and* an alternative representation of these relations.

It is therefore in the fissures between the utopia of belonging and the dystopia of placelessness that diasporic heterotopias are formed. Diasporic heterotopias contain paradoxes within paradoxes: the time and space before dispersal is regarded as the utopic ideal of a previously united community, the place of origin provides a rooted sense of home, yet the heterotopia is also a site of dystopic unsettlement, (forced) uprooting, upheaval and loss. The diasporic subject experiences life as incongruent — unable to fully belong and unable to return, such a subject is never completely able to feel 'at home' in the world. The heterotopic space of otherness (*Unheimlich*) becomes 'home' (*Heimlich*), evoking an uncanny sense of constantly being 'out of place'. The heterotopia, or site of otherness that the immigrant calls 'home', could be said to represent the 'gap' or space of in-betweeness in which slippages between ambivalences of assimilation and difference, memory and lived reality, an idealised past and a difficult present, separation and attachment, loss and gain, routes and roots, are continually played out. Constantly contesting each other, these ambivalent states form a dense network of interactions. Their juxtaposition challenges settled representations: the fixity and certainty of order in both the old and the new country are challenged by the creation of alternative forms of ordering. However, as Ien Ang (1999: 558, emphasis added) argues, diasporic views of the world through double-consciousness or bipolarity tend to construct what I call the heterotopic space of in-betweenness "as an empty space, the space that gets crushed in the cultural translation from one side to the other". This space is located in an unrequited state, where "dwelling *here* assumes a solidarity and

connection *there* ... Linear history is broken, the present constantly shadowed by a past that is also a desired, but obstructed, future: a renewed, painful yearning" (Clifford 1997:269, 264).

4.3.3 *Tacit complicity*

Inasmuch as Bertha Marks's complicity with maintaining and upholding the politics of exclusion was a socially accepted norm, in her context and community, her behaviour might also be described as 'overt collusion' with colonialism's racist policies. Similarly, from her position as a member of the Jewish community and the dominant white minority during the years 1948 to 1994, it may be argued that Freda Farber practiced a form of 'tacit complicity' with the apartheid regime by assuming the role of 'silent bystander'. Her assumption of this role is directly linked to her status as an immigrant Jew and a member of the white minority. As I suggest in the discussion to follow, this role could be viewed as a means of adaptation to her new environment and as an indication of her formative relationship towards, and with, the other.[115]

In examining the complex and often contradictory relations between community and conscience from approximately 1930 to 1994, Shimoni (2003:73) identifies two characteristic facets of political behaviour in South African Jewish subjectivities. He points to the prominence of Jewish individuals in the radical and liberal

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[115] As one of her anecdotes, Freda Farber describes her first encounter with a black person. Her childhood reaction is disturbingly reminiscent of Franz Fanon's (1967:112) personal narrative of racial fear: "Look a Negro! ... Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" Freda Farber (cited in Farber 2006) explains how, "We arrived at my uncle's house in Randfontein ... We went into the kitchen and there was a black woman there; I had never seen a black person before. Apparently I took one look at her, screamed, and ran out the kitchen."

Figures 23 (above) & 24 (below): Remains of a *shtetl* and landscape, Latvia, 2009. Photographs by the author.

streams of political opposition to the apartheid system (Shimoni 2003:73). The display on contributions of South African Jewry to the antiapartheid struggle in the South African Jewish Museum in Cape Town contains the following comment by Nelson Mandela (cited in Fellner 2009): "In my experience I have found Jews to be more broad-minded than most whites on issues of race and politics, perhaps because they themselves have historically been victims of prejudice." These words reiterate the commitment of a relatively large number of South African Jews to antiapartheid campaigns. However, despite the presence of Jews within the various forms of opposition to the apartheid regime, Shimoni (2003:73) highlights the avoidance of association with these 'radical' streams on the part of the vast majority of Jews, their tendency to assume a position in the white political spectrum just left of centre and, significantly, regarding Freda Farber's relations to apartheid policies, their position as "silent bystanders".

The official representative organ of the Jewish community, the Jewish Board of Deputies, reinforced this position of 'silent bystander' from 1933 onwards (Shimoni 2003:29). The Board steered away from any engagement with the political struggle against the government's apartheid regime, issuing policies throughout the 1950s and 1960s that stressed, "neither the Board of Deputies, as its representative organization, nor the Jewish community as a collective entity, can or should take up an explicit attitude in regard to specific policies in the political field" (Shimoni 2003:30). Shimoni (2003:31) explains that the explicit justification offered for this position was that it was impossible to formulate a collective Jewish political viewpoint, but that the (rarely articulated) implicit justification was that it would be undesirable, if not dangerous to the interests and safety of the South African Jewish community, to do so.

The orthodox rabbinate adopted a similar attitude. Some rabbis maintained silence on the implications of apartheid society from a Judaic perspective, while others occasionally spoke out on Judaism's incompatibility with racist beliefs or the practice of racial discrimination (Shimoni 2003:141). Most orthodox rabbis took the view that Jews should recognise that they were no more than 'guests' in the lands of *galut* (exile), and that they ought to remember that South Africa offered Jews economic freedom, as well as upward mobility and prosperity (Shimoni 2003:141). Underpinning these attitudes were deep-seated fears of anti-Semitism, as the Jewish community felt that their positions in South Africa were subject to Afrikaner goodwill (Shimoni 2003:272). Shimoni (2003:73) sums up this duality as follows:

> Because the Jews were part and parcel of the privileged white minority, their welfare was unmistakably dependent on conformity with the white consensus. Within the parameters of that consensus, they were more liberal than most other whites. But to challenge the parameters of that consensus which liberally allowed equal opportunities and rights for all whites but denied them to non-whites, was perceived by most Jews — including many who deplored apartheid — as courting a clear and present danger.

Despite the ironies and complexities of being othered and suffering periods of anti-Semitic discrimination, it was of fundamental importance for the socio-economic prospects of Jewish immigrants to South Africa that they had the status of being 'Europeans' or 'whites' (Shimoni 2003:3). In South Africa, Jews had full civic equality and enjoyed all the privileges of the dominant white population (Shimoni 2003:78). It is therefore from their privileged position of whiteness that Shimoni (2003:1) questions the multifaceted implications of South African Jewry's moral heritage and historical experience.

Bertha Marks's, Freda Farber's and my South African Jewish subjectivities hinge on our positions as Jewesses located within the privileged 'white' or 'European' sector. While Bertha Marks's acceptance and upholding of colonial prejudices and discriminatory behaviours was in keeping with conventions of the colonial society of which she was a part, as an immigrant who arrived in the anti-Semitic climate of the 1930s that preceded the Nationalist Party's rise to power, Freda Farber's modes of adaptation played out in the kinds of non-involvement with the injustices of apartheid that Shimoni points to. She formed part of the community of 'silent bystanders', whose silence might be read as tacit acceptance of the National Party and its policies but could also be read as a mode of adaptation to her new environment and as a means of survival. After her family fled the threat of Nazi power in Eastern Europe, she was no doubt aware of the precariousness of her position as an immigrant Jewess and thus for her the concerns of safety, security, family well-being and economic prosperity were paramount. Given that her parents were victims of anti-Semitism in Latvia, and that she had experienced anti-Semitism as a child in South Africa,[116] she was well aware of the effects of racial discrimination and persecution. Furthermore, as an orthodox Jewess, she would have known that these behaviours were incongruent with Judaic principles. Yet, paradoxically, in an attempt to secure her position of privileged whiteness, she chose to turn a blind eye.

Elfriede Dreyer (2010:5) draws an analogy between the Victorian organisation of race and social class and the apartheid regime, pointing out that both organisational structures were constructed according to the utopian vision of an 'optimum'

society in which the notion of place was intimately bound up with teleology. It is in the disjuncture between the utopian ideal of the ordered, segregated apartheid society and the real, lived dystopia of racial and ethnic discrimination that Freda Farber's heterotopias are located. These heterotopias comprise multiple contradictions: having narrowly escaped the Nazi concentration camp in Riga, and being subject to anti-Semitism in South Africa, Freda Farber moved from a position of persecuted (victim) to — if not actually persecutor — collaborator, (silent) bystander and witness in her tacit approval of the injustices of apartheid, and benefited from the apartheid system by virtue of her privileged whiteness.

4.4 Personal displacement

> You don't have to leave home to become a refugee. This dispossession does not have to happen, but it can and it does — and will — happen in many cases as old belief systems erode, as old bases of personal and social identity change (Walter Truett Anderson cited in Steyn 2001:149).

As a white woman living in postapartheid South Africa, my experiences from the years 2000 to 2006 encompassed the often turbulent, entangled ambiguities of alienation and belonging, particularly in relation to the African metropolis of Johannesburg in which I have lived for most of my life. My sense of displacement, as it is articulated in the artwork, is not intended as a literal metaphor for dislocation, nor is it intended as an expression of white alienation. Furthermore, in speaking of my displacement from the metropolis, I am not referring to nostalgia for the apartheid city in which I grew up, but rather to the difficulties I have experienced in adapting to ways in which the 'perceived safety' of a once familiar landscape had become increasingly alien to me.

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[116] In her anecdotes, Freda Farber (cited in Farber 2006) alludes to how she and her brothers experienced anti-Semitism in South Africa: "At school the other children called us 'bloody Jews'; I don't think they knew what they were saying … they must've got it from their parents."

Since 1994, as a result of conflicting social, economic and political forces, Johannesburg has evolved from a regulated, apartheid city, designed and built on principles of control, segregation and exclusion, to an African metropolis in which identities are polyglot, heterogeneous, complex and in ongoing states of flux.[117] Rapidly accelerated changes in the physical environment, combined with ongoing processes of psychological and cultural transformation, permit the continual emergence of new conceptions of space, identity and place. From

2000-2006, the transmuting physical environment and social fabric of the city induced in me a sense of displacement that I imagined as similar to that of an immigrant attempting to find ways to adapt to new surrounds. Yet, paradoxically, while experiencing this sense of psychological dislocation and alienation from my physical environment, I also felt a strong desire to relocate myself and to find ways in which to renegotiate and reimagine my place as a WESSA within it.

Upon reading Achille Mbembe's text in 2008, I was struck by how his words seemed to encapsulate what had been my experiences of displacement. Mbembe (2008:38) speaks poignantly of what he calls "the loss of the racial [or apartheid] city", noting that, "the collage of various fragments of the city is opening up a space for experiences of displacement, substitution, and condensation" — experiences that he suggests are "manifestation[s] of traumatic amnesia". He notes that in the process of the apartheid city being destroyed, only its "vestiges and debris" remain; its inhabitants become "wanderers" among its ruins (Mbembe 2008:63). Yet, from within these ruins

> the play of intervals enables everyone to construct his or her own story of Johannesburg and form memories of place. This is an experience of fragmentation and of permutations that may never achieve coherence … Johannesburg becomes a city of deconstructed images. 'We are no longer offered a synthetic order that we can readily grasp, nor a reconstruction of a history we can collectively assume. Our sense of an urban totality has been fractured' — hence the juxtaposition of different images, memories of a past rejected or fantasized (Mbembe 2008:63 citing Christine Boyer).

In using descriptors such as 'fragmentation', 'deconstructed images' and 'fractured' in relation to postapartheid Johannesburg and identifying the city as being composed of incohesive permutations "where various incompatible images collide and coalesce", Mbembe (2008:63) articulates a sense of how I had come to

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[117] Richard Ballard (2004:57) uses Zygmunt Bauman's definition of the stranger to reference ways in which otherness has been incorporated into the postapartheid lifeworld of 'white' South Africans in Johannesburg. According to Bauman (cited in Ballard 2004:57), "The stranger disturbs the resonance between physical and psychical distance: he is *physically close* while remaining *spiritually remote*. He brings into the inner circle of proximity the kind of difference and otherness that are anticipated and tolerated only at a distance — where they can be either dismissed as irrelevant or repelled as hostile." Accepting Bauman's register of the other, Ballard draws on the negativity associated with the Johannesburg inner-city in the 1990s, when it was perceived by many WESSAs living in the northern suburbs as a place of poverty, crime and urban decay. In so doing, Ballard draws sharp distinctions between white and black, suburb and inner-city, self and other, setting these up as dichotomies. Ballard (2004:58) argues that the kind of separation between 'self' and 'the city' as emblematic of otherness is applicable to post-1994 experiences of white South Africans. He posits that some of the uncertainty experienced by white South Africans in the 1980s and 1990s stemmed from a fear of unregulated access by people previously excluded from the city. Unregulated access — such as street trading — marked a change from what had resembled a European city to what was thought of as a Third World or 'African' marketplace. Such 'infiltrated' formerly white spaces were perceived as undermining western identities and as promoting a degeneration of standards by the threat they posed of the presence of others. Ballard (2004:58), citing Robert Wilton, explores this threat in terms of the uncanny:

> Spatial proximity weakens the social distance between self and other and challenges the integrity of individual identity. What is normally projected beyond the ego can no longer be completely distinguished from the self … what produces anxiety is an encounter in a place we think of as our own with people who don't appear to belong. Yet the reaction we experience is not just because people are different and out-of-place. It derives from the fear that they might not be different enough.

As Ballard concludes, space that once generated a reassuring sense of whiteness was experienced as uncanny or heterotopic and consequently the senses of alienation and displacement white South Africans experienced prompted their avoidance of areas in which they felt a lack of control.

see the city as an architectural palimpsest, built up of diverse layers accumulated beneath its apparent surface. As Christine Boyer (cited in Mbembe 2008:63) says, in postapartheid Johannesburg "[we] pass from one image to another, shifting focus and meaning, for the very definition of place is composed of fragmented strata and moving layers". For me, childhood memories, personal and public histories, and private associations with particular buildings, landmarks and sites of the apartheid city had been overlaid by the present of the contemporary African metropolis. Unrelated images and barely coherent traces of the past were juxtaposed against, or psychologically grafted onto, the fabric of the postapartheid city. Spaces that were once 'homely' and familiar had been transformed so that they seemed only partially recognisable. The familiar was thus still present, either physically or in memory, yet had been transfigured to the point that it seemed both uncannily other and deeply othering.

Located in the disjunctures between what Boyer (cited in Mbembe 2008:63, emphasis added) aptly refers to as the "*racist past and the metropolitan present*, between *here* and *there* and between *memories of things* and *events",* my heterotopic state comprised multiple, ambiguous forms and unsettling combinations. Spatial interplay between fragmented images and shifting temporal frames and the alternative system of reordering this interplay created challenged what had previously been, for me, settled representations. My experiences of displacement thus produced the disconcerting effect of making 'the known' appear out-of-place, inducing in me an uncanny sense of literally and figuratively being a 'body-out-of-place'. As Venn (2010:332) observes in relation to the uncanny as it is evoked in *Dis-Location*, "This feeling brings to mind the out-of-jointness that Jacques Derrida … related to an 'hauntology', that is, an ontology haunted by disjunct, invisible-yet-present traces of a traumatic or troubled past, and the disquieting

figure of the other."[118] In the context of displacement, Venn (2010:332) continues, the uncanny may be related to "the process of the reinvention or refiguring of oneself which is shadowed by a recalcitrant and disorientating memory of place and space that must be worked through for newness to emerge".

In 'working through' my memories of pre-1994 Johannesburg, with its ever-present spectre of apartheid that had been formative to my childhood, the processes of 'reinventing' or 'reconfiguring' myself from within my heterotopic conditions proved generative. "New formulations of knowledge" (Topinka 2010:60) emerged as I began to recognise alternative ways of being-in-the-world and lived experience of place. These alternative ways of being were realised through identification with Edward Soja's (1996b, 1999) conception of Thirdspace. Soja (cited in Cresswell 2002:20) proposes a "trialectics of spatiality" based on a deconstruction of the binary notions of spatiality that lie at the core of geographical discourse. These binaries include the oppositions of objectivity versus subjectivity, material versus mental, real versus imagined and space versus place, to produce a 'Thirdspace' which, in Soja's thinking, is a space that challenges or lies in-between these binaries; it is a *lived space* that interrupts a distinction between perceived space and spatial practices (Cresswell 2002:20, 21).[119] Soja (1999:276) defines Thirdspace as "a space of multiplicitous representations … a site of hybridity … moving beyond

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[118] Derrida's (1994:xvii) concept of hauntology — a haunted ontology, or an ontology that uproots its own origins in the notion of being — expresses the effects of the spectre on distinctions between life and death, presence and absence. In supplanting its near-homonym 'ontology', hauntology replaces the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost or spectre, which does not belong to the order of knowledge (Buys & Farber 2011:88). For further detail on hauntology in relation to Johannesburg, see Anthea Buys and Farber (2011:86-101).

[119] 'Firstspace' is Soja's term for describing empirically measurable and mappable phenomena as traditionally used in the domain of human geography. It is the spatial outcome of social processes such as capitalism or patriarchy. 'Secondspace' is conceived space — space which is subjective and imagined; the domain of representation and image (Cresswell 2002:21).

entrenched boundaries, a margin or edge where ties can be severed and also where new ties can be forged". Soja (1996b:139-163) points out that as a third, or other, space, Thirdspace has affinities with Foucault's heterotopias and Bhabha's Third Space. For, as he notes, Thirdspace, heterotopias and the Third Space, "are not just 'other spaces' to be added on to the geographical imagination, but are also 'other than' the established ways of thinking spatially": in them, *"the assertion of an alternative envisioning of spatiality … directly challenges (and is intended to challengingly deconstruct) all conventional modes of spatial thinking"* (Soja 1996b:163). Each of the three spaces opens up what Soja (1996b:5) calls "a critical strategy of 'thirding-as-Othering'": a means of providing an alternative space that counteracts binary oppositions by introducing "an-Other set of choices". In critical thirding, as Soja (1996b:5) puts it, "the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process of *restructuring* that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives". However, unlike the heterotopia which can be a virtual and/or imaginary space, Thirdspace can be creatively imagined but only obtains meaning as *practised and lived* space, as opposed to being material (conceived) or mental (perceived) (Cresswell 2002:21). It provides a theoretical ground for thinking about a politics of place based on inhabited space. In such space, place is not 'finished', obviously ordered or easily framed: "it is blurred at the edges … everything is always changing, in process — becoming" (Cresswell 2002:25). Thirdspace thus provides the template for what Tim Cresswell (2002:25) terms "an unstable stage for performance"; "Place is the raw material for creative production of identity rather than an a-priori label of identity".

4.4.1   *Collective forms of white displacement(s)*

> The collapse of a belief system can … bring down not only the powerful, but whole systems of social roles and the concepts of personal identity that go with them … People can literally cease to know who they are (Walter Truett Anderson cited in Steyn 2001:155).

While the (de)constructing of one's (white) identity is a private act, it is also public and political (Nuttall 2001:128). Nuttall (2001:128) observes that in a postapartheid context, as much as processes of identity-making play an important part in the building of a new nation, they are also about breaking away from the collective conformity of whiteness itself. For,

> to be white in [this] context is to carry a past and a language that is on trial. To break with this is to depend on the possibility of not being found guilty … Thus, one of the mediating moments in the complex set of identity transformations in white autobiographies is necessarily the birth of the individual self. At the same time, *what is desired is the birth of a new collective in which one could belong — while still being oneself* (Nuttall 2001:128, emphasis added).

The making of individual identities in a postapartheid context is bound to collective modes of understanding and belonging; questions of singular selfhood can emerge only in relation to collective identities. Therefore, my attempts to re-evaluate my whiteness and reconstruct a sense of personal identity may be understood against a backdrop of collective South African whitenesses, as may my sense of personal displacement in postapartheid South Africa.

