'*Ag sjeim, siestog*, sorry': Tracing Shame's Affect through Performance in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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DECLARATION

I declare that "**'*Ag sjeim, siestog*, sorry': Tracing Shame's Affect through Performance in Post-Apartheid South Africa**" is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

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ABSTRACT

In this study I investigate what performance as a medium can contribute to our understanding of shame's affect. Given the difficulty of defining and concretising affect according to set parameters and outcomes, critical and dynamic debates about its nature continue. Most recently, New Affect theorists such as Brian Massumi have explored the role of the body in affective meaning-making. Our current social context requires a critical engagement with the forms of affect in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the intangible structures of power and oppression, as well as of desire, interest and pleasure. My aim is to determine the ways in which performance – as a medium through which to navigate an often difficult, evasive and deeply subjective experience – can facilitate a knowledge of how bodies experience, relate to and process shame.

Performance is therefore central to the inquiry, which employs a qualitative Practice-led/Research-led (PLR/RLP) design with autoethnography as the primary research method. I analyse how performance's affect can catalyse alternative ways of knowing in relation to shame, through reflections on post-apartheid South African theatre productions and performance art pieces, as well as visual artworks. These analyses attempt to develop a discussion (both theoretical and practical) of how shame and its affect are worked out in live exchanges between object/performance/ assemblage and audience in order to reflect on the cultural forms of post-apartheid South Africa. I use my autoethnographic feelings, thoughts, writings and findings as a way of coming to grips with what performance can offer to an understanding of shame's affect. In working autoethnographically, the affective in-betweens of writing, performing and conducting research are spoken to, highlighting the temporal dynamics of process-driven work and the confused, unknown and often shame-felt realm in research production. In summary, this thesis posits performance and its affective dimension as the locus of enquiry into the affect of shame, in the hope of reaching a better understanding of how shame affects the body and its meaning-making.

Keywords: Affect, shame, performance studies, practice-led/research-led methodology, autoethnography, embodied cognition, performative narrative, post-apartheid South Africa, Brett Bailey, Gabrielle Goliath, Lara Foot, Juliet Jenkin, South African theatre, performance arts and visual arts.

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INTRODUCTION

Where do you imagine they go? I mean emotions that should have been felt, but were not – such as regret for a harsh word, guilt for a crime, embarrassment, propriety, shame? Imagine shame as a liquid, let's say a sweet fizzy tooth-rotting drink, stored in a vending machine. Push the right button and a cup plops down under a pissing stream of the fluid. How to push the button? Nothing to it . . . Then what happens to all that unfelt shame? What about the unquaffed cups of pop? Think again of the vending machine. The button is pushed; but then in comes the shameless hand and jerks away the cup! The button-pusher does not drink what was ordered; and the fluid of shame spills, spreading in a frothy lake across the floor . . . so into the ether goes the unfelt shame of the world. Whence, I submit, it is siphoned off by the misfortune few, janitors of the unseen, their souls the buckets into which squeegees drip what-was-spilled. We keep such buckets in special cupboards. Nor do we think much of them, although they clean up our dirty waters.

<div align="right">Salman Rushdie, Shame 122</div>

Shame separates us from others, causing us to experience that state of painful disidentification and self-consciousness that at times would threaten to implode the self, yet it also indicates our desire to connect to the people with whom we share a space. It is this dual nature that makes shame such an interesting tropological feeling to consider . . . in a place that yet suffers bitter division and lack of connection between people, wouldn't it be fruitful to represent those feelings that both separate apparent ''others'' and uncover an investment in repairing that severed relationship?

<div align="right">Caitlin Charos, States of Shame: South African
Writing after Apartheid 276</div>

To track shame's embodied affect through the aesthetic of performance in post-apartheid South Africa, it is first necessary to trace how certain threads of thought came to intersect and how I started to see them in relation to each other. In the first epigraph to this chapter, Salman Rushdie describes shame as something that spills out uncontrollably with harmful physical consequences that affect the body, like a tooth-rotting fizzy drink. The extract also questions where all the 'spillage,' the apparently "unfelt shame," is siphoned off to. Rushdie suggests that our world reduces shame to something like ether in its 'unfeltness.' But this shame-as-ether, something that passes

unfelt and disappears like a vapour, is nevertheless mopped up, stored in buckets (of the self) and left to be discarded or hidden away.

While Rushdie points to the everyday spillage of shame, the epigraph from Caitlin Charos highlights the complexity of shame's both/and state of feeling. Shame is both the "painful state of disidentification" which severs our relation to others, and at the same time the state of feeling that reveals our interest in others and our desire to connect with them (Charos 276). Shame therefore speaks to the both/and, both forming "apparent 'others'" and "invest[ing] in repairing … severed relationships" (276). Shame acts as the point that causes disconnection while equally reminding us of our desire to connect. Charos maintains that just as shame holds bodies apart "or rather, reflects our desire to 'hold off' other-ed bodies, shame also holds us together, cathecting in our relationality, our interest in stranger intimacies" (297). Thus as much as we may want to distance our self from the shameful Other, the very act of separation reflects our interest in "stranger intimacies" and our cathecting of relations (297). It is this description that contextualises the affect of shame both in post-apartheid South Africa generally and in my personal grappling with the subject. Both epigraphs offer me a creative point of vantage for thinking through the question of how shame traffics in the self, as well as the wider state of shame in post-apartheid South Africa. Is it possible that the affect of shame, as a sign of our interest in each other's "stranger intimacies" as rather than an experience that severs, can draw us together in South Africa?