Writing in 2003, Van der Watt (2003:16, 41, 42) identifies "a crisis in the heart of whiteness" that she argues to have been related to an intense experience of displacement from the homeland (postapartheid South Africa) for a large sector of the white South African population. For her this displacement was, first of all,

figural or imaginative, experienced by those who could no longer recognise the land around them as theirs, and, secondly, for those who had emigrated, literal. Van der Watt (2003:60) suggests that this 'crisis of whiteness' was a consequence of post-1994 political change that prompted rapid shifts away from what had, up until 1994, been an overtly Eurocentric emphasis in ideological, institutional and operational structures. These structures underpinned all facets of social, political and cultural life, including international relations, school and university syllabuses and style of governance (Van der Watt 2003:60).[120] Although Van der Watt believes that most WESSAs celebrated the transition to a democratic government, she notes that for some the transition provoked a "crisis of citizenship", as the 'new' South Africa posed a challenge to the ways in which they were able to imagine their place in the new dispensation (Van der Watt 2003:61, 104).

Van der Watt (2003:61) suggests that WESSAs' alienation stemmed not only from an irrevocably changed present but also from a past that revealed itself as a lie: "the uprootedness that post-apartheid South Africa has brought in its wake is intensified when the past no longer offers a comfortable memory to escape to … the horrors [revealed by] the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made it clear that neither the past, nor the present offer any comfort or hold any truths". This lack of certainty, based on the destabilisation of what had been internalised as 'truths', resulted in a sense of displacement from a country that for many WESSAs, had become "foreign" and "alien" (Van der Watt 2003:56).[121] Steyn (2001:155)

reiterates Van der Watt's contention, noting that her 2001 text is "a story about displacement, about the subjective experience of dispossession". She observes that the five narratives that emerged from her study during the years 1995 to 2000 were "told by people who are sharing a dramatic change in their lifeworld; they are unmistakably *stories of crisis*, however diverse their interpretations" (Steyn 2001:155, emphasis added). Underpinning each narrative is a sense of loss associated with political change. Steyn (2001:156-162) groups these losses into five categories: loss of autonomy and control;[122] loss of a sense of relevance;[123] loss of guaranteed legitimacy;[124] loss of honour;[125] and loss of home.

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[120] The historical western orientation prevalent in South Africa up to 1994 has been challenged and decentred by the political transition to black majority rule and an ongoing public debate led, since 1994, by the African National Congress (ANC) that positions the African nationalist project as paramount. The citizen who shows her- or himself to be the ideal national subject — an "African of African origins" — is associated with "authentic citizenship" (Chipkin 2007:16, 17) See Ivor Chipkin (2007) and Anthea Garman (2011) for further detail.

[121] For many, a response to this displacement was, and still is, relocation to another country, usually one which better supports the 'white' identity aspired to, and where whiteness is less

contested (Steyn 2012). 'Semigration' ("partial emigration without leaving the borders of South Africa" [Ballard 2004:52]) is a term that describes what Ballard refers to as the large-scale migration of WESSAs from Johannesburg to Cape Town that was especially prevalent during the 1990s. Semigration represents another form of distancing oneself from the full effects of integration for, as Christopher Hope (cited in Ballard 2004:60) observes, Cape Town creates the illusion of "not really being part of Africa". Other spatial practices that could be included under the semigration rubric include the 'utopias' (or, given that they are real spaces, heterotopias [see Hook & Vrdoljak 2002]) of gated communities and enclosed neighbourhoods (Ballard 2004:60), and the creation of the 'Afrikaner homeland', Orania.

[122] Rather like the colonialists' fear of 'going *troppo*' or "falling out of the light, down the long coal chute of social and moral regression" (Brantlinger 1985:196), this fear was, and still is at the time of writing, manifest in references to loss of 'first world standards' and the threat of sinking into the depths of chaos in the form of collapsing economies and crumbling infrastructures (Steyn 2001:158).

[123] 'Loss of a sense of importance and relevance' was reflected in these WESSAs' reference to themselves as 'marginalised' — a term that connotes the loss of a dominant position, subjectively interpreted as oppression (Steyn 2001:159). However, as Steyn (2001:159) notes, while whites lost visible political power, they still held key positions, mainly in the civil service and private sector, and controlled large portions of the economy.

[124] 'Loss of guaranteed legitimacy' spoke to the need to make an emphatic claim to the right of a continued, legitimate, place in the country. What was lost, explains Steyn (2001:160), "is the guarantee that the *interpretation* and *terms* of their legitimacy, previously unilaterally determined, will remain unchanged".

[125] 'Loss of honour' related to the difficulties of maintaining a sense of self-respect after previously subjugated stories were made public through the TRC. This loss was accompanied by the conscious confrontation of white guilt (Steyn 2001:160).

The category 'loss of home' is particularly significant to my discussion. Before 1994, for many WESSAs the concept of 'home' had been predicated on a physical, cultural and psychological space that was culturally and structurally congruent with, and supportive of, white identity and supremacy (Steyn 2001:156, 157). WESSAs' post-1994 'loss of home' therefore entailed an "acute sense of loss of the familiar, loss of certainty, loss of comfort, loss of privilege, loss of well-known roles" (Steyn 2001:156). They were "homesick" for the comfort of a "secure, safe, familiar, protected [and *homogenous identity*" says Steyn (2001:156, 157). Although they were physically 'at home', psychologically, for many WESSAs, home had become *Unheimlich*, an unfamiliar, even threatening space, that no longer offered the illusion of a secure subject position (Steyn 2001:156, 157). For some it was a space haunted by re-emerging traumas of South Africa's troubled past, a space "dangerously populated with the phantasmagoria of previous repressions" (Steyn 2001:157); for others, it became a space in which the 're-emergence' of the other challenged the entrenched master narrative of whiteness and its attendant assumption of white supremacy. Both forms of resurgence gave rise to a deeply unsettling sense of being "out-of-place" (Steyn 2001:156, 157). One may speculate that these resurgences of the repressed were an evocation of the uncanny in what Freud (1955 [1919]; see also Bhabha 1994:206) calls the collective "cultural unconscious" or represented entry into that which Bhabha (1994:206) describes as "a liminal, uncertain state of cultural belief when the archaic emerges in the midst of … modernity as a result of some psychic ambivalence or intellectual uncertainty". Bhabha (1994:206) notes that it is the figure of the ghostly double, or the *doppelgänger,* that is most frequently associated with the uncanny; for the subject, re-emergence of the repressed in the cultural unconscious entails a "doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self" (Freud 1955:234).

According to Steyn (2012), the first decade after transition represented a period of "raw urgency" for WESSAs: owing to their sense of disjointedness, fracturedness, insecurity and dispossession, they felt the need to position themselves assertively within the new dispensation. Yet, despite WESSAs' perceived need to identify more stable subject positions for themselves in fairly definitive terms (Steyn 2012), the kind of statements and questions that Van der Watt identifies as having been prevalent at the time reflect a deep-seated ambivalence regarding how to 'be white' in postapartheid South Africa. For example, "assessing whiteness" was considered to be "a necessary step in negotiating entry into the South African nation"; questions followed the lines of: "How does one live with whiteness in the new nation? How does a white person become part of the new South African nation? How does whiteness become a more inclusive and less threatening signifier?" (Van der Watt 2003:41). These kinds of statements and questions suggest that WESSAs saw themselves as situated 'outside' of, and hence 'not belonging to', the 'new nation'. As citizens, WESSAs formed part of the new dispensation yet psychologically occupied 'other' spaces in which their sense of being displaced, marginalised and rejected was located. These heterotopias constituted 'third' spaces articulated through imagination or perception. As sites of alternative ordering, or reordering, which existed in psychological space, WESSA's heterotopias were disturbing because they served to disrupt and expose the fundamental premise of 'home' as having been little more than a utopian fantasy, a "repressive fiction" established "through denials, exclusions, and blindnesses" (Biddy Martin & Chandra Talpade Mohanty cited in Steyn 2001:157, 206).

As Steyn (1999, 2001; see also Wasserman & Jacobs 2003; Zegeye 2001) observes, the decentring of established discourses of whiteness in postapartheid South Africa revealed a need for reconceptualising WESSA identity formations in ways that would "enable white people to be 'white' differently" (Wasserman & Jacobs 2003:26). Steyn (2001:165) suggests the possibility of "'other' ways to be white — nonnormative ways that are constructed in, and as a consequence of, the *presence* of the 'other'". In a similar vein, Van der Watt (2003:105) concludes that in order to re-establish a sense of belonging, or to feel 'at home' in postapartheid South Africa, the white minority needed to collectively *reconceptualise* or *imagine themselves differently*.

Nuttall and Michael (2000:2, emphasis added) reiterate Van der Watt's words with their suggestion that in postapartheid South Africa, "*new forms of imagining* need to emerge, and indeed are emerging". Their observation finds support in Herman Wasserman and Sean Jacobs's (2003:15, 16) investigation into the social changes that have occurred in South Africa since 1994, and how these changes have been mediated in different spheres. Wasserman and Jacobs contend that by 2003 it was already possible to identify a move towards the redefinition of white South African identities in the cultural sphere. This process of redefinition has proved to be ongoing; it has been, and is currently being, played out on a variety of fronts, including those of mass media, art and other forms of cultural expression. Forms of expression range from visual culture, new media and theatre to the urban aesthetics of graffiti art, poetry, hip-hop, *kwaito* and television dramas (Wasserman & Jacobs 2003:16; for analysis of specific examples, see for instance, amongst many possible options, Falkof 2011; Farber 2009d; Marx 2011; Nuttall 2009; Smit 2011).

4.4.2 *Collective forms of white hybridity*

> Diasporic traversals question the rigidities of identity itself — religious, ethnic, gendered, national, yet this diasporic movement marks not a postmodern turn from history, but a nomadic turn in which the very parameters of specific historical moments are embodied and — as diaspora suggests — are scattered and regrouped into new points of becomings (Braziel & Mannur 2003:2).

Steyn (2001:116) breaks up the final narrative titled 'Under African skies (or white but not quite)' into three sub-narratives. The first sub-narrative, 'I just don't know what to do, being white', belongs to those who recognised the need for change but were hesitant to put this into practice. Those who felt an unbearable sense of white guilt and sought to escape by (over)identification with blackness articulated the second sub-narrative, 'I don't wanna be white no more'. It is the third sub-narrative, titled 'Hybridisation, that's the name of the game' that is of relevance to the discussion of collective forms of WESSA hybridisation that I now introduce.

Respondents in Steyn's third sub-narrative tended to take on the appellation 'white Africans' (Steyn 2001:154; see also Du Preez 2005; Matthews 2011; Morris 2005; Spies 2007) in the process of redefining their identities. Although L'Ange (2005) uses the term 'white Africans' to describe *all* white peoples of South Africa, for Steyn (2006) the term differs from 'South Africans' in its implication that those who belong to this group are 'of Africa' or 'are Africans'. Steyn's interpretation correlates with Mbeki's (1996) inclusive concept of Africanness that he puts forward in his 'I am an African' speech:

I am an African … I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape … I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land … In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East … I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsa and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshoe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom … I come of those who were transported from India and China … Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that assertion, I shall claim that I am an African!

Continuing from these words, Mbeki asserts that, "the Constitution whose adoption we celebrate constitutes an unequivocal statement that we refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, gender or historical origin". Although Mbeki's all-encompassing vision of African identities was an important part of nation-building, it was subject to fierce criticism, precisely because of its inclusiveness. Given that WESSAs' ancestry can be traced back along differing time-lines to European lineage,[126] white South Africans' claims to African identity were (and remain) a contested point that elicited heated debate (see Matthews 2011). Contestations have followed lines of enquiry such as whether belonging in Africa should be determined by skin colour and political orientation (Steyn 2012) or by having been previously disadvantaged (Falkof 2012)? Do white South Africans need to 'earn the right to call themselves African' given that they have not suffered the injustices of apartheid in ways that black South Africans have (Falkof 2012)?

On the basis of generational histories of immigration and settler location, can whites call themselves 'African'[127] (Matthews 2011:3)? Is expressing commitment to Africa above the countries from which WESSAs' ancestors originated and/or participating in African cultural practices and speaking African languages enough to legitimate their claims (Matthews 2011:1-11)? And, more fundamentally, who and what is an African (Garman 2011)? By whose definition of Africa should white peoples' inclusion in or exclusion from the continent be determined (Falkof 2012)? These questions led to counter-responses such as, "if white South Africans are not African then what are they? Is *denying* being African and describing oneself as European more appropriate? … [W]hat exactly does it mean to be 'white' in South Africa and how can one be South African but not African?" (Matthews 2011:11).

The participants in Steyn's (2001:136) survey who responded under the 'hybridisation' sub-narrative tended to accept that in the new dispensation new approaches, attitudes and expectations were required in order to move away from the master narrative of whiteness.[128] Self-examination was a crucial part of this sub-narrative that, as Steyn (2001:xxi-xxii) notes, was characterised by a need to "reinterpret old selves in the light of new knowledge and possibilities, while retaining a sense of personal congruence". Steyn (2001:129) comments that those who identified with the appellation 'white African' leaned towards acknowledgement of race as a construct and demonstrated an understanding of

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[126] Although this is the case for all whites in South Africa, Steyn (2001:198) argues that it is particularly so for WESSAs because they have historically retained a predominantly Eurocentric worldview and have therefore had a bifurcated relationship with the African continent. In his examination of representation and issues of identity in South African cultural production, Clive Kellner (1997:291) puts forward a more nuanced view of WESSAs' subjectivities, noting that, "to be South African is to be a hybrid, from which no singular origin is evident". He argues that while black South Africans have dealt with the threatened erasure of their culture, history and very existence by apartheid, WESSAs have been severed from their European ancestral base and have thus developed a "distorted sense of self" that is neither wholly African nor European.

[127] Steyn (2001:xxiv) notes that although WESSAs have always constituted a minority in South Africa, they are a permanent group. They are not aboriginal but are sociologically indigenous and thus have a legitimate claim to co-occupancy of the land.

[128] As Nicole Falkof (2012) points out, at the time of writing some WESSAs are trying to engage with 'Africa'. Activities such as visiting *sangomas*, holidaying in Botswana, viewing game in the Kruger National Park or decorating one's home with objects that signify African ethnicity may speak of a kind of engagement with the continent, but do not offer new approaches and attitudes that may disturb the master narrative of whiteness.

whiteness as a deliberate mechanism of social advantage.[129] For hybridised white Africans, accepting a more equal power-base necessitated coming to terms with the diversity of intersecting and contradictory codes and structures pertaining to power (Steyn 2001:142, 143). No longer pure, whiteness had become blended, contradictory and complex; those who adhered, or still adhere to, this sub-narrative were, or are, in a state of restlessness comprising multiple subjectivities: "situated in an existential moment that combines … thrownness and agency, they occupy a personal borderland where shifting binaries are held in tension through continual play" (Steyn 2001:147, xxi). The hybridity sub-narrative promotes a dialogic approach towards self and other: "'self' and other are co-created. Getting the 'self' into perspective … means looking at the 'other' through different lenses; hearing the voice of the 'other' inevitably reconstitutes the 'self'" (Steyn 2001:138, 139). The hybridity sub-narrative entails facing "the colonialist fear of finding the African within the European … stepping off the 'pure' side of the binary pedestal artificially fixed by the Manichean allegory, and entering the untidy cultural space in between" (Steyn 2001:147, 138).

For Steyn (2001:169) the hybridisation sub-narrative is underpinned by "an ethos that celebrates syncretism, and is supportive of the choice not to fix identity in a homogenous category … an ethos that commends the creolized, the multiple, the blurred boundary, the strategic coalition rather than the ideologically predetermined".[130] This ethos has commonalities with postcolonial re-readings of diaspora, such as those articulated by Clifford (1997), Gilroy (2000), Hall (1996, 2000) and Mirzoeff (2000), among others. In postcolonial analyses, the term 'diaspora' is used to describe the mass migrations and displacements characteristic of the second half of the twentieth century. The term is usually used with particular reference to formerly colonised areas, refugees fleeing war-torn states and fluxes of economic migration (Braziel & Mannur 2003:4). From its historical associations with essentialist notions of original homelands, defined geographical locations and national or ethnic identity formations, the term 'diaspora' has shifted; in postcolonial discourse, it is frequently conceptualised and deployed in ways that connote concepts of "hybridity, *métissage*, or heterogeneity" (Braziel & Mannur 2003:6).

As Clifford (1997:2, 3) suggests, postcolonial readings of diaspora can provide a useful paradigm for rethinking contemporary identities as *forms of displacement* that may give rise to *cultural meaning*. For, as he states, hybrid cultural identities produced by diasporic movements "stitch together languages, traditions, and places in coercive and creative ways, articulating embattled homelands, powers of memory, styles of transgression, in ambiguous relation to national and transnational structures" (Clifford 1997:10). Hall (cited in Mirzoeff 2000:2) considers diasporas to represent "the in-between of different cultures"; Gilroy (2000:129) sees diasporic identities as "creolized, syncretised, hybridized and chronically impure cultural forms". Hall (2000:31, emphasis added) reiterates Gilroy's definition of diasporic identities in his observation that diasporic

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[129] Despite its positivity, this narrative shared with others the refrain of fears about economic hardship, crime, long-term security, disempowerment and disadvantage through affirmative action as well as feelings of guilt and shame (Steyn 2001:131, 132).
[130] Steyn points to two forms of hybridity: first, the hybridity of being of European descent while living in Africa and, second, the hybridity of those WESSAs who adopt the appellation 'white African'. In both cases hybridity is contingent on WESSAs' "uneven" positioning in the new democracy. Although they may no longer make Europe their centre of identification, white hybrid South Africans, like other WESSAs, experience the ambivalence of being politically decentred in a local context, while their whiteness inescapably links them to the centres of international power on economic, cultural, political and social levels (Steyn 2005:125).

experience "is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*". A critical cultural politics of diaspora thus, as Ang (1999:558) asserts, sets up a "creative tension" between past and present — between a former place of dwelling and current location. Unlike the vacuous, unrequited space of in-betweenness characteristic of the historical diaspora, the postcolonial space is generative and fecund: it is a Third Space, filled with a "multiperspectival productivity" wherein "hybrid cultural forms [are] born out of a productive, creative syncretism" (Ang 1999:558; see also Bhabha 1990:207-221).

Examining hybridity in a postapartheid context, Steyn (2011) proposes that postcolonial conceptions of diaspora offer a useful template onto which the ongoing development of white South African identities may be mapped. However, she does so with caution, acknowledging that although WESSA identities are, by definition, diasporic — owing to imperialism and its consequent migrations, WESSAs are far-flung from their historical centres of origin — historically, whites in South Africa were not the dispossessed, disenfranchised and marginalised of most diasporas; rather, they were Empire's "transplanted", sent to be "in control of the places where [they] settled, in charge of the people among whom [they] settled" (Steyn 2005:123). Extending her argument, Steyn (2012; also see Van der Watt 2003:60) explains that during the colonial period and before 1994, WESSAs would most likely not have regarded themselves as a diasporic community because their sense of identity and self-worth was fundamentally Eurocentric, based on the connections to a larger international community that their whiteness afforded. Post-1994, however, in a political sense WESSAs have become the "invisible minority"; "they experience themselves as marginalised, vulnerable in relation to the centres of political power" (Steyn 2012). Thus, she argues, although they are not necessarily dispossessed or marginalised, WESSAs have commonalities with diasporic communities in that they have had to accept the loss of the stable subject position their former home offered. For WESSAs, coming to terms with the privileges of whiteness necessitates "leaving home" (Steyn 2012) to enter a place "where there are no ready-made identities or categories" that can be unproblematically assumed (Rutherford 1990:25).

In a postapartheid context, the potential for contemporary diasporic identities — as forms of displacement — to be productive in generating cultural meaning emerges. Like postcolonial diasporic identities, postapartheid South African identities are "constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall 2000:31). For WESSAs, hybridity is contingent upon *displacement,* whether it is from an original homeland or from the loss of white privilege. It is from this space of in-betweenness, or 'third' space, that newness, in the form of hybrid cultural identities created from cultural contestation, emerges.

Bhabha's (1994:2) description of the interface between cultures as those "'in-between' spaces that provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood — singular or communal — that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" seems to encapsulate the generative possibilities of diasporas as models for emergent South African identities. In these models, self and other become negotiated spaces, explored through investigations of sameness and difference; foreign and familiar, as embodied in, contingent upon and subject to the flux, transition and transformation of contemporary South African society.

The generative possibilities of hybridity are suggested in the *Ties that Bind Her* series, in which the protagonist negotiates several strategies of selfhood. These culminate in the final phase of her liminal period, shown in the images *Regeneration* and *Regeneration (detail),* in which her move into the Third Space of hybridity is signified by the growth of an 'Africanised' flower and by the completeness of her cicatrisation. Her state of liminality can be described in terms that are remarkably similar to those which Steyn (2001:115, 116) uses to describe hybrid WESSA identities: this hybridity indicates "those who are prepared to live closer to the edge, where 'edge' does not signify an abyss, but the transition where the familiar and unfamiliar meet". In *Regeneration,* this 'third' space of in-betweeness is productive in that it disrupts the category of a clearly defined, contained otherness. The new formations generated by the Third Space/'third' space encompass unstable states of ambivalence and ambiguity, giving rise to fluid, evolving subjectivities. It is from within these formations that the protagonist and the narrators of Steyn's hybridity sub-narrative may be prompted to "[r]ecogniz[e] their ambivalent relationship to the continent [of Africa and] the extent to which they have held it an other" (Steyn 2001:145). And, as Steyn (2001:145) notes, with such recognition comes the need to

> acknowledge that one has lost one's home, the place of a 'safe', homogenous identity to which one can return. There is no other way … but to enter into a new relationship — dialogic, appreciative, committed — with the continent … Opening up space to receive from Africa and from what is African, and to take this Africanness into previously 'pure white' identity, enables the narrators to find their commonality with this 'other'.

4.5 Conclusion

> Once again, it is the space of intervention emerging in the cultural interstices that introduces creative invention into existence (Bhabha 1994:12).

In each persona's heterotopias, the combination and juxtaposition of many spaces in one site creates an intensification of knowledge. While this intensity can expose the foundations upon which such knowledge is built, these insights are limited, given that heterotopias "cannot take us outside of this knowledge or free us from power relations" (Topinka 2010:70). In this respect, the concept of diaspora is pertinent to my argument for, unlike the heterotopia, postcolonial readings of diaspora open up possibilities for new paradigms of thinking or ways of being-in-the-world that foreground the productive aspects of cultural exchange. It is through the constant oscillation between and collision of overlapping epistemes that new ways of knowing and identity formations are potentially created.

The primary ambivalences contained in Bertha Marks's and Freda Farber's heterotopias are their conflicted positions of having been subject to gender and ethnic discrimination while simultaneously actively or tacitly being agents in upholding the hierarchies of power under which they lived. My engagement with Bertha Marks's 'active' and Freda Farber's 'passive' complicities in *Dis-Location* are a form of grappling with the necessity of coming to terms with my own South African whiteness and the multiple racial, historical and cultural privileges it affords. Sonja Kruks (cited in Garman 2011) argues that to estrange oneself from one's white privilege is an impossibility, as it is "continually reproduced through us and for us by the surrounding world". Yet 'complicity' — a highly-scrutinised issue during the TRC hearings in relation to white South Africans as the beneficiaries

of apartheid — can also be interpreted positively. Mark Sanders (cited in Garman 2011) proposes an alternative reading of the word as "a folded-together-ness-in-human-being". As Anthea Garman (2011:3) observes, this reading could suggest ways of rethinking whiteness in South Africa: "If acknowledgement of complicity is not just about a past but is also an acknowledgement of one's sewn togetherness, entanglement, enfoldedness in being human in South Africa then an embrace of the future — uncertain as it may be — is held out as a possibility."

CHAPTER FIVE
A ROOM OF HER OWN

> [W]riting (with needle and plant) about and of dwelling. This dwelling can be found in a room, a language, a stitch, a stylus, a colour, a country, a culture, memory, loss, nostalgia, a future — a gathering of all that is yet to come which depends on all that has gone before, lost, displaced, and all that accrues now as immanence (Bishop 2008:113).

5.1   Introduction

In the final narrative of *Dis-Location* titled *A Room of Her Own*, "three yarns are spun" (Ord 2008:107), interweaving the multiple strands of the personae's narratives from their respective space-time continuums. In the series phonetically grafted residues of Bertha Marks's, Freda Farber's and my British and Jewish ancestry combine with references to a postcolonial South African environment. The series, which comprises three photographic prints, three stage-set installations, one main video and four sub-videos, originated from a live performance of the same title.[131] Bertha Marks's bedroom (hereafter 'the room'), is the leitmotif of the series, the space wherein the three personae's body-world relations play out. Extending the idea of the room as a heterotopia of crisis and deviance as discussed in Chapter Three, it is positioned as an ambivalent space, at once a signifier of physical, social and psychological isolation and confinement and a space of empowerment and liberation for the protagonist.

In this chapter, I draw analogies between Charlotte Perkins Gilman's (1973 [1982]) novella *The yellow wallpaper* and the *Room* series. *The yellow wallpaper* is presented as a collection of journal entries written by a late nineteenth-century woman (hereafter 'the narrator') who, upon failing to find fulfilment in her prescribed roles as wife and mother, is confined after the birth of her baby to the barred and locked upstairs bedroom of a rented mansion by her physician husband. She is forced to take the 'rest cure' to remedy what her husband refers to as "temporary nervous depression — a slight hysterical tendency" (Gilman 1973:10).[132] Although the narrator longs to write, her husband forbids it. Eventually, she resorts to subterfuge by writing 'in secret' and hiding her diary entries from him. Imprisoned in the room, she channels her repressed creativity into its yellow wallpaper, imagining that there are women trapped behind its swirling patterns. Finally, in a psychotic state, the narrator rips the wallpaper off the wall, trying to release what has become her alter ego. She has lost a sense of ego boundaries: the imaginary woman in the wallpaper is self, other and other women (Showalter 1985:141). The wallpaper patterns and the imaginary women trapped within them are metaphoric of her imprisonment within the confines of the room and within patriarchal nineteenth-century sexual politics. Desperate for escape, madness becomes her freedom: crawling around the room, she screams at her husband that she has finally "got out" (of the wallpaper) and "cannot be put back" (Gilman 1973:36).

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[131] When referring to the performance or video, I include a descriptor after the abbreviated title (for example, 'the *Room* video', 'the *Room* performance') but in referring to the works that constitute the narrative I use the term 'the *Room* series'. References to making the artwork and setting it up in the galleries are in the past tense; when speaking of the performance and exhibitions, I use the present tense.

[132] The rest cure was the standard treatment for neurasthenia and in certain instances for hysteria. It depended upon total rest (confinement to bed), seclusion, sensory deprivation, immobility, excessive feeding and 'complete emptiness of mind', usually for a period of six weeks to three months. To achieve emptiness of mind, the patient was forbidden to sit up, sew, read, write or do any intellectual work (Showalter 1985:138).

While I was producing the *Room* series, Gilman's semi-autobiographical narrative of female confinement and madness foregrounded many of the themes that I wanted to encapsulate. I discuss each of the following in this chapter, drawing parallels between how they feature in *The yellow wallpaper* and the *Room* series:

- the body and room as interiorised and internalised spaces (the room-as-body and body-as-room)
- the Victorian trope of the room as a space of confinement and liberation
- means of self-expression[133] through symbolic and semiotic forms of signification
- the room as a private space subject to constant surveillance
- relations between hierarchical Victorian gender roles, sexual repression, madness and self-expression.

Through her narrative, Gilman shows how, for a nineteenth-century woman, 'solitary confinement' within the bourgeois family results in psychosis (Showalter 1985:142). As Showalter (1985:142) observes, because Gilman deals with a woman writer who is denied any legitimate outlet for her imagination, the novella may be interpreted as an account of female *literary* confinement; as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (cited in Showalter 1985:142) put it, "*the* story that all literary women would tell if they could speak their 'speechless woe'". In this chapter, I point to logistic and symbolic ways in which Victorian women's 'speechless woe' or denial of self-expression under patriarchy was made manifest. Opportunities that the protagonist is offered to 'speak her narrative' are explored. To do this, I draw on

Kristeva's conception of the symbolic and semiotic as the two primary modes in the signifying process.[134] Biography, autobiography and autoethnography are suggested as ways in which the protagonist expresses herself linguistically (through means which lie predominantly in the symbolic). Making reference to Kim Miller's (2005) comment made in relation to victims of trauma that, "speaking about one's experiences as a victim can give the speaker renewed agency, leading to a more empowered life as a survivor", I propose that for the protagonist, 'giving voice' to personal trauma could enable a kind of cathartic healing and agency not unlike to that experienced by individuals who testified at the TRC (see Nuttall & Michael 2000:307).

Historically, like needlework, hysteria has been essentialised as predominantly female. Although it is often interpreted in psychoanalytic, philosophical and feminist discourses as "that which does not speak" (Irigaray 1985 [1977]:136), I suggest that hysteria,[135] in conjunction with needlework and the contemporary practice of cutting,[136] may be understood as modes of signification that originate

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[134] For Kristeva (1984 [1974]:24) the two modes of signification are not completely separate; "Because the subject is always *both* semiotic *and* symbolic, no signifying system he produces can be either 'exclusively' semiotic or 'exclusively' symbolic. And is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both." Once a subject has entered the symbolic order, there can never be a full regression into the semiotic without reverting to psychosis.

[135] In my discussion of hysteria I focus on the period 1862 to 1893, when the disorder was at its height. This corresponds with the time in which the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893), famed (and infamous) for his treatment of hysterical patients, worked at the Salpêtrière asylum in Paris.

[136] Cutting is a form of self-mutilation. It is an act of deliberate self-injury to the body, other examples of which include hitting, scratching, burning the skin or wound interference (Ellis 2002:4). Psychiatric practitioners classify self-mutilating acts in terms of the severity of the injury — the most severe being the amputation of a body part and the least being superficial injury (Favazza 1987). Researchers have found that most individuals who cut are female (Ellis 2002:4). Although the practice of cutting has been evident in western medical literature since the 1900s (Favazza 1987), it was not until 1995, with the Princess of Wales's self-disclosure of her own cutting practices, that it became well-known to the general public (Ellis 2002:4).

in the semiotic.[137] As such, they may be construed as forms of agency: for Bertha Marks, they speculatively represent attempts to 'speak' from within the physical and psychological constraints imposed on women by patriarchal society. For her and the postcolonial protagonist, they are a means of renegotiating boundaries between Self/Other or self and the other-within in the process of forming new identities-in-transit.

I align the protagonist's attempts to 'speak through the body' by means of hysteria, needlework and cutting with what Kristeva identifies as 'transgressive writing' or semiotic discourse. Transgressive writing takes a phenomenological approach: it privileges bodily, preverbal experience over prereferential language. While the semiotic may be expressed verbally, it is not subject to the rules of logic or syntax (McAfee 2004:17). Kristeva (1995a:104) relates the semiotic to archaic "primary processes whose sensory aspects are often nonverbal (sound and melody, rhythm, color, odors)".

Transgressive language has similarities with other forms of 'speaking through the body', such as Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous's *écriture féminine*,[138] in that both privilege non-linear, cyclical, gestural, rhythmic writing. However, from an initial point of agreement with Irigaray and Cixous that resistance to phallogocentric

discourse[139] can take place in the form of *jouissance*,[140] Kristeva differs in that she does not promote the idea that women should aim to work outside of discourses that are alternate to the symbolic order.[141] Rather, she sees liberatory potential in women's marginal position, particularly in that it is unlikely to produce a fixed, authoritative subject or language (Jones 2012). For Kristeva (cited in Jones 2012), "In social, sexual and symbolic experiences, being a woman has always provided a means to … becoming something else: a subject-in-the-making, a subject on trial." Her 'speaking subject' is a *subject-in-process*: subjectivity is produced through, and is dependent on, a continual "dialectic between the semiotic drive force and symbolic stases" (Oliver 1993c:8). Owing to the constant presence of the semiotic, the signifying process can be "transgressive, disruptive, even revolutionary" in its potential to rupture the unity of the symbolic order (McAfee 2004:38). Kristeva's understanding of subjectivity as fluid and evolving seems pertinent to the protagonist. As a speaking subject, her subjectivity-in-process is located

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[137] Following Kristeva, I assert that the terms 'semiotic' and 'symbolic' are differentiated only by their ratio of semiotic to symbolic content. Since hysteria is primarily expressed psychosomatically, its focus on the body marks it as predominantly semiotic, whereas medicalisation may be associated with the symbolic because it "externally represents physicality in the form of written and verbal symbols, which render the body absent" (Fairclough 2011a).

[138] Can be translated as 'female writing' or 'writing the body'. For Cixous and Irigaray, *écriture féminine* is gendered as "the inscription of the feminine body and female difference in language and text" (Showalter 1986a:249).

[139] The French feminist literary theorists Chantal Chawaf, Cixous, Ettinger, Xavière Gauthier, Irigaray, Kristeva and Monique Wittig, share common ground in their analysis of western culture as phallogocentric — a paradigm in which man (white, European and ruling-class) is positioned as the unified, self-controlled centre of the universe. In the institutions and signifying practices (speech, writing, images, myths and rituals) of a phallogocentric culture, woman, as the negative polarity of the Cartesian Self/Other binary, is positioned as 'lack' or 'absence'; she exists, and therefore has meaning, only in relation to man/father as possessor of the phallus (Jones 2012).

[140] That is, in the re-experiencing of the physical pleasures of infancy by the writer's return to the pre-Oedipal, preverbal stage of identification with the mother, and in the re-emergence of later sexual desires which have been repressed but not obliterated by the Law of the Father (McAfee 2004:38).

[141] Kristeva proposes that women should embrace their negative place in patriarchal discourses and in so doing, challenge that which already exists. Irigaray and Cixous however, posit that women's sexuality can be clearly differentiated from men's, and that assertion of this psychosexual specificity in signification is potentially a means by which women might "overthrow masculinist ideologies and … create new female discourses" (Jones 2012). The difference in their approaches results in the ways in which resistance is realised: for Kristeva, transgressive language has the potential to *explode* social codes, whereas Cixous and Irigaray argue that *écriture feminine evades* "the discourse that regulates the phallocentric system" (Cixous 1981:253).

at the *limen* between the symbolic and the semiotic, oscillating between them; the boundary becomes a space where *insiderness* (self) and *outsiderness* (the psychoanalytic Other) are under constant negotiation.

In the *Room* series, where the body is the predominant "place, ground, raw material and milieu" (Venn 2010:336) upon and with which narratives of displacement are inscribed, the room carries further associations with 'insiderness' (of the house, the body and psychological states of introspection) over and beyond those that I touched upon in Chapter Three. I propose that, as in *The yellow wallpaper*, in the *Room* series, the room is an *interior, internal* and *internalised* space. From its physical position in the interior of the house (which is itself an interior space), the narrator and the protagonist internalise the room as a lived space inhabited by the body. Law-Viljoen (2008:5) describes *Dis-Location* itself as "an interiorising of, on the one hand, theatrical, photographic, painterly spaces and, on the other, historical, geographic, political spaces". While this description is pertinent to the exhibition as a whole, it is particularly applicable to the *Room* series, as it points to the room as a site of embodiment and as a heterotopia in which multiple physical, psychological, temporal and imaginary spaces of displacement are juxtaposed. I show how, through the telescoping of many spaces in one site and their consequent reverberations against each other, the room may be understood as a counter-archival 'space of reordering' in which glimpses of the principles underpinning the museum-as-archive may be discerned.

In an attempt to evoke a *sense* of transgressive language, I consciously disrupt the text in the first section of this chapter by interlacing symbolic and semblances of semiotic modes of signification. Descriptive phrases articulated in logical terms are intended to signify the symbolic; the more emotive, poetic flow of words

gestures towards the semiotic. In the performance and video, I draw on the realm of affect and the expressive in an attempt to articulate the protagonist's experience of unsettlement and loss. As I cannot capture these emotive qualities in writing, I use the more evocative phrases as a means of conveying a sense of the affective. Although interwoven, these modes of signification are differentiated from each other by means of italicised and non-italicised text.

5.2   A room of her own

"Just as Dolly stands side-by-side with herself — the double strand of the DNA helix unwound and done up again — so Farber and Bertha Marks sit across from one another in a room, over time, musing in display about … unwelcome biological inheritances that lead back to Kew or back to the shtetl, *or the camp. These converging lines of trajectories back to Kew and forward to the parallax of the viewer's vision give the world depth, put it into relief, send us backward and forward at the same time" (Bishop 2008:113).* Hooves clop, a steam-train pulls in at a station, a car revs. With these sounds, each denoting a temporal and geographic frame, the three personae's generations are 'stitched in time' "*such is the thread of time*" *(Deleuze 1997:30)* slowly unwinding in a chronologically linear sequence. The sounds form part of the soundtrack of the performance that takes place in real time and plays out in the video of the same title, produced from edited footage of the performance. In the performance and video, the dramatisation is played out in a three-dimensional photographic, archival re-creation of a section of the main bedroom in the Sammy Marks Museum (Figure 25). The recreated room (hereafter the 'stage-set') was made by digitally grafting photographs of architectural elements and furniture from the room (a glass door, curtains, skirting board, floorboards, carpet and fireplace) and architectural elements

Figure 25: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*, stage-set re-creation
of the main bedroom in the Sammy Marks Museum, performance still. 2006.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

Figure 26: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own,* performance still. 2006.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

and furniture from other rooms in the house (a frieze and dado rail) and adding 'fictitious' wallpaper depicting a typically Victorian design of intertwined roses. In the stage-set, these two-dimensional, illusionistic representations combine with actual period furniture (a Victorian chair, a period sewing box). To facilitate movement, the stage-set was constructed in three segments that locked together to form a single unit.

Seated within the stage-set, with a freestanding sewing box filled with fresh aloe leaves next to her, the protagonist demurely stitches the leaves into the flesh of her thigh (Figure 26). *"In that torn bit of brown leather brace worked through and through with yellow silk … lies all the passion of some woman's soul finding voice-less expression. Has the pen or pencil dipped so deep in the blood of the human race as the needle?" (Olive Schriener cited in Parker 1984:15).* The protagonist gains access to her thigh through a circular hole resembling an embroidery hoop cut into the upper register of her skirt. "*She is tracked down by the long trail of her beautiful embroidery" (Parker 1984:7).* Beginning with one leaf, she stitches a rosette of six leaves around a wild rose embroidered in *petit point* that she has ostensibly already completed (Figures 27a & 27b), "[t]*rying to find the thread that will tie her to place" (Murray 2008:54).* "*Her work is a kind of post-feminist penal colony in which the machines of torture and, ironically, liberation are needle, thread and thorn" (Law-Viljoen 2008:4).*

The first narrative of the soundtrack is that of Bertha Marks; voice-over quotations from her letters to her husband, discussed in Chapter Four, can be heard over classical piano music popular during the Victorian era. From Bertha Marks's narrative, the sequence moves into Freda Farber's anecdotal recollections of leaving Latvia and memories of growing up in South Africa, also discussed

Figures 27a & 27b: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own,* performance stills. 2006.
Photographs by Michael Meyersfeld.