The field of shame and affect studies is growing rapidly, with recent publications such as *The Poetics and Politics of Shame in Postcolonial Literature* (2019) by David Attwell, Annalisa Pes and Susanna Zinato, and *Shame! And Masculinity* (2020) edited by Ernst Van Alphen, who also curated the exhibition *Shame! Exploring Masculinity* (2020) as well as Penny Siopis recent short film *Shadow Shame Again* (2021) exhibited alongside a revisiting of Siopis' older work *Three Essays on Shame* (2005). What distinguishes the present study is that it is a study of shame rooted in performance. The study analyses contemporary South African performance pieces (theatre, visual and performance art) in order to reach a better understanding of how shame traffics in embodied modes. The study adopts the perspective both of the insider as a participant immersed in the performance, inside the processes of embodied meaning-making, and of the outsider, an investigator of the performance, somewhat distanced theoretically and involved in a critical and self-reflective consideration of the performance. Because of this placement, the study considers what the internal self-performance of meaning-

making might be in relation to shame, but contextualised by interdisciplinary theoretical analysis.

In a study focused on shame's affect, it is fundamental that the notion of shame be clearly described and interpreted. In brief: shame touches the skin as it is the skin that colours up as shame's immateriality materialises in the body. It is the stickiness of shame on the self that impairs internal and outward movement, creating a surface on which other thoughts and emotions can gather and stick. It is also through touch that we find and feel connection.

The visual machinery of apartheid attached shame to the skin. Skin colour publicly isolated and shamed individual bodies, disconnecting the shamed body from those bodies not visually marked as shameful. Because of this, shame "altered and intensified" how South Africans read and understood what being human meant (Van Zyl qtd. in Van Alphen, *Shame* 54). The human body and its skin colour therefore acted as an extremely destructive tool informing how people made assumptions about and transferred meaning onto each other (54). The apartheid system aimed to invisibilise hypervisible bodies by creating the shameful Other through a legalisation of racial separation which was 'band-aided' with a rhetoric of social upliftment and 'good neighbourliness.'[1] One's shame and the act of the shamer were invisibilised into a socially constructed system of morality involving 'being neighbourly'. Also concealed was how shame produced the disempowered Other. Shame then worked strategically to manipulate the visibility of some by making certain Other bodies invisible. Peggy Phelan's thoughts (in an interview with Marquard Smith) on what constitutes the border between the visible and the invisible question how a blindness in the South African state to the opacity of the non-seen might frame our embodied experiences of shaming through seeing (qtd. in Smith 293). This idea is explored in relation to hegemonic ideology and how it can serve to blind a collective body into not seeing its control and ubiquity.

Shame is primarily a locus of the social. Shame arises in the interactions between bodies; it involves an intensification of the body's surface and its visibility.

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[1] Hendrik Verwoerd in his justification for apartheid created the policy of 'good neighbourliness' which allowed for the legal administration of separate development. This term stems from the biblical Ten Commandments, where God instructs his people to "love thy neighbour." Verwoerd derived the idea of neighbourliness from this commandment and used it to endorse separate development policies in South Africa. This rhetoric made racial stratification appear biblically approved, ordained by God and therefore morally and socially acceptable.

Even if not experienced in the presence of other bodies, shame is always the by-product of being in relation to someone else, formed by relations of embodied social interaction. A real (or even imagined) audience needs to be present for a shame experience to occur. However, the metaphors of an audience, the embodied awareness of being seen and of one's visibility, are instrumental in how shame affects us. This therefore highlights the structural features of shame, which involve the subject becoming aware of a discrepancy between a possible detached observer's description of their action, appearance or state and their own assumptions about these same features.

Part of the complexity of this investigation into shame is the uncanny business of thinking with another, empathetically thinking in relation, as shame is formed and dependent on being in relation. It is for this reason that this study of shame is rooted in performance, for both shame and performance occur and are experienced in relation. The analysis conducted in the following pages proposes a way to think with the other. Performance also facilitates a both/and: it acts as a medium for critically questioning, but also for possibly repairing the severing effects of shame through its intimacy, sociability, nearness, dependence and necessary 'being in connection.' Performance can only exist in a state of relation as it requires a witness to exist at all. Performance thus offers a way into shame's repair through its central sociability, the communion between performer and audience. Moreover, if the body was the site on which apartheid made its violent mark, then the body can also be the site for offsetting this marking, the medium through which something new is made and the marking of shame is undone.

Focusing on performance reinforces Sally Munt's argument about the need to approach a study of shame through an interdisciplinary lens because of how knotted and multi-layered the messages of shame are:

> A distinction between what is written on the body, what erupts from the body, and the visualisation of bodily activity from another's point of view, is a compound shame entanglement subject to much scholarly conjecture; unfortunately, the answers to questions of origin depend largely upon the disciplinary subject boundaries the researcher happens to be trained in. Investigating shame needs to be from an interdisciplinary approach, so knotted are its messages. (Munt 2)

To reiterate, this study investigates what the aesthetic of performance can contribute to an understanding of shame's affect. I ask how the performative encounter that is immediate, live, connected, embodied and borderless in affective exchanges, and positional in placing the spectator as a witness, may or may not speak to the affect of shame. I also question how performance can possibly act as a tangible representation of the physical repertoire of shame's affect. And lastly, I consider how performance can facilitate a way into knowing how bodies experience, relate to and process shame, in turn offering a possible medium for shame's repair and undoing.