Figure 28: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*,
detail of wallpaper before the performance. 2006.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

in Chapter Four. The third segment, representing the postcolonial persona's narrative, begins with an excerpt from South African Prime Minister BJ Vorster's infamous 'We will Fight to the Bitter End' (*The Winds …* 2004) 1970 speech, followed by protests of *Amandla Maatla* (*The Winds …* 2004) from the Soweto uprising of 16 June 1976. Thereafter, the postcolonial protagonist's experiences of displacement are represented by ambient sounds of contemporary Johannesburg (glass breaking, cell-phones ringing, taxis hooting and alarms sounding) that increase in volume until they create a cacophony that overwhelms the harmonious background music.

Before the performance I built up the printed wallpaper of the stage-set into relief using pigmented wax. A three-dimensional wax counterpart replaced each rose of the original wallpaper motif, and the smooth background to the motif was modelled into an irregularly moulded, tactile surface (Figure 28).

In its waxen-fleshy state at the start of the performance, the wallpaper is suggestive of skin.[142] As Georges Didi-Huberman (1999:65, 66) says, in its "plasticity, instability, fragility, sensitivity to heat [wax] suggests the feeling or fantasy of flesh … there probably exists no other substance that can imitate with such polyvalence both the *external flesh*, the skin and all the *internal flesh*, the muscles and viscera".

I chose to work with wax not only because of its propensity to mimic flesh but also because of its inherent instability. Much of the affective impact and meaning of the performance hinges on exploitation of wax's potential to transform from

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[142] The analogy of flesh and wax dates back to the seventeenth century, when wax was used in the rendition of anatomically correct medical models used for teaching purposes (see *Encyclopedia anatomica* 1999).

one physical state to another. During the performance, application of heat from the back of the aluminium surfaces of the stage-set cause the wax to shift and melt and the roses to drop to the floor. Heat, in this instance, is metaphoric of the warmth of the 'African sun' that destabilises the known sureness of the protagonist's colonial world. The melting wax reveals that in certain areas roses in the printed wallpaper have transformed into images of aloes. Wax, as used in this artwork, thus embodies states of formation and transformation: as Didi-Huberman (1999:64, 65) puts it, "wax ... 'moves' in the sense that it 'upsets' ... [it] presents a disconcerting multiplicity of physical properties ... the fundamental *passivity* — malleability — and *fragility* of wax ... [is] always consequent on some kind of metamorphosis". The idea of the *Room* series being in-process, or in a perpetual state of becoming, is analogous to the protagonist's processes of physical and psychological transmutation.

When working up the wallpaper surfaces, I applied alizarin crimson-coloured wax as a first layer over the printed wallpaper. As a result, the roses and their attached pieces of 'fleshy' wallpaper appear to be 'bleeding' as they slide down the wall, leaving viscous traces of their paths (Figure 29). *"[T]he wax roses melt, in Bertha's chilly hothouse ... slowly ... until, yes! ... the wax blob merges into a metaphor of the woman's bleeding flesh" (Murray 2008:54).* Together with large sections of 'flesh', the roses fall to the floor around the protagonist, who, deeply absorbed in her needlework, is oblivious of the catastrophe of her colonial world collapsing around her. *"She is a patiently sewing woman whose quiet undoing is suggested by the wax roses sliding down the walls of her boudoir, whose obsessions with the minutiae of thread and needle is, to our horror, a passage into her own flesh, her own past" (Law-Viljoen 2008:6).*

Figure 29: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own,* detail of wallpaper after the performance. 2006. Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

"The camera evokes her still, with her world melting around her, the walls more porous than skin, as porous as time, as porous as borders of countries and cultures and cultivations … Here, in this room, we have the long, slow smear of time, as the materiality of the world undoes itself, is undone, comes undone. From the gelatinous marks we can gather the residue of time" (Bishop 2008:117, 115). In his reference to 'the long slow, smear of time', Bishop draws analogies between the 'gelatinous marks' or residues the melting roses and 'flesh' leave on the wallpaper, the movement of the roses and their waxy attachments, the shifting of continents and people across the globe and the temporal distance over a century that plays out during the performance. While liquid and in motion, the wax residues bear a strong resemblance to blood and bodily fluids (Figure 30a), and are thus strongly abject. However, once solidified, the residues are more evocative of what Rosalind Krauss (2005 [1996]:397) calls the "condition of matter": a viscosity that is "neither

solid nor liquid but somewhere midway between the two" that evokes a "slow drag against the fluidity of liquid" (Figure 30b).[143] By the end of the performance, the wallpaper surfaces appear as if arrested in an intermediatory state between form and formlessness (Figure 31).

In the performance, the physical enactment of the 'smear of time' takes place by mounting one of five video cameras on floor-tracks. As the performance unfolds in real time, with the aid of a mechanical motion device the video camera, almost imperceptibly, moves from the left-hand side of the stage-set across to the right. In so doing, it captures the actual 'time' of the 30-minute performance, as well as the fictive and historical span of time it references. The second of the remaining four cameras focuses on the protagonist's body, the third on roving views of the melting roses and the fourth on a close-up of the protagonist's stitching. The fifth, a static camera, is trained on a single view of the roses as they melt throughout the duration of the performance. Footage of the stitching detail plays out in real time on a Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) screen visible to the audience.

The narrative extends into a series of three photographic prints, titled *Generation, Generation (detail)* and *Redemption*. In them, time has elapsed since the protagonist stitched the aloe leaves into her thigh. Seated amongst the mounds of fallen wax roses and pieces of melted wallpaper, she lifts her skirt to reveal that the aloe leaves have withered and at their central core, replacing the tapestry rose, a new, succulent hybrid plant has emerged. The blood-red embroidery cotton that she used to stitch the leaves into her skin has grown into her flesh,

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[143] Krauss (2005:397) points to congruencies between the abject and the condition of matter, in that both have the potential to disrupt an individual's sense of being a unified separate and distinct self through the loss of ego boundaries.

Figures 30a & 30b: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own,*
details of wallpaper after the performance. 2006.
Photographs by Charles Blackbeard.

Figure 31: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*,
detail of wallpaper after the performance. 2006.
Photograph by Michael Meyersfeld.

Figure 32: Désiré-Magloire Bourneville and Paul Regnard,
Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière, 1877-1880.
Photograph, Paris. (Emotions and disease 2000).

Figure 33: Désiré-Magloire Bourneville and Paul Regnard,
Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière, 1877-1880.
Photograph, Paris. (Horror, hallucination, hysteria [sa]).

forming a system of roots and veins in her calf. These extrude from the skin at certain points of growth, unravelling into threads on the floor. In *Redemption,* she collapses amidst the debris. Her pose suggests that she might have undergone, or is undergoing, an hysterical fit, given that its theatricality is reminiscent of, but not a direct reference to, those poses adopted by women in what Jean-Martin Charcot diagnosed as the third stage of an hysterical attack. In this stage, known as the *attitudes passionnelles* (passionate gestures),[144] the hysteric embodied heightened, transformative emotional states, such as hatred or love. The theatrical poses adopted by women in the various stages of the *attitudes passionnelles* (Figures 32

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[144] The complete seizure or *grande hystérie* (hystereo-epilepsy) involved three phases: the epileptoid phase, in which a woman lost consciousness and foamed at the mouth; the clownism phase, involving bizarre contortions; and the phase of *attitudes passionnelles*, an enactment of incidents and emotions from the patient's life (Showalter 1985:150).

& 33) were captured by photography, wherein, as Martha Noël Evans (1991:24) puts it, "patients were turned into manipulable objects as their convulsions became a series of still-life portraits collected in albums by Charcot's assistants". Charcot's interpretation of hysteria as linked to female sexuality and the sublimation of female desire is evident in the titles of these photographs: *Amorous supplication; Ecstasy; Eroticism* (Showalter 1985:150).

In the exhibition the three 'spatial' segments of the stage-set are separated and displayed as freestanding units, each of which has been reworked to form an individual installation. The frontal section of the original stage-set forms the primary installation and the two smaller side-sets are displayed as separate entities. Cast-wax aloes of varying scales, suggestive of new growth, nestle amongst the melted roses and remnants of the wallpaper; in the main stage-set, small *cultivars* are integrated into the upholstery of the chair (Figures 34a & 34b) and two large-scale *cultivars* grow out of the floorboards (Figures 35a & 35b). These sculptural plants 'penetrate' the floorboards and the wall, disrupting the hermetically sealed nature of the house.

Figure 34a: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*,
details of tapestry and upholstery of chair, main stage-set installation. 2006-2007.
Photograph by Creative Colour Solutions.

"While reticent in its grotesqueries … the interior scape has about it [a] sumptuous quality … there is the hint of ever more lushness, a nausea waiting to overwhelm in an ambiguous environment where 'craft' manifests as simultaneously a minor female felicity, a queasy social constraint, and a time-honoured skill that might just be able to move the body forward, into an Africanised future" (Murray 2008:54). With the exception of the tapestry roses, the upholstery of the chair is covered in wax that is suggestive of tones of Caucasian flesh. Trails of embroidery cotton emerge from torn pieces of tapestry roses, cascading onto the floor in gradations of light to dark (white) flesh-tone hues. *"[T]hread can be used to embroider and embellish, in other words, to fabricate a fiction falsifying a face — the masking of a culture by its colonisation; or the Africanisation of the European immigrant?"* (Ord 2008:107). 'Root-vein systems' emerge from the lower level of the sewing box, each sprouting a strand of thread. In their multiplicity the threads form an entangled mass spilling out over the edges of the main stage-set. *"Thread is the material for … pulling together multiple strands in a relationship of variable length"* (Ord 2008:107). Small-scale *cultivars* encased in Victorian bell jars replace the aloe leaves in the sewing box.

In addition to the primary video that comprises edited footage from all five cameras, I produced four separate videos from the edited footage of the melting roses, the stitching into the skin, the roses landing on the floor and the static view of the roses melting during the performance. In the exhibition, the videos of the stitching detail and close-ups of the melting roses play on miniature LCD screens mounted on the walls of the two side-sets. Each screen is contained within a black Victorian-style frame so that the video appears to be an animated 'picture' on the wall (Figures 36a & 36b). I edited the footage of the roses dropping onto the floor and the static shots into a further two videos that play on 32-inch plasma

Figure 34b: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*,
details of tapestry and upholstery of chair, main stage-set installation. 2006-2007.
Photograph by Clive Hassall.

Figures 35a & 35b: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*,
detail of *cultivars* growing out of floorboards, main stage-set installation. 2006-2007.
Photographs by Brent Meistre.

screens mounted on either side of the main stage-set. As they are also framed, the screens create a similar impression of being moving paintings hanging on the gallery wall. Ceiling panels are suspended above the main stage-set and the smaller of the two side-sets.

At the lowest register of each stage-set, photographic prints of characteristically 'red' 'African' soil, roots and rhizomes, resembling a cross-section of geographic strata, create the illusion of being able to see underground into the foundations of the *Room* (Figure 37).[145] Prints of a life-sized vertical cross-section of Victorian brickwork, in which young aloe seedlings protrude from the plaster, form panels on each side of the stage-sets, creating the illusion that each stage-set represents a cut-out segment of the room (Figure 38).

The culmination of these additions and changes to the original stage-set creates a sense of the room as having shifted from being a transitional space for the performance of self-transformative rituals to being a site of transformation itself. In the installations, the *Room* appears to be in an arrested, yet seemingly endless, process of becoming: *"the decor and the flowers … are in constant process of morphing into something else: the wallpaper flowers slide down the walls of the room and decay; Bertha's/Farber's body is pierced by the grafts of tropical plants; it is as if everything has been invaded by a viral contagion already accomplishing transmutation" (Venn 2010:330).* In a similar way to that in which the 'African' aloe germinated in the protagonist's body, indigenous plant growth pervades the colonial room-as-body. Together with the melted roses, the growth

Figures 36a & 36b: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*, detail of videos, side-set installations. 2006-2007. Photographs by Clive Hassall.

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[145] In instances, I use the abbreviation 'the *Room*' to denote a combination of the 'stage-set' (as an artwork) and the conception of it as the *protagonist's* room before, during and after the performance.

Figure 37: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*,
detail of roots and soil, main stage-set installation. 2006-2007.
Photograph by Clive Hassall.

reflects the demise of the protagonist's colonial lifeworld; *"The on-going decay of the reconstituted world Bertha has left behind embodies the impossibility of authenticity and fixity for the self. The room may well be a prison, or purgatorio, an in-between place where one awaits transmutation or deliverance: from the past, from dislocation, from the unfamiliar or unhomely" (Venn 2010:330).* To borrow Coetzee's (1988:11) words, "no longer European, not yet African", the in-betweenness of the *Room* might be thought of as a "hybrid hyphenation" (Bhabha 1994:313) — a space wherein cultural translation takes place, not through accumulation but through improvisation. If applied to the *Room*, Bhabha's conception of the hybrid as that which "is not formed out of a ... transferral of foreignness into the familiar" but rather "out of ... awareness of the untranslatable bits ... the incommensurable elements ... the stubborn chunks ... that linger on *in* translation" (Papastergiadis 1995:18) is pertinent. 'Stubborn chunks' of colonialism remain in the structure, architectural elements and furnishings of the *Room*; these 'linger on' in combination with new growth. Extending Bhabha's

Figure 38: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*,
detail of brickwork and wallpaper, main stage-set installation. 2006-2007.
Photograph by Brent Meistre.

conception of hybridity to the process of cultural transformation in the *Room*, "The interaction between the two cultures proceeds with the illusion of transferable forms and transparent knowledge but leads increasingly into resistant, opaque, and dissonant exchanges" (Papastergiadis 1995:18). It is in this tension that the Third Space emerges.

5.3 Animating the archive

> One of the defining characteristics of the modern era has been the increasing significance given to the archive as the means by which historical knowledge and forms of remembrance are accumulated, stored and recovered … The archive is not one and the same as forms of remembrance, or as history. Manifesting itself in the form of traces, it contains the potential to fragment and destabilize either remembrance as recorded, or history as written, as sufficient means of providing the last word in the account of what has come to pass (Merewether 2006:10).

As Alexandra Dodd (2010:470) acknowledges, one of the most crucial developments in visual art since the 1960s has been a turn to the archive. This turn is usually towards developing a new and distinctively postcolonial and/or postapartheid concept of the archive, in which the politics of selection and classification of knowledge (that which is included or excluded) are interrogated or destabilised. Counter-archival practices can take the forms of performance and artistic interventions in which the limitations of the archive are challenged (Hamilton 2010). In such productions, artists often draw on documentary traces, reinterpreting or reanimating them in ways that open up new forms of engagement with the past. Merewether (2006:16) speaks of the counter-archive as "a form of recollection of that which has been silenced and buried … standing against the monumental history of the state". As Jillian Carman (2008d:75) notes, in postcolonial and postapartheid times memories, in the form of archives, "have become resources to be used for engaging with the past, refiguring old material, and turning the repositories of history into narratives for the present". She continues that *Dis-Location* is rooted in archival material, including "places, written records, imagery, landscape, plants, woman's work, religion, sound, physical change and, importantly, the body, which is the locus for accumulated heritage and struggles of identity" (Carman 2008d:70). Collectively these materials create a counter-archive that, "demonstrate[s] … how memory and archives can be used to create new ways of understanding our past and present contexts" (Carman 2008d:72).

My use of the Sammy Marks Museum as an archival repository is perhaps most evident in the stage-set. Here, a Victorian room in a museum is refigured into an artwork which chronicles an account of "identities past, present and compound" (Ord 2008:107). To-scale representations of elements from the room are integrated with representations of other elements found in the house. The stage-set contains objects that resemble those which decorate the room as it has been preserved. Post-performance, each of these elements and objects were subject to a series of alterations and additions that allude to transformation processes that have taken place (in the past) and appear to be under way (in the present of the exhibition). Space and time fuse chronotopically: in the *Room* performance, Bakhtin's (1981:84) argument that time "thickens" during a performance, "taking on flesh, becoming artistically visible [as] … space becomes charged and responsive to the movement of time" is borne out.

The individual stage-sets were reconstructed in each of the seven venues on the exhibition tour.[146] Thus, as Carman (2008d:71, emphasis added) points out: "There is a simultaneous dislocation of an archival source ([the] stage-set that reconstructs a bedroom in a museum) and a relocation in a new archive (the stage-set — *the dislocated archive* — is now inserted into the architectural archive of the exhibition venue)." Wherever possible, the exhibition venues were chosen for their neoclassicist architecture, characteristic of British building style in South Africa (and the colonies in general) in the late Victorian era and the first half of the twentieth century.[147] Relocation of a simulated Victorian bedroom in gallery spaces that architecturally echo its period results in what Ord (2008:107) describes as "a tension between the real and the artificial ... the museum setting and the stage-set, history and fiction".

The room itself is a 'reconstructed space' in that it is part of a recreation of an English country house. As it bears no trace of new location in southern Africa, it could literally be a Victorian English bedroom transplanted onto African soil, as the representations of red earth and roots of the reworked stage-sets imply.[148] The

room, in its original form at Zwartkoppies and as a stage-set in *Dis-Location*, is a physical yet fictitious reconstruction of Bertha Marks's 'home' away from home; as mentioned previously, its objects and furnishings act as 'culturally portable' 'containers of memory'; talismans of home (in England) and social class (Plotz 2007:660, 661).[149] While, despite its limitations, it may have been a utopian space in which Bertha Marks could imagine herself to be 'at home', the 'English' room and its objects and furnishings are 'out of place' in their new location in southern Africa.[150] In a similar way, the stage-sets represent displaced segments or 'slices' of the actual room. Emplaced in the gallery space, the stage-sets form heterotopias in that they are, literally and metaphorically, dislocated sites. Bertha Marks's original bedroom as part of an archive, the stage-sets as spaces wherein the archive and history are realigned and the museums or galleries in which they are exhibited bear direct correlations with Foucault's (1986 [1967]:26) fourth principle, in which

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[146] These were the Albany History Museum, Grahamstown, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth, the Johannesburg Art Gallery and the Durban Art Gallery.

[147] As Thomas Metcalf (1989:177, 178) observes, "the use of classical forms to express the spirit of Empire, was, for the late-Victorian Englishman, at once obvious and appropriate, for classical style[s], with their reminders of Greece and Rome, were the architectural medium through which Britain always apprehended Empire". Empire itself became the vehicle for the English to "gigantically replicate themselves, carrying with them their language, their culture, their institutions and their industry" (Krishan 2003:183).

[148] Lessing (1994 [1949]:74) describes a similar kind of discrepancy between the 'English interior' and the 'African exterior' with regard to her mother's difficulty in reconciling the inside and outside of their colonial house in Southern Rhodesia:

> All around her were the signs and symbols of the respectable life she had believed was her right, her future, silver tea trays, English watercolours, Persian rugs, the classics in their red leather editions, the Liberty curtains. But she was living in what amounted to a mud hut, and all she could see from her high bed was the African bush.

[149] In her comment that the stage-set, as it looks during the performance, "could be Bertha Marks's home in 1906, or ... a contemporary upper middle-class 'period' home in Kloof, Constantia, Westcliff", Murray (2008:53) points to how the domestic interiors of English Victorian and Edwardian homes serve as a template for the interior design of many contemporary South African homes. To speculate: perhaps it is because this style is associated with the Victorian values of decorum and respectability that it has been adopted by middle- to upper-class South African homeowners across a broad range of historically delineated racial categories. Contemporary reproductions of this style might therefore be seen as part of a colonial legacy that lingers in postcolonial South Africa, as a reflection of the homeowner's aspirations to 'classic', 'cultured' or 'timeless' traditional British values or perhaps as a way of 'insulating' the (WESSA) homeowner against perceived threats emanating from living under the new dispensation.

[150] If read in the light of Bachelard's (1964 [1958]) phenomenological exploration of the home, Bertha Marks's imaginative reconstruction of her 'home' in England could be seen as testimony to her 'imaginative power' or psychological flexibility, and thus as a means of self-expression. Focusing on *lived space*, for Bachelard, memories of prior dwellings are an intrinsic part of creating "new homes based on ... continuity with the past and past spaces" (Snyder-Rheingold 2003 [1999]). According to Bachelard (1964:6), "By approaching the house images with care not to break up the solidarity of memory and imagination ... we may hope to make others feel all the psychological elasticity of an image that moves us at an unimaginable depth." As Snyder-Rheingold (2003) explains, Bachelard's 'elasticity' alludes to a spatial depth and expansion that is contingent on the imagination. For Bachelard (1964:6), it is through writing or literature, "through poems, perhaps even more than recollections" that one may "touch the ultimate poetic depth of the space of the house".

he considers the museum as a heterotopia of collected time. When exhibited in the galleries or museums, the stage-sets therefore form secondary heterotopias within the primary heterotopia of the museum.

Zwartkoppies and its contents as a dislocated and relocated site and as a museum, the reassembling and transformation of architectural elements and furnishings derived from Zwartkoppies in the stage-sets, and the emplacement of the stage-sets in a second museum create a multiplicity of heterotopias. Each heterotopia operates in relation to the others, clashing in their interrelationships to create additional disturbing spatio-temporal units. The intensification of the empirical, phenomenological and ontological knowledge each heterotopia contains and the interplays between these sites create "ruptures in ordinary life, imaginary realms, polyphonic representations" (Daniel Defert cited in Johnson 2006:87). If regarded as sites in which the archive is subject to an 'alternative ordering', they can be said to act as counter-hegemonic spaces or counter-archives that expose the governing principles and underpinning ideologies of the original archive.

The temporal and ideological correlations between the artwork and the exhibition spaces set up an interesting trialectic between the colonial architecture and history of the gallery, the imagery and content of the artwork and the postcolonial context of the present. Although this trialectic was present in each of the seven venues, the artwork resonated most powerfully for me at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG). In this context, the contemporary temporal, ideological and physical space of the JAG and the chronotopic fusion of South Africa's colonial past and postcolonial present in *Dis-Location* gave rise to a series of characteristically heterotopic tensions. Given the correlating periods in which they were constructed, many architectural, and consequently ideological, similarities between the JAG and

Zwartkoppies are evident, albeit that the former is a public space and the latter a domestic one. Designed by British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, the JAG opened to the public in 1915 as a colonial monument to house a European art collection in the developing city of Johannesburg. It formed part of a broader scheme that "sought to encourage a particular type of settler to Johannesburg, to regulate their social lives and to assert the superiority of British culture" (Carman 2006:55). Establishing an art gallery was a way of, as Carman (2006) puts it in the title of her book, "uplifting the colonial philistine" through exposure to British cultural values. As she notes, "there was no indigenous production that was 'fine art' in the European sense; settlers and visitors found nothing that could be appropriated to a European construct, there was no circular re-importation of a Europeanised indigenous specimen. The fine art museum was a foreign import" (Carman 2006:30).

Paintings by British artists featured prominently in the JAG's early collection. To reference the JAG's colonial origins and ways in which these are reflected in choices of early works acquired, I drew on paintings from the JAG's historical collection (which represents an archive in itself), namely *The Seamstress* (second half of the nineteenth century) by the English pre-Raphaelite painter Rosa Brett (Figure 39) and *Stitch! Stitch!* (1876) by Sir John Everett Millais (Figure 40). These hang in each corner next to the main stage-set in the Florence Phillips Gallery (Figures 41a & 41b). They form a counterpoint to the historical photographs of Freda Farber and her family (1935) (Figure 18), a group photograph of the first Kagan family immigrants to South Africa (1902) (Figure 21) and a studio portrait of Bertha Marks (1906) (Figure 17). Derived from the Latin *punctus contra punctum,* meaning 'point against point', the term 'counterpoint' in this instance refers to the dialogical relationship between the photographs. While they differ temporally,

geographically and generationally, and are thus independent of each other, when hung together they become interdependent, reading with and against one another to form a polyphonic synthesis.

Architecturally and ideologically, as was the case for most art galleries established by the British across the country, the JAG represents a transplantation of British cultural values, first into southern Africa and thereafter into the Union of South Africa. Like Zwartkoppies, the JAG is a heterotopia — a site of colonial displacement, and, in accordance with Foucault's fourth principle, a museum in which time accumulates. The JAG forms a further heterotopia in its current position in the Johannesburg inner-city — architecturally, that which remains of the original neoclassicist edifice now resembles a displaced colonial island in the midst of an Afropolitan, postcolonial space. Joubert Park, the area in which the JAG is located, has changed from what was a predominantly white, bourgeois, urban living, shopping and leisure space in the late 1980s to what David Bunn (2008:154) describes as "a hub that spins off centrifugal traffic and collects the centripetal journeys of migrants ... a space of flows, and temporary associations".

Refugee communities from various African countries use peripheral spaces around the JAG, including the adjacent park originally designed by Lutyens as a frontispiece to the gallery, as sites for microenterprise trading.[151] Entry into

Figure 39 (left): Rosa Brett, *The Seamstress*. (Second half of the nineteenth century).
Oil on canvas, 30.8 x 25.5cm.
Courtesy of the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

Figure 40 (right): John Everett Millais, *Stitch! Stitch!* 1876.
Oil on canvas, 76 x 63.8cm.
Courtesy of the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

Figures 41a & 41b: *Dis-Location/Re-Location*,
installation in the Florence Phillips Gallery, the JAG, 2008.
Photographs by Clive Hassall.

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[151] The park is as much a heterotopia as the gallery itself. Designed according to Edwardian logics of civil aesthetics combining regular geometry, formal plantings and axial paths, the park was associated with "decorous bourgeois wandering" and "the idea of pleasurable retirements and the arts" (Bunn 2008:158). Ironically, according to Melinda Silverman and Msizi Myeza (cited in Bunn 2008:168), the layout of the park "emphasized regularity and order in contrast to the chaotic streets of the rapidly developing town" of Johannesburg in the late nineteenth century. Like the rose garden at Zwartkoppies, the park is doubly displaced: its design is a European import and its layout mirrors colonial cultural ideals, yet it is located in the midst of an Afropolitan space. Echoing the way in which access to the heterotopia is often controlled, the

the gallery necessitates negotiation between street hawkers' stalls, curio sellers' stands, streams of human traffic, all set within a major taxi rank of the local minibus taxi industry. As a result, many whites perceive the instability of the area to impart a sense of danger (Bunn 2008:156): the 'outside' of the JAG "must literally be physically negotiated in order to cross into the space of the 'inside'" (Allan 2008:[sp]).

However, despite marked disjunctures between the contemplative silence 'inside' the JAG and the chaos of the city 'outside', 'crossing over into the inside' does not necessarily mean crossing into a colonial space (Allan 2008:[sp]). While the ideological underpinnings of Empire and temporal references to its colonial past are cemented in its architecture, since the early 2000s the JAG's immediate environment in the inner-city and its interactions with Joubert Park have had a direct impact on the JAG's curatorial practices (Carman 2012).[152] As a civic institution, its pedagogic foci and visitor demographics reflect transformation processes for, as Anthea Buys (2011:46) observes, "In recent years, the JAG has provided both material and site for curators, artists and critics attempting to make sense of the repercussions of apartheid in Johannesburg's urban social life and culture." Given this combination of contrasts, oppositions and juxtapositions, all of which reverberate discordantly against one another and the surrounding sites, the JAG epitomises a site of otherness. Its otherness is established through ways in which spatial and social relations are reordered and alternatively represented, creating a 'third' site imbued with unsettling tensions. Presentation of *Dis-*

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park is surrounded by a metal fence that demarcates it as a separate space from its surroundings and from the JAG itself.

[152] See Bunn (2008:153-164) for examples of the many artistic projects undertaken since 2000 in which project leaders or curators aim to bring the 'outside' of the JAG into a more fluid relation with the 'inside'.

Location within this heterotopia intensified the already existing tensions between ideological positionings, temporal differences and physical space, which resulted in jarring levels of discomfort.

5.4   Inner/interior politics and proximities

> Interiority constantly hollows us out, splits us in two, doubles us, even though our unity subsists (Deleuze 1997:31).

In the *Room* series, tensions between insiderness and outsiderness similar to those evident at the JAG play out, as well as tensions between the body, the *Room* and their inter-relations.

Radiating from the exterior inwards, hedges and walls with gates enclose an estate such as Zwartkoppie's grounds. The grounds contain the house, which itself denotes a second level of privacy. The house and its grounds therefore act as mechanisms of confinement: "ancestral places situated within a legacy of control and supervision" (Snyder-Rheingold 2003 [1999]). Located at the core of these 'interior/exterior' apparatuses, the bedroom forms a locus of what Mark Wigley (cited in Snyder-Rheingold 2003) calls a "secret privacy" within the privacy of the home; "it is its own interior wrought with overtones of mystery and intrigue" (Snyder-Rheingold 2003). As in *The yellow wallpaper*, the *Room* contains the female body and is a space in which the protagonist performs secretive acts. This coupling suggests associations between the *Room* and the body: both are secret, both contain secrets. Writing about the body and secrecy, Ludmilla Jordanova (cited in Snyder-Rheingold 2003) notes:

Veiling implies secrecy. Women's bodies, and by extension, female attributes, cannot be treated as fully public, something dangerous might happen, secrets be let out, if they were open to view. Yet in presenting something as inaccessible and dangerous, an invitation to know and to possess is extended. The secrecy associated with female bodies is sexual and linked to the multiple associations between women and privacy.

Thus, as metonym for the female body, the *Room* might represent "the enigma and threat generated by the concept of female sexuality in patriarchal culture" (Mulvey 1992:630). The combination of the reified body and the 'forbidden' space of the *Room* invokes a sense of spatial proximity between the two, and bodily associations of enclosure and intrigue. As suggested in Chapter Three, the room constitutes a heterotopia of crisis *and* deviance, since it carries similar attributes of sacredness, secrecy, forbiddances, clandestineness and transgressiveness as these two forms of heterotopias. In both the *Room* series and *The yellow wallpaper,* an internal narrative space is set up that as Snyder-Rheingold (2003), speaking in relation to *The yellow wallpaper*, points out, "interrogates its very interiority". Unintentionally echoing Snyder-Rheingold's words, Law-Viljoen (2008:4) describes *Dis-Location* as "a work of unremitting interiority"; in the *Room* series, all is "inward, infolded, and yet played out on the skin — an exteriority that reveals interiority" (Bishop 2007).

Snyder-Rheingold (2003) conceives of Gilman's novella in architectural terms. I suggest that the *Dis-Location* narratives might be similarly read, given that, with the exception of the *Aloerosa* series, the narratives are all interior. The structural interior/exterior dichotomy is foregrounded in each narrative and particularly in the *Room*, where the main stage-set features a view of the rose garden outside

the glass door of the room (Figure 42). As it is particularly congruous with my conception of the *Room,* I take the liberty of extending Snyder-Rheingold's (2003, some emphasis added) observation to the *Room* series:

> [It] is not a space innocuously located within the house's interior ... the bedroom is *internalized* ... actively inner, not merely 'inside' the home, but consciously constructed as interior and localized as the absolute antinomy of all that is external to it ... *It is as if the space of the bedroom turns in on itself, folding in on the body as the walls take hold of it.*

In this quotation Snyder-Rheingold captures the sense of the room-as-body and body-as-room that I attempted to set up through the use of wax. Prior to the melt, in their evocation of external flesh, the wax-covered walls are analogous to the protagonist's skin. Skin forms "a line of demarcation, a periphery ... separating the outside from the inside ... It is separation, individuality, the basis for corporeal privacy and ... the point of contact for everything outside the self" (Dworkin 1987:25). Much of the inner body (blood, plasma) is fluid in nature, as opposed to the external body that, enclosed by skin, contains these masses within its boundaries. During the melt, the containing boundaries of the wallpaper 'skin' dissolve, possibly arousing associations with the formless, limitless and undefined nature of the inner body (Figure 43a & 43b). Didi-Huberman (1999:66) draws links between the vision of internal flesh, a sense of anxious insight and the material properties of wax, noting that inner flesh is "the inverse of human form, the formless itself", and that, "in its ever-to-be-expected indecision between form and the formless, wax remains, historically and phenomenologically, the incomparable material of *organic resemblances*". The visceral qualties of the wax are disturbingly abject, suggesting a loss of bodily boundaries for the protagonist and a sense of mergence between the protagonist's body and the fleshy walls of the *Room*. As Kristeva (1995b:22) notes, in an abject state, "one is neither subject

nor object … the borders between the object and the subject cannot be maintained … the autonomy or substance of the subject is called into question, endangered. I am solicited by the other in such a way that I collapse."

Snyder-Rheingold's analogy between the interiority of the room and the interior of the body[153] and my attempts to evoke a sense of dissolving bodily boundaries in the *Room* resonate with Merleau-Ponty's (1964b) phenomenological analysis of the body-world relation. Venn (2010:336) touches on salient points raised in Merleau-Ponty's analysis, which I refer to in the discussion to follow, whilst also tracing them back to the primary source (Merleau-Ponty 1964b). Merleau-Ponty (1964b:22) proposes the idea of an indivisible connection that binds the being who feels with what is felt, noting that, "A human body comes into existence when, in-between the being who sees and the visible, between touching and what is touched, between one eye and the next, between each of one's hands, a kind of folding over occurs, when the spark of the sensing-sensed is kindled." He understands the body-world relationship as being contingent upon the juncture binding the outside and the inside, so that the one cannot be reduced to the other; each is enfolded into the other (Merleau-Ponty 1964a). For Merleau-Ponty the dynamic experience of mutual enfolding and unfolding between the world

Figure 42: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*, detail of interior-exterior space, main stage-set installation. 2006-2007. Photograph by Creative Colour Solutions.

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[153] In her autobiographical writings, Lessing (1994 [1949], 1997 [1957]) sets up a similar analogue between the protected domestic interior of the settler home in Southern Rhodesia and the white Englishwoman's body. Both are sheltered and sheltering, and fundamental to the propagation of Englishness in the colonised land (Rosner 1999:84). In Lessing's (1997:40, 41) descriptions of her family's farmhouse, she establishes links between the architectural components of the house and the skin of the body: for instance, she describes the walls of the house as "covered in a thick dark mud-skin" and the grass roof being "flattened like old flesh" (Lessing 1997:41). Furthermore, Lessing (1994:195) experiences the house as an extension of her own body: "my house … was like my other skin." Lessing's sense of bodily integrity eventually expands to merge with the walls of the house so that her skin and the 'skin' of the house become one (Rosner 1999:75).

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and self, between embodied experience and consciousness, produces a double perception of the world: it is known through phenomenological inner experience as well as empirical apprehension (Venn 2010:337). He reiterates this doubleness of perception in his concept of the 'flesh' of the world as the threshold between the interior and exterior of being: "The thickness of the body, far from rivalling that of the world, is on the contrary the only means which I have for reaching into the heart of things, by making a world of myself and by making them into flesh ... The body unites us to things directly through its own ontogenesis, by welding together the two outlines of which it is composed" (Merleau-Ponty 1964a:176, 177).

Merleau-Ponty's body-world relation sets up a dialectic between the interior of the world and the interior of the self and vice versa. His view of the body-world chasm presupposes that, "the gaze has an interior dimension and that the perceptible exterior 'has a prolongation, in the enclosure of my body, which is part of its being'" (Merleau-Ponty 1964a:319). In Snyder-Rheingold's conception of the room in *The yellow wallpaper* as an interiorised bodily and psychological space, the gaze is similarly turned inwards: inasmuch as the narrator phenomenologically and ontologically 'internalises' the wallpaper, she perceives the wallpaper-as-body to gaze upon her and as having visual authority over her. In this sense, Snyder-Rheingold (2003) argues, the room becomes panopticon-like: a "contrived viewing apparatus with 'hidden mechanisms'" that covertly forces the narrator into a position of self-surveillance. The knowledge that she is being 'watched' by the wallpaper causes her to observe herself in the act of looking — to internalise the gaze and consequently to internalise the room. As Snyder-Rheingold (2003) concludes, "this gaze is instrumental in creating the bedroom as interior — peering inward and 'interiorizing' the bedroom despite its already interior status".

Figures 43a & 43b: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own,* detail of roses after the performance. 2006-2007. Photographs by Charles Blackbeard.

In the performance and video there is a tension between the ways in which the *protagonist* (as an *image*) and *myself* (*performing* the part of the postcolonial protagonist) engage with the dynamics of seeing and being seen. Although she performs her feminine and colonial subjectivities for an unseen audience and for herself, the *protagonist* enjoys what she believes to be privacy in the enclosure of her room. However, her privacy is illusory: she is in actuality constantly under surveillance — by the mechanistic gaze of the video-camera lens; by the audience at the performance; by the viewer of the video. Their gaze is voyeuristic: she is 'caught' in the midst of an illicit act. Produced by 'the look', she exists as an image only through her "looked-at-ness" (Mulvey 1975:63). Yet, as has been mentioned in Chapter Three, I *(as performer)* have a heightened awareness of observing myself through these external 'eyes' and know that I am being observed. Like the narrator, I self-surveil — while I perform for an audience, I internalise its gaze. Post-performance, viewing myself as performer in the video problematises this position. As an active looker, I watch myself playing the part of Bertha Marks and the postcolonial protagonist but, while watching, feel an active connection between the disembodied (optical) image of my body on the screen and the lived, felt experience of being in my body. Thus the questions that Snyder-Rheingold (2003) asks with reference to the narrator — "is the protagonist in fact writing in secret? What is it, then, to write in a privatized space that is subject to a constant watch?" also pertain to the *Room* series.

In the performance, subject-object relations such as the *protagonist* performing as the object of the audience's voyeuristic gaze and the mechanised gaze of the camera are set up. She is, as Joseph Conrad's (1971 [1902]) narrator in *Heart of darkness* (cited in Allara 2008:54) comments in relation to nineteenth-century women, "in a world apart" as she sits isolated in a room that is "so much her own

that it becomes enclosed and claustral" (Murray 2008:54). As in a proscenium theatre, the audience faces the slightly raised stage and views the performance through a proscenium arch. No attempt to disguise the 'constructedness' of the stage-set is made — its side and upper edges are clearly visible to the audience. I strategically combined these factors to effect a sense of theatricality. However, as Law-Viljoen (2008:5) observes, "the purely theatrical is now a post-modern performance, in the sense that the cordoned-off space of the theatre enters the gallery and the very structure of theatre — the structure of the physical stage as well as the psychic structure of theatrical performance — is subject to analysis".

In a review of the *Room* performance, Pamela Allara (2008:56) identifies the latter as "narcissistic … regressive … theatre of the self-involved performer", in which theatrical distance between audience and performer is set up through an "intense focus on the figure of the artist, surrounded not only by the audience, but by a phalanx of cameras" (Allara 2008:56). Ironically, although Allara possibly intended these to be critical comments, in making such observations and in the statement that, "the constructed room provides the space required to create and maintain an upper-class white woman's 'world apart'" (Allara 2008:56), she identifies several premises upon which the performance is based.

My intention *was* to recreate and enact a sense of the protagonist's isolation, insulation and interiorisation, and in order to do this I carefully choreographed theatrical means that distance her from the audience and vice versa. Although working within a feminist framework, by deliberately re-establishing a staged (as opposed to engaged) performance I consciously challenged the pervasiveness of intersubjectivity that has been an integral part of contemporary feminist

performance art since the 1970s.[154] The audience are positioned as spectators; they are *granted* (as opposed to 'stealing') visual interaction with the subject. No longer 'intimate voyeurs', they are 'outsiders looking in'. Therefore, inasmuch as the protagonist acts in secrecy, so the audience-as-voyeurs, far from being made into "docile, passive observers" (Allara 2008:55), are invited to conduct an active form of 'secretive' looking. Like the narrator, the protagonist writes or speaks *as if* she is in secret yet, although 'hidden', she cannot hide. As her husband and the wallpaper surveil the narrator, so the protagonist's existence is a consequence of the audience's voyeuristic gaze.