According to Marcel Proust, "the truths which intelligence grasps directly in the open light of day have something less profound, less *necessary* about them than those which life has communicated to us *in spite of ourselves* in an impression, a material impression because it has reached us through our senses" (61, italics in original).[2] Performance is a sensory experience in that it draws on a variety of resources for making meaning to communicate with its audience via visual and aural codes. Lighting, music, sound, costumes, props, voice, movement and bodies are employed as meaning-makers, communicating to us in impressions made on our senses, communicated both because of and in spite of what its maker and recipient may have chosen to know or feel. Part of the vitality that performance engenders derives from an awareness of its capacity to shift one's thinking. The aesthetics of performance open up new possibilities for understanding how we make meaning.

As suggested above, performance offers a potential space for experiencing something shameful or shame-inducing that previously would have been numbed and rendered inaccessible to the recipient. The observations of Charos quoted above are echoed by Stephanie Arel's proposal that "the affect of shame is simulated and modulated in relationship," and therefore it is "through relationship that it is repaired" (32). Both viewpoints support my argument that performance offers an encounter with the other and thus a potential modification of shame through that encounter. If shame's affect is formed in relation, the communion of performance offers an alternative embodied and affective relationship with which to repair the blame/shame cycle.

Because shame is so intrinsically linked to self, the methodology employed in this study is a form of qualitative, critical, self-reflective, autoethnographic Practice-

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[2] This follows Jill Bennett's reading in *Empathic Vision* of Deleuze's interpretation of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (7).

led/Research-led (PLR/RLP) practice. This perspective keeps the study engaged in a form of double play as both insider and outsider. Ethnographer Clifford Geertz's thinking regarding "experience distant" and "experience near" offers the analysis a terminology that supports this simultaneous positioning as insider and outsider. The same applies to the both/and, insider/outsider status of PLR/RLP. The study also situates the body as a central meaning-maker, corroborating Barbara Bolt's claim that theory only occurs once we have somatically understood experience through our handling of it ("Materialising" 66). The study offers four case studies that created the space in which shame's affect could be thought through. The case studies are based on two performance art pieces, *Stumbling Block* (2011), *Blood Diamond/Terminal* (2009), and two theatre pieces, *Tshepang* (2004) and *Woolworths* (2017), where I am situated as an observer detailing what meaning-making occurred both during my encounter with the performance and retrospectively. Because bodies are inherently ambiguous, relational and imperfect, shame is a constant feature and possibility of social life. I therefore centralise myself as a member of the audience in the case studies to highlight and record the shame experience/s. Through the use of this methodology, practice and theory form and inform each other throughout the study.

The process-driven approach of PLR/RLP methodology creates the space for the study to unpack the affective relation in the research process. This approach is in line with human geographer Tim Ingold's insistence that thinking must be coupled with making: "in order to know something, you work with its materiality, not anticipating what it will reveal, but rather discovering through an attentiveness to its textures a way of corresponding with whatever it is you seek to know" (*Being* 7). My approach is also in line with Bolt's artistic practice, which is influenced by Heidegger's concept of "knowledge that arises from our handling of materials and processes" ("The Magic" 30). Any theoretical understanding in the research is therefore initially positioned by Bolt's discussion of "handling" the material (30). What Bolt calls "praxical knowledge" or a "theorising out of practice" (33–34) relate to what I experienced in the embodied performance of shame, an experience which gave birth to perceptions of and thoughts about shame, affect and performance. Dwight Conquergood talks about the value of working with "praxical knowledge" through performance, resisting the visual, verbal and textual forms of representation predominant in western epistemology and associated with colonial forms of control. Conquergood instead draws on the writing

of Frederick Douglass,[3] who asserts the need for a research methodology that incorporates "experiential, participatory epistemology . . . an ethnography of the ears and heart" and "a hermeneutics of experience, relocation, co-presence, humility, and vulnerability: listening to and being touched by" (149, 150).

At the same time, the PLR/RLP follows an iterative, cyclical process that does not distinguish research from practice but rather encourages the folding in and folding out of research into practice and practice into research, highlighting the interwoven, creative nature of the process. The rhetorical structure of the thesis is therefore recursive, in two important senses: first, as already adumbrated, the constant movement between practice (e.g., personal affective experience) and relevant theorisations of affective experience and its dynamics. Secondly, various discursive trajectories emanating from the case studies may arrive at the same point, let us call it point A. But at its second iteration, Point A leads the exploration to a further point, Point B, or suggests a different angle, point C, and so on, throughout the thesis.

The methodology in turn provides a different sort of knowledge, a knowledge of "the things behind the things" (Radway ix-x). *Senselab*, a laboratory for thought in motion, based at Concordia University in Canada, has developed the term Research-Creation, which refers to an intuitive research philosophy. This approach has enhanced my PLR journey. I see the hyphen between the words as the liminal space of Research-Creation potential, namely the affective exchange/encounter (Thain 2). Research-Creation is described as the "thinking-feeling of what happens" (3). Using Research-Creation in my PLR brings me into an "affective co-motion" with the study, experienced in the self-reflexivity of my response to the encountered performance, and in the process of thinking with the both/and of theory, embodied meaning-making and the practical act of writing.

The study critically examines how self-reflective documenting/analysis of embodied modes of meaning-making can be used to explore the affect of shame. The

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[3] The thoughts of the African-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass regarding the improvisatory performance politics expressed in the singing of enslaved people opened up a way of thinking about how cultural performances embody feelings. Douglass thus theorised performance as an alternative way of knowing, one that was outside of cognitive control (qtd. in Conquergood 149). Douglass, a freed slave, "always acknowledged the deeply felt insights and revelatory power that come through the embodied experience of listening to communal singing, the tones, cadence, vocal nuances, all the sensuous specificities of performance that overflow verbal content" (qtd. in Conquergood 149). Douglass also advocated for a riskier hermeneutics of the ethnographer, one that did not only read written accounts, but engaged with "experience, relocation, co-presence, humility, and vulnerability" (qtd. in Conquergood 150).

practice asks the questions: How does a PLR approach in researching the affect of shame offer the researcher new ways of knowing and understanding how shame's affect is experienced? How does a PLR practice coupled with an exploration of affect, change, enhance and develop the research project in nuanced ways? It is to be hoped that the PLR approach will reveal practical ways of thinking about shame's affect and its formulation in notions of self in post-apartheid South Africa, primarily through the performative medium.

As noted in my discussion of autoethnography as a method, the analysis is placed in the specific context from which the ideas and the writing process evolved, speaking directly and indirectly to the wider social context by which my interpretation and writing has been influenced. With my return to graduate studies during the contentious student movements of #Rhodesmustfall and #Feesmustfall from 2015 to 2017, a time when student voices were raised against institutions of systemic oppression, I started to understand how my attitudes to Othering discourses were primarily affective. In reading widely around affect, I came across Shame Theory. In my reading I started to find a language that articulated a way of making sense of many of my lived experiences while growing up in South Africa. Immersed in the radical student movements of 2016, I started to see systemic structures of racism and classism as an affective force. Through employing and enforcing affective states of exclusion or inclusion, affective power dynamics acted covertly, masked behind a 'liberated' political history of overt policies that had 'previously' endorsed racism. With the ever-increasing tensions and polarisations on campuses across South Africa, I saw these binary states as a reaction to years of socialised shaming through strategies that render shame invisible. I also saw the harm in how the movement used a polarised rhetoric that worked at silencing opposition, similarly splitting the 'new' shame Othered from the movement's construction of its future by using a shameful silencing and 'calling out' strategy. Furthermore, I realised how intrinsically shame's affect is to the maintenance of unity in cultural politics. The protests demonstrated shame's inordinate relevance in social and political movements "where the oppression of marginalised groups is often not the result of legislation or overt political manoeuvrings, but happens more invisibly through the cultural deployment of affects like shame" (Dolezal xv). I saw the truth of shame theorist Gershen Kaufman's recognition that "[t]he transfer of blame is fundamentally a transfer of shame" (98). Bodies on campus either blamed, carried the weight of blame, or both.

When reading the Institute for Creative Arts'[4] (ICA) first critical work on contemporary live arts performances in South Africa, *Acts of Transgression* (2019), I came across Sarah Nuttall's considerations about affective structures and how they bring integral and visceral dimensions to the grammar of the political ("Upsurge" 10). Nuttall claims that as a country "we have exhausted our faith in facts to speak to and for us," and that instead we need "to trace the emotion and psychic energies of our time in order to find meaning" (10). This idea is echoed by Krista Tippett, who suggests that "we have outlived our faith in facts to tell the whole story or even to tell us the truth about the world and ourselves. So many of us feel excluded and dismayed by what passes for discourse in our common life" (32). I myself experienced a mounting disquiet that made me question the world I had grown up in, one in which performed words, declarations, laws and speeches could not be trusted. As a way of distilling and re-examining my reality, I turned to performance's affect to ground a reappraisal and rewording of what my meta-narrative was and is.

I started to think about how shame works in relation to power and how it can be used to control, enforce and maintain power dynamics. I started to reflect on my own childhood, looking for memories where meaning had been felt internally and left in the in-between of pre-cognitive thought. I thought back to moments when I had lacked the intellect or vocabulary to sound out what I had felt and experienced but had nevertheless processed and attached meaning to. I soon saw crossovers between what I was reading theoretically and memories of shameful experiences encountered, for instance, in Christian institutions. Through the process of research, I began to identify how shame had been a code used to control, order and regulate the church community. Through tracing these once-muddied, embodied memories of shame, clarified through a theoretical understanding of the concept, I could relate them to how bodies in the apartheid era had possibly experienced and encountered shame in their day-to-day encounters with bodies who were not like them. And even though legalisation enforcing racial shaming has been removed, covert forms of shaming are ever prevalent and dare I say, even increasing in the South African cultural landscape.

Performance has been a space where, ever since childhood, I have experienced a deep sense of inner vitality. Here I am making reference to Patricia Clough's use of

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[4] Formerly known as the Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts (GIPCA), the Institute for Creative Arts (ICA) is situated in the University of Cape Town's Humanities Faculty and facilitates research projects with an interdisciplinary, live arts and public spheres focus.

the term 'vitality' when she describes affects as "the augmentation or diminution of a body's capacity to act, engage, and to connect, such that autoaffection is linked to the self-feeling of being alive, that is aliveness and vitality" (2). I am therefore speaking of a vitality that has made me feel more connected to a sense of self and a sense of shared humanity. This vitality, I argue, is affectively charged because performance takes place in co-presence with other 'living' bodies. It is because of this vitality in performance that I experience a deep-seated connection to my sense of self. Additionally, as discussed, performance requires and relies on the relationship between a performer and an audience member. It is this 'aliveness' of the event that heightens the potential for affects to transfer and communicate between bodies. It is perhaps for these reasons that I found the medium of performance central to a better understanding of shame's affect. Through performance's multiple avenues, be it in the role of performer where I am centred[5] and stilled into a deep self-awareness, or in the role of audience member where I am made to sit in silence, observe and engage internally with how I am made to feel, I am reminded me of the ways in which I am connected to fellow humans through embodied modes of meaning-making experienced in relation to each other. It is through these several aspects of performance that the processes of how shame traffics affectively can be studied, identified and articulated.