I also attempted to set up a generational 'dialogue' between the three personae by grafting their encounters with the lifeworld through a recounting of their narratives on the soundtrack. It could be argued that each persona's personal disclosures form part of a collective narrative of displacement that is enacted out in the *Room* series and through the protagonist's body — both of which I have suggested as being interiorised, 'actively inner' spaces. Therefore, again, this time on an auditory level, the audience are privy to but not part of the protagonist's inner world.

The protagonist's experiences of alienation and isolation and of mental and physical confinement are played out in the work on the exhibition. For instance, she is always shown as being alone — in her rose garden, in the veld or in her room. In the *Room* performance and video, the interiority of the space and her interiorised state are visually manifest in her body — like the woman in Vermeer's painting *The Lacemaker* (1669-1670) (Figure 44), the pose she adopts is one of self-absorption. The lacemaker's pose is echoed in nineteenth-century British oil painting conventions in which women are depicted with "eyes lowered, head bent, shoulders hunched" (Parker 1984:10) (Figure 45). As Parker (1984:10) points out, this pose has dual significations: it represents the 'ideal' feminine traits of repression, subjugation, submission and modesty yet the "embroider's silence, her concentration also suggests a self-containment, a kind of autonomy". The protagonist's 'silence' may be linked to a stereotype of femininity in which the needleworker's self-containment is interpreted as seductiveness (see Parker 1984:10).[155] In a deliberate play on these nineteenth-century conventions, I tried to establish an analogy between the protagonist's self-contained pose and her representation as eroticised object. As in the *Ties that Bind Her* series, I played with the feminist tropes of the eroticised male gaze and voyeurism, deliberately setting myself (or the protagonist) up as an objectified spectacle for visual consumption.

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154 Antonin Artaud's (1957 [1938]:96) advocation that, "We abolish the stage and the auditorium and replace them by a single site, without partition of barrier of any kind, which will become the theatre of the action" had a profound influence on first-generation feminist performance artists. Artaud (1957:96) called for a re-establishment of "direct communication … between the spectator and the spectacle, between the actor and the spectator, from the fact that the spectator, placed in the middle of the action, is engulfed and physically affected by it". First-generation feminist performance artists such as Carolee Schneemann and Hannah Wilke actively promote intersubjectivity or "direct theatrical enactment of subjects in relation to one another; such that the hierarchy between viewer and performer, between actor and spectator [is] dissolved and social relations [become] profoundly politicized" (Jones 1998:1).

155 Parker (1984:10) elaborates that in romantic fiction, the needleworker's silence and stillness can have multiple connotations, ranging from "serious concentration to a silent cry for attention". Nevertheless, she notes that, "in terms of the stereotype [her silence and stillness] is a sexual ploy" (Parker 1984:10). In women's novels, sewing is considered as a signifier of self-containment and restraint: as Parker (1984:166) comments, the critical encounter between lovers is invariably marked by the moment when the woman drops her work: "with her embroidery … goes her self-containment and she surrenders to her lover".

Figure 44: Johannes Vermeer, *The Lacemaker*. 1669-1670.
Oil on canvas transferred to panel, 23.9 x 20.5 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris. (Allposters.com [sa]).

Figure 45: Marcus Stone, *In Love*. 1888.
Oil on canvas, 118.8 x 167.8 cm.
Castle Museum, Nottingham. (Parker 1984:plate 5 [sp]).

Further references to repressive female sexuality and the Victorian sublimation of female desire permeate the exhibition. Representation of sublimated desire takes place through repetition of sexually coded motifs, arguably to the point of fetishisation. For instance, in the *Room* video, the rhythmic repetition of stitching alludes to the phallic penetration of soft, warm, pliable skin by the hard, cold, steel point of the needle and the lanceolate-shaped aloe leaves. The plush velvet upholstery of the benches provided as part of the exhibition echoes the luscious wine-coloured velvet lining of her sewing box (Figure 46) and the baroque velvet drapery used to create the sense of a theatre curtain framing the main video screen at the JAG. The oval shape of the hole in her skirt that exposes the flesh on her thigh carries vaginal associations. The wax roses and other hybrid varieties of plants appear as seductive, succulent, fleshy forms imbued with sexual innuendo, and the *cultivars* that 'grow' through the simulated wooden floorboards and soft upholstery of the Victorian chair of the stage-set suggest penetration of the interior from the exterior.

Figure 46: Leora Farber, *A Room of Her Own*,
detail of sewing box, main stage-set installation. 2006-2007.
Photograph by Clive Hassall.

5.5 A voice of her own

5.5.1 Linguistic signification

> What does it mean for a white woman to claim space in this way? (Murray 2008:51).

As shown in Chapter Four in relation to Bertha Marks's situation, nineteenth-century female experience was usually of domestic confinement wherein, given the authority of the Victorian *paterfamilias*, the woman was silenced and spoken for. Victorian women had to stifle their independence and intelligence if they were to fit the mould of the 'feminine ideal'. Bereft of voice and agency, if nineteenth-century women did find a means of intellectual, emotional, sexual and/or creative self-expression, this had to be covert.[156] One may recall Jane Austen hiding her half-written manuscripts or covering them with a piece of blotting-paper (Woolf 1989 [1929]) and the narrator who, secreted away, hides her writing from her husband, whilst acknowledging that, "I *must* say what I feel and think in some way" (Gilman 1973:21). For these women, as well as Bertha Marks, the room is, paradoxically, a heterotopic space of liberation and confinement.[157] As I show in this sub-section, on the one hand the protagonist deploys the *Room* as a private space that offers a form of liberation in which she can assert herself as a 'speaking subject' through modes of symbolic and semiotic signification. Yet, on the other hand, as a 'space of otherness', the *Room's* privacy signals her isolation from society and alienation from her new environment.

Virginia Woolf's extended essay *A room of one's own* (1989 [1929]), based on lectures she delivered in 1928 at the two Cambridge women's colleges on the subject of Women and Fiction, provides a literary parallel to the protagonist's quest to deploy the 'room of her own' as a liberating space. Here she makes her famous statement: "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (Woolf 1989:4), from which the title of the *Room* series derives. The metaphor of the room as a liberatory space also features in EM Forster's novel, *A room with a view* (1988 [1908]). Forster's heroine is a young woman, Lucy Honeychurch, who struggles to reconcile her experiences of conformity and freedom signified by the well-bred sterility of England with the warmth and violence of the other (in this case, Italy). For Honeychurch, Italy is a place of passion that inspires in her freedom and liberation from the sexual repression of English society. For the narrator, the room is a space of enforced infantilism and regression into psychosis yet, paradoxically, it is though her psychosis that she achieves liberation. Woolf's room signifies intellectual freedom and economic independence; Forster's protagonist experiences newfound sexual awareness and the narrator escapes her physical and mental imprisonment in the room through madness. For the protagonist, the *Room* represents a space in which linguistic (symbolic) writing and bodily (semiotic) speech become forms of agency which offer the potential to enter into a Third Space of hybridity. The *Room* and the body are private, privatised; it is from these inner spaces that her linguistic and bodily forms of self-expression emerge.

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[156] While covert may mean 'in secret', it can also point to a strategy of hiding one's identity in order to remain anonymous. For instance, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's (1978) 'madwoman in the attic' is a fictional character who stands in as the author's double in nineteenth-century women writer's texts. She is the symbolic representation of the female author's anger against the rigidities of patriarchal tradition and of the way in which, under this tradition, her creative energies are repressed (Showalter 1985:4, 68). Examples in which the author uses her main character as a vehicle for autobiographic narratives are Florence Nightingale's *Cassandra* (1852), and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Villette* (1853).

[157] Conception of the room as a space of confinement for a madwoman is a common trope in Victorian literature. Examples include the room that the narrator occupies and the windowless room to which Bertha Mason, Rochester's mad wife in *Jane Eyre*, is confined (Showalter 1985:141).

For Bertha Marks, one form of linguistic self-expression would have been letter-writing. Erlank (1996:85) draws a clear link between the practice of letter writing and privacy: "letter-writing occurs in private — [it is] what has been referred to as a 'confessional' form of discourse". It is likely that Bertha Marks wrote some of her letters to her husband and, fictitiously, the diary entries I extrapolated from these at the writing desk in the bedroom of Zwartkoppies. Using empathic unsettlement, I attempted to 'give her a voice' in the quotations from these letters. Freda Farber's narration presents an opportunity for her to 'tell her story' through anecdotes, personal musings, reminiscences and reflections. Given that Bertha Marks's and Freda Farber's actual words are cited, the soundtrack may be thought of as a series of (auto)biographical narratives. Biography is a key strategy that allowed me to impart factual and projected perceptions of Bertha Marks's experiences and, for Freda Farber, autobiography provides a means through which she can 'speak' her narrative.

The legitimising of personal disclosure that has developed in South African cultural practices since 1994 forms a backdrop against which my foregrounding of the autobiographical may be contextualised. As Nuttall and Michael (2000:298) observe:

> The autobiographical act in South Africa ... has become a cultural activity. Memoir, reminiscence, confession, testament, case history and personal journalism, all different kinds of autobiographical acts or cultural occasions in which narrators take up models of identity ... Talking about their own lives, confessing, and constructing personal narratives ... South Africans translate their selves, and their communities into story.

The development of personal disclosure may be linked to the effects of postcolonial theorising with its operational recognition of otherness, difference and hybridity. It might also be as a result of various transformational processes in South Africa that have opened up spaces for the inclusion of subjects in domains previously defined by codes of exclusivity and exclusion. However, it is the cathartic legacy of the TRC which seems to have played the most significant role in legitimising individual self-expression. In the multiple testimonies of the 'victims' and 'perpetrators' of the apartheid era made public before the TRC, the subject was asked to "speak both individually and collectively, to both grieve and heal" (Nuttall & Michael 2000:307). In this context, speaking is akin to personal healing; personal healing leads to healing of the community and the nation (Nuttall & Michael 2000:307). The processes of healing individual and collective pasts were, and at the time of writing continue to be, a means by which the new nation is being re-conceptualised and rebuilt (Nuttall & Michael 2000:308).

If contextualised against this backdrop, the (auto)biographic narratives of the *Room* video and performance might be seen to represent a minuscule part of an emergent South African 'autobiographical culture'. These narratives might be argued to carry import as reflections of white women's experiences of displacement in a larger historical context. Nevertheless, their value within this context may be construed as relative for, as Allara (2008:57) comments, "If Bertha suffered trauma from her transplantation to South Africa that loss was and remains insignificant in comparison with the daily agonies suffered by black South African women." By extension Allara (2008:57) states that, "If white female

identity is to be performed, it surely must be performed in relation to that of the majority female population, for that relationship is not contingent, rather it is fundamental to South African society."[158]

Although engagement with Allara's argument is beyond the scope of this chapter, in partial response I suggest that Freda Farber's autobiographical accounts, and my having given 'voice' to Bertha Marks's experiences of displacement, represent an articulation of those 'little stories' — often deemed insignificant — that through the the authority of spoken experience are assigned value in the broader context of South African identity constructions. While the degree of Bertha Marks's and Freda Farber's suffering in comparison to that of black women under apartheid is, of course, relative, and particularly so because they occupied the dual roles of being subjugated or othered and upholding the hierarchies of power under which they lived, in their detail their individual narratives point to larger historical socio-political concerns. My interpretations of their life experiences and histories thus have political reverberations: in them, the *personal is political.* Even if Bertha Marks and Freda Farber were unaware of their racial prejudices or tacit complicity

with the apartheid regime, I contend that it is through their stories that these political positions, reflective of the ideological contexts of the larger social groups in which they were positioned, are revealed.

In my case, throughout *Dis-Location,* self-representation takes the form of speaking through autoethnographic narratives. As mentioned previously, although in the artwork my speaking position slips fluidly between artist and protagonist, I differentiate between *myself* (as *artist*, *maker of the image* and the person who *performs* my part as the postcolonial protagonist) and the *postcolonial protagonist* (the character who is being portrayed). I found the tensions between these slippages and processes of differentiation useful; while slippages allowed for a sense of immersion in the artwork, differentiation resulted in a critical, self-reflexive distance from it. As is common in autoethnographic writing, I found that in writing about oneself, or inserting oneself as a character into the text, a distance between one's subjectivity at the time of writing and the character's subjectivity occurs; as Catherine Russell (2006:2), speaking about autoethnographic writing, says, "the self we write about is turned into 'an other' over time". Therefore, in constructing myself as an ego in the text, the character I portray is not always myself; even although I, as artist-writer and the postcolonial protagonist consist of the same person, there is a difference between the two. Awareness of this difference is what allows for self-reflexivity in the text; in autoethnographic modes of self-representation, the artist draws attention to the nature of the text as a construct or fiction by inscribing herself into it in an ironic way.[159] The authorial subject opens

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[158] Allara's statements raise several troubling issues that could have broader implications for representation of selfhood and otherness in contemporary South African art. I do not attempt to address these in the context of this thesis but merely raise them as questions which might lead to further debate. These questions take the following lines of enquiry: if the historical or postcolonial South African white woman is to 'speak' or narrate personal accounts of trauma, can this be done only in relation, and with specific reference, to South African black women's experiences of trauma under apartheid? And, if so, how literally do these experiences have to be articulated in an artwork in order to set up an 'adequate' foil or context for the white woman's voice to carry valence? Given her position of complicity, does the privileged historical or postcolonial white woman have a right to speak and be heard? Can the white, postcolonial woman speak?

[159] As it originates from personal experience, in the study autoethnography takes on a testimonial, confessional character but is not intended to assume a position of authenticity and veracity. For, as Russell (1999) notes, the confessional mode has no intrinsic validity beyond the reader's (or viewer's) belief in the authority of the text. Testimonial discourses can be subsumed into the "essayistic" mode, "which incorporates the 'I' of the writer into a commentary on

herself to anthropological inspection but simultaneously mediates her image and identifies herself as its maker, thereby "inscribing a doubleness within the ethnographic text" (James Clifford cited in Russell 1999). For me, *Dis-Location* is a text in which, as an artist, I represent myself as a fiction; in addition to being able to recreate myself as a member of another society set in another temporal and geographic context, I also recreate or 'self-fashion' my own subjectivity.

5.5.2 *Bodily signification*

While the nineteenth-century woman was denied logistical means of self-expression (space and money) and was psychologically 'silenced' by her deference to patriarchal authorities, she was also, more fundamentally, assigned to "a zone of silence" in western philosophical discourses structured around the male as the paradigmatic sex (Luce Irigaray cited in Evans 1991:213). For Irigaray (cited in Evans 1991:213), "the silence of women results, then, not only from the denial of their authority to speak, but also from the lack of a symbolic system reflecting their experience". During the Victorian era, the exclusion of women from linguistic discourse "brought the nervous body and its protean complaints into being" (Peter Melville Logan cited in Fairclough 2011b) — a state that was exemplified in the female propensity for the disorder of hysteria. As Showalter (1997:55) puts it, since hysterics "suffered from the lack of a public voice to articulate their economic and sexual oppression" their hysterical symptoms "seemed like bodily metaphors for [their] silence". From this perspective, hysteria reads as a form of non-verbal, bodily communication: "Converting their bodies into the *site of another language*,

women/hysterics communicate in the pantomimic mode of fits, trances, paralysis, anesthesia, blindness, pain, and any other somatic complaint science provides them for relaying the message of their gender as illness, as *unsayable*" (Evans 1991:214, emphasis added).

Feminist writers such as Showalter (1985, 1997), Evans (1991), McAfee (2004), Jones (2012) and Du Preez (2004, 2009) concur that the political and social repression of speech and its channeling into psychosomatic symptoms such as hysteria[160] were instances of a systemic suppression of women. However, two interrelated ways of considering hysteria as a bodily form of speech can be discerned (Showalter 1985:5). In the first, hysteria is regarded as an unconscious form of feminist protest within the specific historical framework of the nineteenth century; in the second, it is recognised as a form of desperate communication by the powerless. Showalter (1985:147) sums up the two sides of the debate as follows: "Instead of asking if rebellion was mental pathology, we must ask whether mental pathology was suppressed rebellion. Was the hysterical woman a feminist heroine, fighting back against confinement in the bourgeois home? Was hysteria … a mode of protest for women deprived of other social or intellectual outlets or expressive options?"

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the world that makes no grand scientific or totalizing claims but is uncertain, tentative and speculative" (Michael Renov cited in Russell 1999).

[160] Opinions as to the nature of hysteria vary. Some authors (see for instance Du Preez 2004, 2009) speak of hysteria as a 'mimed' illness: "Women feign hysteria … imitating symptoms of diseases" (Du Preez 2004:47). Showalter (1985:147), however, notes that according to Charcot hysteria had psychological origins. Through observation, physical examination and hypnosis, between 1872 and 1893 he proved that hysterical symptoms were produced by emotions rather than injury or bodily malfunctions and that hysteria was therefore a genuine illness, the symptoms of which were not under the patient's conscious control. Extending this idea, in 1895 Freud, together with Joseph Breuer, proposed that hysterical symptoms stemmed from traumatic repressed sexual experiences that usually occurred in childhood and resurfaced in adulthood (Showalter 1997:38).

The first position is represented by feminists such as Cixous, Xavière Gauthier, and Irigaray who associate madness with female protest, resistance and revolution (Showalter 1985:5). They celebrate nineteenth-century hysterics as 'protofeminists'; "champions of a defiant womanhood, whose symptoms, expressed in physical symptoms and coded speech, subvert the linear logic of male science" (Hunter 1983:474). Cixous (cited in Du Preez 2004:47) in particular describes the hysteric as a "core example of the protesting force of women" given the ways in which she used her body as a source of (limited) agency and as a vehicle through which to transgress the laws of the symbolic order. For these feminists, in her embodiment of western constructs of femininity (such as irrationality, instability, emotionality, madness and 'reversion' to the unconscious and/or semiotic), the hysteric signifies the "woman-type in all her power" (Hélène Cixous cited in Showalter 1985:161). They connect "the hysteric's silences, symptoms and distorted speech to female symbolism, semiotic or infantile wordless verbalisation" (Showalter 1997:5).[161] By using a form of communication that lies predominantly beyond the masculine definition of language, Cixous and Irigaray argue, the hysteric can establish an(other) point of view (a site of *différence*) from which phallogocentric concepts and controls can be deconstructed. Thus, for them, it is precisely through her otherness that the hysteric gains power. By extension, Irigaray and Cixous propose

that in order to establish a female position in language in which specifically female sexualities are dominant, contemporary women should "speak from the place of the hysteric" or the bodily drives associated with the semiotic (Evans 1991:203).

This strategy is fraught with contradictions, a primary one being that the psychoanalytic constructs (man-woman) that these feminists employ are embedded in the patriarchal system they attempt to challenge. It is difficult, if not impossible, to speak of the category of 'woman' without the ideological weight that has historically been attributed to it (Evans 1991:205).[162] Their alignment of women with madness and view of hysteria as a form of feminist protest[163] are contested positions for, as Showalter (1985:5) points out, such associations run the risk of romanticising madness, reinforcing historical, essentialist connections between femininity and insanity and endorsing hysteria as a desirable form of rebellion.