As noted earlier, the research is situated in a post-apartheid South African context. In working autoethnographically, my engagement with shame occurs in relation to this contextual placement. The methodological approach of autoethnography is an embodied and sensuous process and "requires living consciously, emotionally and reflexively" (La Capra 10). The writing focuses on my personal experiences with shame, shame in the performative mode, and how shame is felt in the constructed relationship an audience member has with a performance. In this regard, the research does not speak for any community but reflects my own personal perspective. I am the observer, deliberating and intuitively responding to contextual moods, shifts and tensions. In so doing, the research offers a questioning of how shame's capacity to move between bodies interrupting the archiving of a

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[5] I use the word centred from the performance terminology of centred, centring. This word is used to describe a perfomer's internal preparation both in mental and bodily capacities to unblock the body from any thoughts, experiences, anxieties and pressures which may hinder the body in performance. This technique of centring generates a sensitivity to the body as the actor becomes hyper-aware to any twitch, tense muscle or repetitive thought.

national reconciliation sought by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its 1998 report. Even though I do not speak for a community, the individual response explored here reveals how differently located individuals might experience shame's affect. The study therefore responds to the optative question posed by Charos in the epigraph to this chapter: "wouldn't it be fruitful to represent those feelings that both separate apparent 'others' and uncover an investment in repairing that severed relationship?" (276).

In working with affect and shame, the study could not be placed outside a narrative of self, for shame works in the deep intimacies of selfhood. In attempting to give shame a voice, I needed to place myself in a position of exposure to generate interest, connection and intimacy. I ask in this study how this kind of introspection as a methodology can problematise or extend the limits of academic discourse. I therefore speak "nearby" – a form of expression discussed by Trinh T. Minh-ha in an interview with Nancy Chen. For Minh-ha this is a kind of speaking that "does not point to the object if it is distant from the speaking subject or absent from the speaking place. A speaking that reflects on itself" (87). Writing in such a way means that there is no object/Other framed in relation to the speaking subject. It is a technique that makes visible the invisible. By positioning my writing in this way, I hope to expose shame's invisibility in its many spheres of implicitness, concealment and entanglement. Because shame is a bodily experience often falling outside of articulated words, the effect of what affect does is analysed. The challenge in this study is that in writing I attempt to use words to describe something that is theoretically outside of language. A further challenge to be navigated is that the writing process itself repeats an internal cycle of shame, seen and felt in the disclosure of shame through the materiality of the printed words in the thesis. It is, however, this "visceral *resistance to tell* [that] is constitutive of shame's desire for self-effacement" (Attwell et al., "Introduction" 17). So it is precisely in the telling that repair can be made.

In writing autoethnographically in a PLR/RPL methodology that investigates shame from the ephemeral landscape of performance, how do I prevent this study and myself from drowning in a sea of subjectivity and narcissism? How do I articulate feelings of sameness while still staying attentive to difference? The situation is not without tension, for as Stuart Hall states, the self carries with it a doubled movement, it expresses "a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'" (225). This is a precarious venture in the writing of a doctorate, but I believe my analysis holds a balance between

insider/outsider, sameness/difference and observer/participant that speaks to the precarity of walking in the in-betweens of meaning-making. Shame is a deeply intimate experience and expression of self, and I hope that this analysis of shame's performativity opens up to others the possibility of facing and critiquing their personal experience of shame.

My intention with the autoethnographic approach is to explore the dual nature of shame's 'felt-feeling': the desire to connect and the awareness of separation; a negotiation of self-awareness and reflexive self-evaluation. The writing process will aim to highlight the felt-feeling of separate apparent 'others', and the internal uncovering of an investment in repairing severed relationships. The self-reflective analysis also discusses how writing and performance involves an ethical intricacy in their bias and skewing of what is remembered and of what is forgotten, what is voiced and what is erased. Shame (even when experienced individually) functions as a social affect that signals a threat of social exclusion – a threat that leaves the self with only two possibilities, namely, withdrawal/submission or aggression/retaliation. In attempting to offer another avenue of response to shame outside of anger/blame/ aggression/withdrawal/submission, the autoethnographic approach draws on gender and cultural theorist Elspeth Probyn's speculation when she claims, "it's not that the effects of shame can be harnessed by stories; it's that shame demands that we tell other stories" (*Blush* 72). These traces also do not necessarily represent some sort of 'truth' or 'true' picture of myself or my society but rather offer an attempt to give voice to my social embeddedness in and of shame. In turn, the methodological approach adopted addresses the question: What is it for a voice to speak about itself and about society? The writing of self is thus a direct attempt to break shame's grip and give shame a voice. My reflections, despite their probable unreliability, can nevertheless serve as an important site of testimony and witnessing. The narrative voice employed by me in this thesis thus has the potential to affect how each of us sees the past, participates in the present and imagines the future. I track my affective reactions to the four cases studied in italics, using the present tense as a way of capturing the lingering affective recall of those moments, positioning the reader in the in-between of a viscerally induced state. The change in font also signals the affective disruption I am trying to mark in this discussion.