The second position is encapsulated in Shoshana Feldman's (cited in Showalter 1985:5) statement that, "madness is quite the opposite of rebellion. Madness is the impasse confronting those whom cultural conditioning has deprived of the very means of protest or self-affirmation." Similarly, Showalter (1997:7) proposes that hysteria is "an expression, a body language for people who otherwise might

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[161] As Du Preez (2004:50) notes, the hysteric's *linguistic* speech usually followed three patterns. The first was the adoption of aphasia. In the second, they spoke in a "female language akin to the pre-Oedipal 'semiotic babble that exists between an infant and its mother', a language partly of the body and partly a pastiche of foreign words, gestures, and neologisms" (Hunter 1983:474). In the third instance, they spoke audaciously and assertively, with a lack of modesty. This pattern was also characterised by the 'shocking' behaviour of speaking as men and using foul language (Du Preez 2004:49, 50).

[162] To address this, many of the French feminists endorse the gender bifurcation found in patriarchal discourses. The assertion of difference of the sexes is seen as a *temporary but necessary strategy* of deconstruction. Others idealise women by placing the very characteristics with which women are associated in patriarchal discourse as the positive polarity of the Cartesian male-female binary. This strategy may be construed as counterproductive, as it repeats and reinforces the defensive structures these feminists were attempting to deconstruct (Evans 1991:203).

[163] However, the nineteenth-century hysteric's rebellion was ineffectual, as her revolt was usually co-opted by the institutions of family and medicine (Evans 1991:215). Showalter (1985:161) adds that, at best, nineteenth-century hysteria was a personal outlet for women's frustrations, wherein the immediate gratifications (familial sympathy, the physician's attention) "were slight in relation to its costs in powerlessness and silence".

not be able to speak or even to admit what they feel". As Robert Woolsey (cited in Showalter 1997:7) notes, in this reading, "hysteria is a 'protolanguage'" and its symptoms are "a code used by a patient to communicate a message which … cannot be verbalized". Following Woolsey's view and that of Freud (cited in Evans 1991:242), I consider hysteria a "pathology of powerlessness".

Millais's pre-Raphaelite painting *Ophelia* (1852) (Figure 47) was an important prompt for the suggestion of hysteria in *Redemption*.[164] In using Millais's *Ophelia* as a reference, I was well aware of the dangers of reinforcing historicist and essentialist equations of women and the body, nature, madness, excessive emotion, powerlessness and passivity. I also knew that the artwork might be read as aestheticising and romanticising woman's historical association with madness, as reinforcing notions of woman as 'pathological' and possibly as sentimental and clichéd. In an attempt to circumvent these readings, I heightened the constructed nature of the image through overt use of theatricality. The protagonist's 'pose' is over-dramatised; she performs hysteria almost to the point of parody, echoing the way in which Charcot's patients performed in the "theatrical space" of the Salpêtrière mental asylum during his public lectures (Jann Matlock cited in Du Preez 2004:48). Charcot would stand beside a hypnotised hysteric "in a 600-seat amphitheatre filled to capacity, *with floodlights on the stage,* and demonstrate each clinical sign to the spellbound audience" (Martin Jay cited in Du Preez 2004:48, 49, emphasis added by Du Preez) (Figure 48).[165] In this context, the hypnotised women put on a "spectacular" show for their voyeuristic, curiosity-seeking audience (Du Preez 2004:49; Showalter 1985:148). Similarly, in *Redemption* the protagonist's body, clothed in white diaphanous garments, is spotlighted. Like the nineteenth-century hysteric, who was specularised (and sexualised) by medical science, the protagonist's body is offered as a (sexual) spectacle for the (male) viewer's gaze. Use of *chiaroscuro* heightens this sexual fetishisation; light bathes the figure, pushing the background into evocative darkness. As in the

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[164] Shakespeare's Ophelia was a prototypical figure used by Victorian artists, writers and doctors to represent the madwoman and, by extension, the young female asylum patient (Showalter 1985:90, 91). As Sander Gilman (cited in Showalter 1985:10) notes, "the changing representations of Ophelia over the centuries … chronicle the shifting definitions of female insanity, from the erotomania of the Elizabethans and the hysteria of the nineteenth century to the unconscious incestuous conflicts of the Freudians and the schizophrenic double bind of the Laingians".

[165] Charcot (cited in Bowen 1999:140) himself called his clinic a "living theatre of female pathology". Du Preez (2004:49) adds that Charcot referred to his lectures as 'theatre' and to patients who 'performed well' as his 'stars'. Several patients, such as Blanche Wittman (known as the 'Queen of Hysterics') became celebrities (Showalter 1985:148). Others, such as the patient called Augustine, made 'careers' out of modelling for Charcot's *Iconographies*. Showalter (1985:154) suggests that Augustine's poses resemble the exaggerated gestures of the French classical acting style, stills from silent films or poses in nineteenth-century paintings such as Millais's *Ophelia*.

Ties that Bind Her series, the protagonist enacts femininity as a masquerade, this time by performing the part of the hysteric who was already "conflated with the signifiers of femaleness (sex) and femininity (gender) to such a degree that the terms *female, femininity* and *hysteria* … [were] interchangeable" (Du Preez 2004:47). The protagonist's performance of nineteenth-century feminine ideals draws attention to the artifice of these constructions.

Figure 48: Pierre André Brouillet, *A Clinical Lesson of Dr Charcot at La Salpêtrière.* 1887. Oil on canvas, 240 x 350 cm. Lyon, Musée de Lyon.
(Realcuba's Blog 2012).

5.5.3   *Transgressive language and the speaking subject*

Although it is unclear whether the protagonist has had, or is undergoing, a hysterical seizure, or is overwhelmed by the transmogrification of her body and identity into a Third Space, her pose in *Redemption*, like that of Millais's *Ophelia*, suggests a liminal state, oscillating on the threshold between the symbolic and the semiotic. I suggest that perhaps it is owing to this fluid and evolving nature of her subjectivity that the protagonist might be seen to assume the role of the speaking subject and as such that her bodily speech may be construed as a form of transgressive language. For Kristeva (1989:265, 272) language is the signifying system in which "the speaking subject *makes and unmakes* himself"; the subject is both

> immersed in the logical order of symbolic meaning, where identity … reigns [and] riven by the body's and the psyche's semiotic charges and energy displacements. The speaking being is a *subject in process* because her identity is never fixed in place; her identity is continuously disrupted by semiotic language's heterogeneity, polyphony, and polysemy (McAfee 2004:105, emphasis added).

If the protagonist is acknowledged as a speaking subject, needlework might be proposed as a means of speech through which she 'makes and unmakes' her subjectivity. I base this proposition on an interesting contradiction in the way needlework signified femininity in Victorian society (Parker 1984:165). Parker (1984:165, emphasis added) points out that in Charlotte Brontë's writing embroidery (and thus femininity) emerges as a means of *self-denial* and *self-defense,* portraying "*female subservience and availability*" yet simultaneously acts a means of establishing what she refers to as "*inviolate female space*". Extending Parker's observation, I propose that on the one hand, because it signified compliance with the codes of femininity, needlework positions the

protagonist as operative within the symbolic order. On the other hand, it may be a form of bodily praxis by which the protagonist enters into the preverbal, pre-Oedipal space of the semiotic.

Ironically, Parker's contention that through needlework nineteenth-century women were able to enter an 'inviolate female space' finds support in Freud's and Joseph Breuer's (1893:13) claim that needlework was a potentially 'disruptive' activity for Victorian women. In their clinical studies they proposed connections between women's monotonous existence, needlework and hysteria. As Freud and Breuer saw it, needlework made women prone to daydreaming without an interlocutor, which rendered them 'vulnerable' to 'hypnoid states' in which their repressed imaginative, creative and emotional energies and drives came to the fore.[166] Consequently, Freud and Breuer considered needlework to be dangerous to women's health and therefore to the health of the family, because "it led to states of mind where women experienced their *'selves' creating and enacting narratives in a private theater* to which men had no access" (Przybysz 1993:180, emphasis added). In its ability to prompt hypnoid states, needlework was deemed a potentially destructive activity in that it allowed women to access the 'excesses' of femininity and, by association, the semiotic, which in turn would give way to pathogenic associations that engender hysterical symptoms (De Mijolla 2005).

However, if seen through a feminist lens, needlework could be a means of creating a psychic space for Victorian women's 'selves' as a way of escaping culturally constructed and constricting feminine roles. Following this view, I suggest that

needlework, as a form of transgressive language, might be a 'disruptive' force; like hysteria, it has the potential to transgress the containing boundaries of the symbolic through the release of 'excess' (emotions such as desire and rage; drives such as creativity). The concept of needlework and hysteria as forms of transgressive language is borne out in the *Room* series. I suggest that Parker's dual reading of the nineteenth-century needleworker's self-absorbed pose as denoting both subservience and autonomy could be interpreted as her working within both the symbolic and the semiotic modes of signification. Through this pose, the protagonist conveys a sense of submissiveness, passivity, docility and modesty yet, while remaining linguistically silent, engages in a bodily praxis that enables her to 'create and enact her narrative'. Her self-containment suggests that she is indeed in a 'private theatre' as she engages with and enters into the semiotic and, in so doing, achieves a sense of agency and autonomy.

Teasing these arguments out further, I propose tentative correlations between needlework, hysteria and the contemporary practice of cutting, as forms of agency effected through 'semiotic speech'. Cutting the skin to the point of releasing blood is a form of self-mutilation practiced predominantly by westernised teenage girls. It is not about the conscious intent for self-harm, nor the experience of physical pain; rather, the cutter craves the relief provided by endorphins released into the body that 'anesthetise' emotional pain (Levenkron 1998:24). Like hysteria, cutting is a way of 'speaking' when one is unable verbally to express overwhelming emotions or unfulfilled emotional needs. It is a desperate cry for help in the face of a devastating sense of alienation, lack of belonging, powerlessness and abandonment (D'Arcy 2007; Ellis 2002:12).

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[166] In a hypnoid state ideas and affects are fragmented and split off from consciousness, resulting in what Freud and Breuer (1893:12) term a "double conscience".

Feminist writers such as Ellis (2002) suggest that cutting, like the eating disorder anorexia nervosa,[167] is an extreme bodily response to certain expectations embedded in patriarchal ideologies rather than a symptom of individual psychopathology. Like the late nineteenth-century hysteric, the present-day anorexic responds to situations in which she feels powerless by exercising control over her body in a bid for independence and autonomy (Przybysz 1992:180). Viewed from this perspective, cutting could be considered as a non-verbal way in which contemporary women might respond to the patriarchal regulation of the boundaries of femininity, using their bodies as means through which this is effected.

Ellis's feminist reading of cutting prompts an interesting question — could Bertha Marks's self-mutilation be read as a desperate attempt to speak through the body from within the rigid constraints imposed on it in the Victorian era? According to Ellis (2002:10), acts of self-mutilation "create a renewed sense of external agency, through control over [the] body". While the action is external, it provides "an internal sense of self-control" that compensates for those external circumstances that the cutter perceives as uncontrollable (Ellis 2002:11; see also Favazza 1987). To speculate again: if this contemporary practice were to be reframed in the light of Bertha Marks's alienated, isolated life at Zwartkoppies, it could be concluded that for her 'cutting' is a reaction to feelings of numbness and sublimated desires that such alienation might have provoked. Furthermore, if the contemporary psycho-logical/somatic disorder of cutting could be projected into a Victorian context,

these emotions might be read as symptomatic of the gendered constraints and restrictive social norms that women of the upper middle classes were expected to comply with and, like the historically gendered psycho-logical/somatic 'disorder' of hysteria and its attendant sublimation of desire, might be seen as forms of release and liberation.

By representing Bertha Marks cutting herself in order to effect the graft, I suggest that I afforded her an opportunity to 'speak' in the face of situations in which she felt powerless. From this perspective, through its evocation of abjection and potential to act as a means of self-expression that derives from the semiotic, cutting as it features in *Dis-Location* has the transgressive potential to 'explode' the sameness of the symbolic order. For the protagonist cutting, as the action that precipitates the graft, enables a renegotiation of boundaries between Self/Other or the other-within. Skin is the site where history is contested, cultures are brought into contact and exchange, experimentation is undertaken and fantasies play out. The cut is a 'traumatic incision' that, as discussed previously, is not only a marker of physical pain but may be read as a signifier for the psychological trauma that accompanies the protagonist's acculturation processes. As semiotic forms of speech, hysteria, needlework and cutting may be recognised as means through which the protagonist is able to articulate her trauma and, for Bertha Marks, as empowering mechanisms which enable her to 'speak out' against being the victim of colonial gendered discourses. For both personae cutting, together with needlework, may be construed as empowering in its potential to lead to new, hybrid identity formations and generative cultural fusions. I therefore suggest that perhaps the protagonist's act of 'speaking her narrative' has tentative similarities with the manner in which processes of giving testimony at the TRC enabled individuals to achieve a sense of cathartic agency and empowerment as survivors.

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[167] Although it usually thought of as a disease which affects contemporary western women, anorexia nervosa was first diagnosed in 1873 (Evans 1999:229). It was characterised as a subset of hysteria. Modern medical investigations into the psychic dynamics of anorexia point to a range of underlying personality disorders, yet its root disorder is still considered to be hysteria (Evans 1999:229).

In so doing, I am not proposing any connection between the protagonist's traumas and those of individuals who testified before the TRC but rather that, in Ana Douglas and Thomas Vogler's (cited in Miller 2005:41) words used with reference to subjects of trauma, through her narrative testimonies she is able to "move from a state of helpless victimage to a mode of action and even potential self-renewal, demonstrating that new actions can still be possible in spite of the trauma of suffering".

5.6   Conclusion

> He finds in the attic a woman who has slipped from his certain reality and refigured herself somewhere between the real and the not real, between place and placelessness, where space is so elastic that [he] cannot apprehend it (Snyder-Rheingold 2003).

From the self-contained confinement of her room and her position within the suffocating patriarchal conventions of the time, Bertha Marks is shown to take advantage of these delimitations; although tightly bound by convention, she, like Lucy Honeychurch, Virginia Woolf and the narrator, finds opportunities to convert those bonds into wings of flight or quest. And, like the narrator, she attempts to reformulate herself within the very space that represents her physical, social and psychological confinement. Through biographical, autobiographical and autoethnographic forms of linguistic speech and enactments of semiotically-driven speech, both Bertha Marks and the postcolonial protagonist are empowered towards achieving an (ultimately unresolved) sense of self-renewal. As a speaking subject, the protagonist's transgressive language takes the form of what Venn (2010:334, 335) terms "an anamnesis … a process of working-through taking place at the threshold between unconscious psychic economy and conscious activity, individual … and collective identity". In the final image of the exhibition,

Redemption, she is infinitely suspended in a perpetual state of becoming: criss-crossing the boundaries[168] of self and Other, the conscious and the unconscious, the symbolic and the semiotic, insiderness and outsiderness. Through these ongoing processes of negotiation and transformation, the 'me/self' and 'not me/Other' lose coherence as discrete entities, creating an ambiguous space of in-betweenness in which the "logical certainty of either the subject/object or self/not-self binarism" is threatened (Wolfreys 2004:3). It is thus in the contested space of the *limen,* which represents "neither/nor … both, [but] not quite either" (Lugones 1994:459) that her subjectivity-in-process is situated.

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[168] These boundaries, or borders of the body image, are symbolic (Grosz 1994:79). They are neither physically nor psychologically fixed, and are not confined to the anatomical 'container' of the skin. The body image is fluid and dynamic, its borders, edges, and contours are "osmotic"; as Grosz (1994:79) states, "they have the remarkable power of incorporating and expelling outside and inside in an ongoing exchange".

CHAPTER SIX

INTERMEDIATE NOTES

> [T]he experience of relocation, be it approached with the desire for assimilation, integration or the perpetuation of difference, leaves us 'all unmoored'... [We are] 'at home' but elsewhere, 'home' but not 'at home'. Our identities are fluid. Belonging is a contested state. Home is a place riddled with vexing questions (Caryl Phillips cited in O'Brien 2010).

> Home is within me (Eartha Kitt cited in Rutherford 1990:24).

Reflecting on the study, I am reminded of Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) metaphor of the rhizome which, at the time of writing, seems to be a pattern of knowledge formation that is particularly pertinent to the artwork and this thesis. Both in their making and the final output, the creative work and this thesis can be described as rhizomatic, as neither is organised around a singular, arborescent thread. Instead multiple alliances are set up; each point connects to a range of other points and their offshoots that, like the rhizome's bulb and tuber, coalesce at nodes. From these nodes, further connections emerge to establish a decentred, non-hierarchical, complex matrix. As Ord (2008:108) comments,

> *Dis-Location/Re-Location* is not a singular, thoroughbred event with its meaning univocally prescribed in authoritarian tones. It is rather a hybrid of images ... an infinite field where, in its ever-expanding and changing margins, the signification of meaning is always in process. Hence, there is no closure to the framing of meaning and identity; just differing and deferring disclosures.

Despite its linear structure and the order of the chapters that reflects the chronological sequence of the three narratives, this thesis could be said to be composed of multiple "directions in motion" (Deleuze & Guattari 1988:21), and like the rhizome the text "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (Deleuze & Guattari 1988:25). Mirroring the rhizome, the text spreads horizontally as opposed to vertically; because of the delimitations of the thesis, I have chosen to foreground breadth rather than depth. For me the text is, even at this point in the writing, 'in-process'; constantly replicating, ceaselessly establishing connections, ever-emergent. Furthermore, following the rhizome's heterogeneous system of growth and propagation, my subjectivity is constantly in flux; the place I am currently writing from is somewhere in motion, for, as Russell (2006:2) notes with reference to autoethnographic writing, "who we think we are when we write a text is already another self".

Considering these points, perhaps it is neither appropriate nor possible to provide a summation of the key arguments put forward in this thesis, or to present a range of conclusive (or inconclusive) research findings. For me this 'conclusion' is an intermediate phase; it represents a juncture from which further textual and creative offshoots can grow. I therefore use these notes as a space of reflection and consolidation within which to highlight certain insights derived from the study.

Given its focus on the reconfiguration of WESSAs' subjectivities and identities arising from historical and contemporary processes of displacement, on a theoretical level the study contributes to the fledgeling but growing fields of South African whiteness and cultural studies, as well as to South African autobiographical and visual culture. Using the principles of the rhizome, in the discussion to follow I trace certain key 'threads' embedded in and arising from the creative and theoretical work that, for me, gesture towards the value of the research.

To begin, I suggest that value lies in my use of the artwork as a means through which to attempt to evoke registers of that which is affective, experiential, (im)possible and unrepresentable. Using visual art languages such as metaphor, medium, material, iconography and formal strategies, an artist can potentially open up a world beyond an empirical or manifest order of knowledge; as McAfee (2004:1) says, "Meaning is made in large part by the poetic and affective aspects of texts."

Venn (2010:323) notes that because they allow for investigation of the problematics of subjectivity through the role of affect, creative media are often effective registers through which the lived experience of displacement can be expressed. As he observes,

> the process of migrancy is simultaneously geographical, cultural, temporal, 'ethnic', environmental, psychic, historical and political, enmeshed in power relations ... the lines of fracture of identity are ... multiple, and much happens below the threshold of conscious calculations so that the reality of displacement does not easily fit social science's attempt to categorise diasporic phenomena (Venn 2010:323, 333).

Drawing on a range of examples in the arts, music and literature, Venn (2010:323) notes that signifying forms such as the 'postcolonial' novel and visual artworks are often used as registers through which the artist can "transcribe, or transcript, the making and remaking of identities in the context of plural belongings" *at the level of lived experience*. For, as he elaborates, "We are born into a world that we experience and make our own, as dwelling. Most of this experience operates directly at the level of the senses — the aura of a place, associations that the body knows in the form of a body-to-body attunement to its surroundings" (Venn 2012).

This inner experience can be understood in terms of the uncanny: "the notion of dwelling, of emplacement, call[s] up both the homely and the unhomely" (Venn 2010:337).