The literary scholar David Attwell raises a very interesting discussion in his own field of study, one that I would like to consider in its application to what performance

offers in processing, understanding and uncoupling itself from the dominant linguistic language of shame that is "notoriously blocked, recursive, and obsessive" ("Writing in" 43). Attwell states that:

> [T]he effects of shame quickly spiral into a malaise of constriction and paralysis. The catching at the throat, the hives on the skin, the downcast and averted gaze: since the difficulty is precisely that because these effects, and affects, are inimical to the subject's creativity and autonomy, indeed often simply to thought, shame presents unique challenges in the domain of culture. … To be released from it into a freer sociability involves a negotiation that may have to pass through abjection and rage. What does it mean, then, to enter this space as cultural practice? Can aesthetic and literary invention represent a condition of such severe diminution from the inside? Does the writing of shame inevitably follow its psychopathology or are there ways of engaging with it that are both responsive to its social causes and aesthetically inventive? ("Writing in" 43)

I argue that the issues raised by Attwell can be addressed in a PLR/RLP approach. South African theatre-maker and academic, Mark Fleishman, suggests that "as we journey, we search for potential material to be used in the production, but importantly, we also search for a way to build a compositional logic or a guiding creative principle by means of which the material might be assembled" ("Remembering" 22). The methods of this study are in themselves an investigation into how performance could be used in dialogues around shame, what shame is, how shame works affectively and how shame is often left unarticulated and buried in the body. My approach has affinities with Fleishman's ideas about working in practice-based inquiry:

> If performance as research is anything, it is the desire to make conscious, to become aware from within the midst of the endless process of becoming and then to attempt to translate this for others through a variety of modalities. This requires a kind of perceptual still point, a slowing down or thickening of the ongoing, of the flow, so as to surface the differences in the spaces in-between. ("Remembering" 35)

I attempt through the study to understand how shame has been performed affectively on my body, remaining in the in-between crevices of embodied cognition. In order to permit this, the study requires a stillness from me, a deep reflection, and an

engagement with "the differences in the spaces in-between" (Fleishman, "Remembering" 35). I have had to go deep within myself with little outward movement; a deep concentrated stillness, like the stillness in the bodies of the performers described more fully in the chapters that follow.

The study also explores what it means to think about a state of shame. In considering this I explore the felt-feeling 'state' of South Africa and the 'State' that bears the shameful history of apartheid. Judith Butler traces the move from 'state' to nation in her conversation with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Butler writes about how we might understand the sets of conditions and dispositions that account for the "state we are in" (state of mind), the "state" where we hold rights of citizenship, or what functions as the provisional domicile for our work (*Who Sings* 29). If, as Butler suggests, the "state we are in" links to the idea of "a state of upset," then possibly a state of shame can also be connected to the State, and to how we articulate the State (29). Butler's discussion is very relevant to a critical assessment of how South Africans engage with their feelings after apartheid, and particularly feelings of shame. I therefore question how South Africans feel about the post-apartheid state? (Charos 278).

A narrative inevitably contains nuances, ambiguities, erosions, exclusions and emphases. In the telling there is a sharing of a new sensibility, another way of knowing and thus another way of seeing. The performative writing therefore reflects on the felt-feeling of shame, experienced through the lens of my contextual placement and my specific social classification as a white, English-speaking, middle-class South African. Shame, and our country's shameful past, may have been publicly represented as being dealt with through the offering of a performative presentation of closure. Yet with this came a silencing of being able to share one's shame and the borderless affects of shame in day-to-day life in South Africa. This sort of situation is what Sara Ahmed has in mind when she cautions "against the desire to move on" (*Cultural Politics* 35). According to Ahmed, feelings of shame are not only indicative of human relationality and the desire for community, but are also crucial to forms of nation-building. Ahmed argues that "if we reconsider the role of shame in securing the (hetero)normative, then we can see that national shame works as a narrative of reproduction"; the nation hence (re)produces itself by displacing shame onto "illegitimate others (who fail to reproduce its form, or even its offspring)" or by shamefully mistreating its citizens in "perpetuating

forms of racism" (24). This is borne out in Charos's claim that our bodies carry the nation's shame obscured by the proud banner of the rainbow (288).

In my own case, when I entered a newly de-segregated school system in 1994, any discourse of shame was obscured by political rhetoric. Interestingly, this obscurity has been further heightened by a global and cultural stifling and silencing around shame and its felt-feeling. Zoë Wicomb, one of a few writers to broach the subject of shame after apartheid, engages with the troubling notion of shame and how it is bound up in notions of exclusion, separation and constructed sensibilities of belonging. Wicomb avers that it is "the very nature of shame to stifle its own discourse" (92). Shame does not want us to give it a voice even though it will not be easily buried or put to rest. South Africa is burdened with inequality, racial tension, othering and a conservative culture that does not give shame a voice. If we wish to look more deeply into the complex web of reconciliation, rebuilding and reconnection, shame and its felt-feeling – enacted through the visceral, live, connected medium of performance – presents us with the means.

As shame psychologists tell us, "the way out of the shame impasse … is the recognition of shame and the narration of the shame story" (Bouson 14). Through its recognition of and writing about shame, this study seeks to break the shame impasse. The process of writing has itself been fraught with layered feelings of risk, vulnerability, failure and the constant awareness of "the shame about shame" (103). As a way to negotiate the contagion of shame that seeks to isolate, separate, disconnect and infest my sense of self with a sticky sickness, I hold onto the thoughts of Elspeth Probyn, who sees the potential for transformation in the painful act of writing shame. Probyn suggests that "we might envision writing shame as part of an ethical practice" that "fleshes out an ethics of response to shame" (*Blush* 127, 131).

The process of writing about what has been affectively embodied performatively is at times extremely difficult. It is, however, in the telling of my story that an ethical practice of sharing our shame with others can be formed. It is through an articulation of shame that I hope to bring "recognition to the ubiquitous presence of shame in our lives in the hope of spurring others to question and confront – and thus to resist and undo – the somatophobia that continues to bind so many of us in shame in our contemporary culture of appearances" (Bouson 183). This thesis might be considered risky because I ask the reader not merely to engage in the academic exercise of

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acquiring knowledge, but instead to "embark on an interrogative relationship with the self and the processes through which we interact with others" (Munt xi).

In March 2020, the structure of the thesis had to be adjusted. I had originally envisioned creating a solo performative piece that would serve as a visual, embodied assemblage of the thinking which had developed from the research process. However, owing to a global pandemic and a national lockdown,[6] rehearsing and the possibility of having a live audience (a central component in the investigation) could not take place. Not knowing when doors for audiences would be reopened, the possibility of including this component of the study became extremely uncertain.[7] Also, not knowing how long the delay in the research journey would be, I decided to alter the structure of the study and remove the live performance piece. It is unfortunate that this component did not materialise, yet, as mentioned above, the writing process itself, and thinking through the process of writing in its various stages, gather together some of the performative insights that were to have been embodied in the performance. Readers are thus offered a performative dimension of shame's affect and its affective performativity in the body.

Structurally, the thesis opens with introductory thoughts that trace how and where ideas and methods intersected, and where they were assembled from. Chapter One presents a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework in which the larger analysis of the study is grounded. This framework comprises a contextualised discussion of affect, shame and performance theory, and the differing insights these fields offer to the study. Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five, discussed in more detail below, consist of analyses of selected cases that act as points of entry into the examination of affectively charged states of shame, while also offering a visual tracing of shame in performance in a post-apartheid context. The four case studies create the space to think with and through shame's affect. Chapters Two through Five also question how performance positions the attendee/audience member or participant as witness. At the same time, I offer a critique of witnessing as an affective experience

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[6] Hard lockdown (Level Five) lasted for five weeks in South Africa. All non-essential workers were restricted to their place of residence. Residents were not allowed to leave their home unless they were accessing an essential service (food or health). No outside activities were permitted.

[7] South Africa entered into another lockdown in January 2021 owing to the drastic increase in Covid-19 cases and the shortage of beds in hospitals across State and Private Hospitals. The second wave far exceeded the initial surge in June/July 2020. Covid-19 and its impact in limiting contact between people and gatherings has continued into 2021, making the possibility of a live performance with an audience highly complicated and distressing in the light of increasing Covid-19 infections.

and how this relational state may impact on the ways in which shame is performed internally. The case studies thus generate discussion around what affective witnessing can do for bodies and politics, and possibilities that are otherwise obscured such as voices and stories and cultures that are silenced, suppressed, or simply unheard. The role of witnessing is inescapably a collective and relational practice. The case studies therefore also interrogate what performance affords us in the way of understanding how shame, in its touch and in witnessing, is affectively experienced on the skin. The concluding chapter looks at the performativity of speech acts of shame in the contextually unique, colloquial use of terms like *sjeim*, *siestog* and 'sorry' in South African dialogues. This chapter also opens up a discussion about young contemporary artists who are making performance pieces that reflect an undoing of shame in our current context. The chapter offers a reluctant conclusion as the cyclical nature of the methodology continues to open up new interpretations and insights which prompt ongoing and ever-evolving analyses. Furthermore, all five chapters speak to Minh-ha's discussion referred to earlier in this chapter, about making visible the invisibility of shame through a "speaking that reflects on itself" (qtd. in Chen 87).

Chapter Two reflects on *Stumbling Block* (2001), a work by the performance artist, Gabrielle Goliath. In this piece a performer's body is concealed and wrapped in a blanket and placed on a sheet of cardboard, often but not always positioned in liminal spaces, such as doorways or passages. In the analysis of this piece, I ask what the performance offers audience members, the performers, and Goliath in terms of understanding affect and shame. *Stumbling Block* highlights how humans are invisibilised and visibilised through affective states of control and power. I use this piece as a departure point for my analysis of shame's affect in performance, as this was the first piece that brought a synergy between the performative and the theoretical probing of the study.

Chapter Three explores the provocative performance art piece *Blood Diamond/Terminal* (2009) by Brett Bailey. This is an immersive performance piece staged at the site-specific locale of an disused railway station. Bailey also introduces the notion of liminality to probe contentious issues and address unquestioned structures of power in the post-apartheid state. The work draws upon an exhibitionist style, using the tableau technique to curate moments from South African lives, with some of the performers in cages to unsettle and disturb the viewer. For the duration of the performance, silence is maintained. Individual attendees are led through the

performance piece by a young child who holds their hand. The piece probes the role of silencing in performance and how it might centre an attendee on him or herself, and the ways in which metaphorical and physical touch evoke shame and its repair.

Chapter Four discusses the play *Tshepang: The Third Testament* (2004) by Lara Foot. In a postmodern, physical theatre style, fragmented narratives are assembled to reflect on the collective identity of South Africa in relation to a traumatic event. The playtext focuses on an incident which took place in South Africa in 2001 when a 9-month-old baby was raped. This chapter discusses how a physical theatre performance style might offer new ways of telling a taboo and violent narrative encapsulated in shame. The role of Simon (the central and narrator character) is critiqued in terms of whether the performative relationship he creates with the audience facilitates or stifles the experience of shame. Consideration of the character of Ruth (the mother) opens a discussion around how shame is represented on our skin, how we touch shame on our skin, and how shame is simultaneously buried deep within the body. The chapter examines the act of witnessing in relation to shame and the shameful Other, and how discomfort and apathy are concealed and produced through the act of shaming. This discussion of *Tshepang* also offers possible insights into how performance in itself can challenge the perpetuation of a shaming culture.