In *Dis-Location* I explored how the processes of art production can be used to foreground the registers of the affective to express the lived experience of displacement through three different space-time encounters with the lifeworld. In so doing, I used the artwork as a means through which I tried to give form to feelings and experiences that are difficult, if not impossible, for me to convey through other registers. While it was possible to gain factual knowledge, work with empathetic projection and interpret or imagine what Bertha Marks's or Freda Farber's displacements might have entailed, it was impossible for me to re-experience their lived, bodily encounters with place. Ways in which I could attempt to engage with, express and possibly convey to the viewer an empathetic sense of these otherwise 'unrepresentable' or 'unknowable' experiences were through processes of making the artwork, use of visual art languages and careful orchestration of its presentation.

Knowing that the work can only 'speak for itself'' to a relative degree, and that its reception is largely dependent on what the viewer brings to the text (in terms of their subject positioning, knowledge formations and life experiences), I nonetheless attempted to incite a form of viewer participation that encouraged emotional-cognitive engagement and/or identification with the lived experience of displacement (see Venn 2009:4).[169] The primary means by which I attempted to

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[169] In conversations I had with the general public and students in the venues around South Africa where the exhibition was shown, many WESSAs expressed a sense of identification with my narrative of displacement as a white South African coming to terms with new subjectivities.

do this was by engaging with materials, media, imagery and formal strategies that might be conducive to invoking the liminal states of the uncanny and abjection. By making the familiar 'strange' and 'estranging the familiar', I hoped to provoke a sense of subjective dissonance in the viewer. Similarly I attempted to evoke a sense of abjection through use of imagery such as cutting and stitching into the body, suggesting states of in-betweenness such as hysteria and the Third Space and exploiting materials that carry bodily associations, such as wax. Both the uncanny and the abject can potentially disrupt an individual's sense of a unified, separate and distinct self through the loss of ego boundaries. As Christy Rennie, (2010:55) notes, this is a cyclic process: the loss of ego boundaries engenders the ambivalent emotions of simultaneous terror and rapture in the subject; these reactions in turn perpetuate a sense of ego dissolution. Working within the registers of the transgressive, the traumatic, the strange and the foreign, "which evoke layers of the subconscious ways of thinking caught between the unknowable and knowable", could therefore be seen as a means of generating new insights, identities and ways of being (Venn 2010:324).

Both the uncanny and abjection disrupt the normative (of the conscious mind and the symbolic order respectively) by placing the subject at the *limen* and in so doing disrupt forms of phallogocentric thought that underpin western knowledge systems.[170] In *Dis-Location*, the *limen* — the space of in-betweenness initiated by the graft — is foregrounded as a place of resistance; in its indeterminancy and

instability, that which lies at the margin decentres the subjectivities, discourses and institutions of dominant hegemonic knowledge formations. The margin thus plays a critcal role in the production of new knowledge; it is here that that new identity formations are produced. In *Dis-Location,* these ruptures take place in various ways. First, the graft and its consequent hybridity disrupt the hierarchical polarities of colonial discourse; the Third Space is a site of 'counter-authority' to the singular voice of colonial discourse. Secondly, owing to the predominance of the semiotic, the signifying processes with which the protagonist engages as a speaking subject and through bodily forms of speech can be transgressive, even, in Kristeva's terms, "revolutionary", in their potential to "explode" the social codes of the symbolic order (McAfee 2004:38). And thirdly, the heterotopias she inhabits are counter-hegemonic spaces that stand apart from, yet are situated within, the conventional ordering system and expose the underlying structure of the dominant order in which they are located. They therefore have the potential to facilitate acts of resistance and transgression. The protagonist's hybridity and position as a speaking subject places her subjectivity in a liminal, dialogical space wherein identity is constantly in flux and in processes of negotiation.

The processes of displacement that the protagonist undergoes may be understood in terms of the model of the rhizome, has associations with the 'third' states of hybridity, diaspora, heterogeneity and creolisation (Braziel & Mannur 2003:4), and its antithesis, the radical or root (associated with linearity, singularity and arborescent thought). The organic metaphor of the rhizome is particularly pertinent to the creative work, in which displacements "of place, of cultural space, of temporalities, of ways of being, of imaginaries, of inner space" are represented at several levels simultaneously (Venn 2009:12).

Interestingly, this sense of identification was often expressed with embarrassment, or as that which had been experienced but not actually identified.

[170] Logocentrism is based on power structures that preserve the hierarchical relations of difference; it "assembles the heterogeneous possibilities of meaning within language into fixed dichotomies" resulting in a "stasis of meaning [that] regulates and disciplines the emergence of new identities" (Rutherford 1990:22).

If read in the light of relations between subjectivity and identity, Bertha Marks's and Freda Farber's life encounters with place can be linked to the mode of geographical engagement that Cresswell (2002:12) terms "sedentarist metaphysics", advocated by humanist geographers of the 1970s. Sedentarists foreground place (as opposed to the more abstract notion of space), considering it a bounded location for identity construction. Place is constructed as contained, ordered and defined within localising strategies such as community, culture, region, centre and periphery (Clifford 1997:246); 'authentic' social existence is located in circumscribed places; 'roots' are privileged over 'routes' (Clifford 1997:3). In the sedentarist lexicon, place is associated with concepts such as 'home' and 'belonging', which in turn carry connotations of security, stability, commitment, recognition and inclusion. These concepts imply a moral negativity towards transience and mobility, possibly suggesting deviance, shiftlessness and disrepute (Cresswell 2002:14). For sedentarists, mobility may lead to "irrational and shallow landscapes" (Cresswell 2002:14);[171] to leave one's place of origin is to be 'unmoored', unrooted, displaced.

I propose that the idealist, perhaps utopian, conception of cultural identity determined by sedentarist metaphysics has commonalities with the essentialist approach in which cultural identity is understood in terms of "one shared culture, a … collective 'one true self' hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves,' that people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (Hall 2000 [1996]:22). Here, cultural identities reflect the common historical experience and shared cultural codes that provide a group with unitary,

"stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of … history" (Hall 2000:22). The 'essence' of culture is seen to lie in this 'oneness' that underlies other, more superficial, differences (Hall 2000:22).

On the one hand, Bertha Marks's and Freda Farber's cultural identities fit comfortably within this essentialist framework. For both personae, 'home' is constituted by the motherland; despite relocation, their identities are constructed through a sense of rootedness established through beliefs, behaviours, values, customs and traditions originating in the homeland; both attempt to preserve and uphold these identities in the new environment, albeit in different ways, and with varying levels of adaptation. On the other hand, their identities may also be considered as partially discursive/psychoanalytic in nature, for it is precisely within the *disjunctures* between Bertha Marks's and Freda Farber's grounding in an original past, their attempts to establish continuity with this past and their life encounters with the new country that their heterotopias of crisis are located. These disjunctures are a recognised part of discursive/psychoanalytic identity construction: as Hall (2000:23) comments, "We cannot speak for long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity' without acknowledging its other side — the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute [that culture's] uniqueness." Following constructivist thinking, Hall (2000:24) asserts that cultural identities formed according to the discursive/psychoanalytic approach have no fixed 'essence' and no 'authentic' origin to which one can return. Cultural identities are "unstable points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*" (Hall 2000:24).

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[171] One such landscape is that which Marc Augé (1995:44) terms the "non-place". 'Non-places' include highways, airports and supermarkets — sites marked by the "fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral"; uprooted places characterised by mobility and travel where particular histories and traditions are not considered relevant.

Similarly, as a model for culture the rhizome resists the organisational structure of the root-tree system, in which causality is charted along chronological lines and in which a linear trajectory between an original source and a defined pinnacle or conclusion is established. As Hoving (2002:125) states, "the cross-cultural world [i]s a rhizome-like network of relations in which every identity is fluid, open, temporarily shaped by its relation to others, always in the process of transformation". The postcolonial persona's subjectivity aligns with this model: her cultural identity is contingent upon history — it is positioned by and within the past but undergoes constant transformation, as it is "subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (Hall 2000:23).

Conceptions of place in sedentarist metaphysics contrast with ways in which place is conceived of in theoretical work produced since the 1990s, particularly in the fields of feminism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism and postmodernism. In these paradigms, which foreground fluid identity constructions, concepts such as an 'essential, true self' or being grounded in a specific place that defines an 'authentic identity' are regarded as anachronistic. As Cresswell (2002:17, emphasis added) puts it, in a postmodern context the description of place and home as dualist categories and binary choices are no longer applicable: "People are no longer simply from '*here*' or from '*there*'." As opposed to sedentarist metaphysics, the postmodern emphasis on mobility and global interconnectedness — which Creswell (2002:17) refers to as "nomadic metaphysics" — consigns the idea of place to a marginal position in the theorisation of society and culture.[172]

Unprecedented developments in transportation and communication technologies allow for the sustainability of transnational ties between persons, networks and organisations, enabling people to be in "two places at once" (O'Brien 2010:1). Such developments also foster political and economic migrations. In a mobile, constantly interconnected transnational world, with its "landscapes of mobility" (Cresswell 2002:16), "Home has become an ever more tentative or fragile ideal … [it] is now everywhere and nowhere. And often it's both simultaneously" (O'Brien 2010:2). In this new world order, whether through interconnectedness, migration or both, notions of 'identity' and 'belonging' have become increasingly decentred: identity is heterogeneous, polyglot and rhizomatic in its endless replication.

While, as Rutherford (1990:24) points out, the multiplicity of subject positions and potential identities currently available "hold[s] prospects for historically unparalleled human development", the loss of a centred self that they represent could lead to fragmentation and psychosis. Indicators of spatial and temporal coordinates that are essential for a consciousness of collective and personal pasts have been erased, resulting in what Rutherford (1990:24) identifies as "a global sense of [n]ot belonging … unreality, isolation and being fundamentally 'out of touch'". As Rutherford (1990:24) says, "The rent in our relation to the exterior world is matched by a disruption in our relation to our selves. Our struggles for identity and a sense of personal coherence and intelligibility are centered on this threshold between interior and exterior, between self and other".[173]

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172 For instance, philosophers and cultural theorists such as Appadurai (1996), Clifford (1997), Deleuze and Guattari (1986), and Paul Virilio (1986) promote mobility in terms of contemporary nomads, travellers, connections, flight and speed, locating culture and identity in material and mental mobility as opposed to place.

173 Cresswell (2002:2) proposes that a viable alternative to the essentialising and exclusionary tendencies of sedentarist metaphysics and the universalising placelessness of nomadic metaphysics is recognition of "lived, practiced and inhabited place" — a spatial practice that has correlations with Soja's (1989, 1996b, 1999) Thirdspace and Merleau-Ponty's body-world relation (Cresswell 2002:21). This 'politics of place' entails a specific awareness of space as open and active; it is shaped by the social and in turn shapes the social (Soja 1996b:10, 22). In this

Rutherford (1990:24) suggests that this indeterminacy could be less debilitating, and may even be empowering, if one could recognise the diasporic condition as being "*the* defining experiential reality of contemporary times" (Venn 2009:12). For Rutherford (1990:25, emphasis added), this recognition entails first coming to terms with and then embracing the realisation that, "in this struggle for new ways of living, more democratic relationships and new subjectivities, *there can be no homecoming*". For Rutherford (1990:24) a conception of home within a postmodern, global framework is a "space within" that can be achieved through the development of "personal integrity" and acceptance of difference and diversity.

Interestingly, Rutherford's conception of home correlates with Steyn's (2012) views on how WESSAs might, at the time of writing, continue to reconceptualise their identities in postapartheid South Africa. As discussed, the fluid identity constructions characteristic of postmodernity apply to the majority of South Africans. However, Steyn (2012) extends these identity politics to the diasporic conditions of many WESSAs. In 2001 she had already speculated that, "the realities of South Africa now are such that white South Africans may just have to become comfortable with the inevitability of learning to leave home" (Steyn 2001:157). Eleven years later, Steyn (2012) reiterates that a significant number of WESSAs still need to accept that 'home' as they knew it before 1994 is no longer, and may never again be, a site of comfortable certainty: "there are people who still have not 'got it' that power relations have changed. They want to insist that [normative whiteness] is the way things ought to be". For her, the five narratives of whiteness are still at play: "I hear them all the time" she says, "although not as dominantly as post-1994 into the early 2000s." She continues that, "contestation between different discursive positions is not as raw as it was … because time has elapsed, to some extent we've become more relaxed, people don't feel the urgency to position themselves the way they did" (Steyn 2012). This lack of urgency, Steyn (2012, emphasis added) argues, is underpinned by a mixture of complacency and fear:[174] "Although *traces of dislocation* are still evident, people seem to have chosen their narratives; they've found the discourses either with which to be constantly outraged, or those with which to forge ways of remaking, bolstering and emplacing themselves."

In terms of resistant whitenesses, Steyn (2012) notes that many WESSAs have "found ways of dealing with not belonging". Some have learnt to how to co-opt "new South Africa speak" (the language of transformation) as a front for a deeper resistance; others encourage their children to emigrate to locations that they perceive not only to be physically safe and economically predictable but which are also seen to be culturally congruent with and supportive of white identity;

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lexicon, "Place as practiced and practice as placed always relies on the symbiosis of locatedness and motion rather than the valorization of one or the other" (Cresswell 2002:26); "traveling and dwelling are recognized as aspects of the same spatial practice" (Hoving 2002:125). Thus, as Hoving (2002:126), citing Glissant, notes, "it becomes possible to meet the world not just by traveling, but by dwelling too". As she explains:

> Places (nations, cities, landscapes) are the complex of points of convergence of many cross-cultural and transnational relations. Staying in such a place, probing that place thoroughly, analysing its historical and political complexity yields a knowledge about cross-cultural relations and globalization that (literal) travels could never bring. It brings an unparalleled knowledge about the world. On the one hand, it is very much a situated knowledge, for it is a knowledge of a very specific place, with its particular conditions. On the other hand, this knowledge embraces the world, as the whole world meets in this single place (Hoving 2002:127).

[174] As Steyn (2012) notes, any positionality that tries to maintain superiority "is underpinned by a substratum of fear; fear of things being overturned in some way, or losing privilege". In postapartheid South Africa, racial fear is still reflected in discourses around crime, yet fear is held in tension with complacency; they do not cancel each other out; "we hold fear and complacency in tension in our psyches", says Steyn (2012).

some have learnt 'functional' ways to relate in social and public situations; others covertly resegregate — within a society that requires contact, they have learnt mechanisms of creating segregation through collusion (Steyn 2012). For Steyn, coming to terms with and accepting an ever-shifting subjectivity and sense of in-betweenness is a fundamental part of becoming a hybrid WESSA. While the state of in-betweenness she speaks of includes the positions of those hybrid WESSAs who acknowledge their links to the centres of power yet simultaneously try to claim a sense of Africanness,[175] her words refer more to the indeterminacy of broader white South African subjectivities. Ever-emergent postapartheid identities continue to open up new speaking trajectories; relationships between home and elsewhere, global and local, tradition and modernity are in states of fluidity. In order to position themselves within this context, Steyn (2012, emphasis added) advocates that, "WESSAs need to accept this state of becoming *as a way of being* — without expectation of finding resolution." For Steyn (2012, emphasis added), *not belonging is a form of belonging;* the in-betweenness of *not being located is one's location,* or, as Nicole Falkof (2012) puts it*, "*the subject position WESSAs occupy is their in-betweenness; they are neither inside, nor outside". This position means acknowledging that in postapartheid South Africa, living as a WESSA is to live in a space that is continually contested (Steyn 2012), embracing this knowledge, and learning to work with, and from within, it (Falkof 2012).

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[175] Sally Matthews (2011:4) puts forward a progressive political stance regarding hybrid WESSAs' ambivalent relation to Africa, which might bear further consideration. For Matthews, a way around the vexed question of what constitutes a white African might lie in the formation of identities that, "[accept] the 'in-betweenness' of white South Africans and [involve] a commitment by white South Africans to strive to find an appropriate way to belong in Africa". While Matthews's proposition prompts the question, 'What is an appropriate way of belonging in Africa?' and may be construed as problematic in that it operates under the premise that white people do not belong in South Africa, it nonetheless opens up possibilities for debate.

Albeit via different routes, Rutherford (1990:24) and Steyn (2012) reach a similar conclusion: once an understanding that subjectivity lies in the space of in-betweenness and a sense of personal integrity is achieved, self-representation and self-recognition (or what Antonio Gramsci [cited in Rutherford 1990:19] calls "knowing thyself") become possible. As noted at the outset of this thesis and in Chapter Four, for Steyn (2001:xxi-xxii) the process of developing personal integrity involves the re-evaluation and re-imagining of 'old selves' in ways that retain a sense of personal congruence.

These processes of self-evaluation acted as a catalyst for the artwork. In working through them, I gained insights that have affected my ways of being-in-the-world. As Venn (2009:8, 2010:323) notes, "The questioning of the experiential which an artwork might prompt can relay another questioning: that of oneself and one's way of being". Venn's (2010:323) suggestion that in prompting self-questioning, the artwork "participates in the process of becoming, and of becoming different", holds currency for me as an artist. Through the study I have come to see myself, as Gramsci (cited in Rutherford 1990:20) puts it, "as the product of the historical process to date which has deposited an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory" for, as he says, "Each individual is the synthesis not only of existing relations but of the history of these relations." Playing the part of the postcolonial protagonist necessitated looking back to a personal past from my position within the present, tracing deeply ingrained colonial values in myself by enacting them through the persona of Bertha Marks, and connecting to familial histories through exploration of Freda Farber's narrative.

Making the artwork and reflecting on it in the writing has been a process of relocating myself *from within* the disjuncture of identity that resulted from my sense of displacement. Although, occasionally, I still experience a sense of displacement in relation to my environment, I find Steyn's (2011) concept of postcolonial diaspora — as a possible blueprint against which to rethink contemporary identities — and recognition of ways in which displacement can be constitutive of new, hybrid, cultural forms, empowering.

My sense of empowerment may be extended to the construction of emergent postapartheid WESSA subjectivities, as cultural hybridity continually transforms ways in which WESSAs are grappling with questions of subjectivity, identity and creative agency. Steyn (2012) and Falkof (2012) both point to the surge of work in the South African cultural sphere that has emerged from circa 2000 to the time of writing. In the realm of visual art and culture, white identities are being represented in ways that disrupt homogeneity and problematise the notion of a 'singular voice'. Steyn (2012) interprets this as an indication that some WESSAs have moved beyond the need to position themselves in definitive terms and feel empowered to openly assert their identities in ways that acknowledge contestation, ambiguity and ambivalence.

It is towards these "new forms of imagining" (Nuttall & Michael 2000:2) that my exploration of displacement in *Dis-Location* gestures. The exhibition's narratives of roots and uprootings, unsettlement and resettlement, reveal that while displacement and the diasporic conditions it can create might give rise to trauma and cultural conflict, processes of dislocation and relocation can also provide generative opportunities for the production of new identities and ways of being-in-the-world. For the protagonist, grafting allows for this newness, in the form of insights, identities and ways of being, to emerge, pointing towards the production of an imagined or "*interstitial* future" (Bhabha 1996a:313). Bhabha (1996a:313) describes this future in relation to hybridity as emerging "*in-between* the claims of the past and the needs of the present". Locked into ever-evolving processes of becoming, the protagonist is situated in a perpetual Third Space of hybridity, "always oscillat[ing] between identity and alterity" (Yuri Lotman cited in Papastergiadis 1995:14). Her subjectivity is "continually, contingently, 'opening out', remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference — "[w]here identity and difference is neither One nor the Other but something else besides, in-between" (Bhabha 1996a:313). It is in this contested space of neither/nor that she finds her 'home', and finds herself 'at home'.

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