Chapter Five covers the play *Woolworths* (2017), written and directed by Juliet Jenkin. The play takes the form of an epic choral poem that is variously spoken, moved to and sung by a chorus of seven actors. The play is a satiric, dramatic and comedic critique of (primarily white, English-speaking) middle-class South African identity in the post-apartheid state, which develops theatrical *mise-en-scène* through the physical use of voice and body. *Woolworths* employs the ancient performative device of the chorus to make visible the invisibilised hegemonic culture of white middle-class, English-speaking South Africans. The very nature of the chorus becomes the vehicle for a satiric critique that not only reflects on but embodies systemic and shared social issues. *Woolworths* shows how a collective habitus is used to justify the actions of an individual, and how it works to erase the complexity of the individuals who make up the collective, resulting in an un/intended homogenisation. The chorus as a theatrical convention situates the audience as witness, thereby making them members of the choral group. In *Woolworths* the performance and the audience-performer relationship explore current notions of shame in relation to maintaining whiteness. This chapter reflects on and shakes up my personal habitus by demonstrating how different aspects

of colonial and patriarchal heritage "come alive in shame" (Probyn, *Blush* 40). At the same time, Munt's notion of how the histories of "violent domination and occupation" "lurk" behind the dynamics of shame is probed, highlighting how shame has political potential since it "can provoke a separation between the social convention demarcated within hegemonic ideals" (4).

While the chapters summarised above explore the affective sway of shame, the conclusion points forward to its performative undoing. I look firstly at performative speech acts in relation to shame, drawing on the works of J. L. Austin and Judith Butler. As the research is contextualised in a post-apartheid South Africa, the analysis explores the cultural use of the word 'shame' and its inclusion in colloquial exchanges, social encounters and expressions that appear to contradict the definition of the word 'shame' as used in this study. I discuss the performativity of shame in relation to specific speech acts used in South Africa, namely, *siestog*,[8] *ag sjeim*[9] and 'sorry.'[10] These linguistic forms are commonly used to express a range of emotional responses to hurtful or uneasy experiences and most frequently express feelings of empathy and sympathy. 'Shame,' interestingly, in a South African context gives voice to fellow feeling rather than distancing from the other person. My investigation of these performative speech acts points to the difficulties of textualising an affective flow that seems to defy reification in language. This chapter thus offers a provocative framing of 'shame' in its ubiquitous and colloquial linguistic use in South Africa. I also touch briefly on the work of several younger South African artists which seem committed to the process of undoing shame. I explore how this work reveals a noticeable shift in the way younger artists engage with shame by choosing to focus on its transformative potential. Their approach offers a more forward-looking interpretation of the performance of shame.

The conclusion refers to the everyday affects of shame through a discussion of shame in its idiosyncratic colloquial presence in South Africa. The continual eclipsing of shame by our sympathetic attempts to connect with the other is achieved by burying it beneath language, perpetuating a damaging evolution of shame's

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[8] *Sies* (disgust) *tog* (pity) – *siestog* – is Afrikaans in origin. It is often used when describing the cuteness of a child, linking to a maternal instinct or emotion. It is also often used to identify a felt feeling of shared sympathy.

[9] *Ag sjeim* is a colloquial term of Afrikaans origin that when said sounds like 'shame.' It is generally used in a sympathetic way, but can also be used to dismiss someone or an idea.

[10] 'Sorry' can be used interchangeably with *siestog* and *ag sjeim*

withdrawal. I speculate to what extent this 'speaking out' of shame, through its linguistic iteration and in its centralisation in contemporary performance, serves to relax the hold that shame has upon us.

The next chapter provides a more detailed explication of the theoretical framework underlying my approach to the case studies.

CHAPTER ONE / THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study my theoretical framing of shame adopts an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on affect theory, body theory, and performance studies.

The affective turn has seen the emergence of various cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourses in current critical theory (see Massumi; Massumi and Manning; Blackman; Ahmed; Thompson; Gregg and Seigworth). The study of feelings and their relation to the body has been of interest in critical inquiry, from Baruch Spinoza to Thomas Hobbes to Henri Bergson and, most recently, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. These thinkers have all attempted to develop alternate hermeneutics regarding feelings in social, political, economic and cultural contexts. Foundationally, Spinoza defined affects as ways of connecting to people and situations. He drew attention to how the body affects and is affected, maintaining that one had "yet to determine what the body can do" (87). It was this position of 'not yet knowing' the power of affects that drove Spinoza's enquiry in the field of affect.

In my thinking on affect, on how the body affects and is affected, the immediacy of affect in relationality is central. New Affect theorists construe affects as capacious spaces, in-between, ever evolving, where encounters play out, forms interact, bodies impinge on one another and meanings proliferate. With these new insights, affect theory has presided over a readjustment of theory's relation to the world, harnessing not just the eyes and ears but the whole body in questioning how meaning is made through our interactions with the animate and inanimate elements in our world. The description of affect by Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg summarises how I frame affect in this study:

> How to begin, when, after all, there is no pure or somehow ordinary state for affect? Affect arises in the midst of *in-between-ness*: in the capacities to act and be acted upon. Affect is an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes sustained state of relation *as well as* the passage (and the duration of passage) of forces or intensities. That is, affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, *and* in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves. Affect, at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give those forces – visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than*

conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion – that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world's apparent intractability; indeed, affect is persistent proof of a body's never less than ongoing immersion in and among the world's obstinacies and rhythms, its refusals as much as its invitations. (1, emphasis in original)

For the purposes of this study, I frame affect as a bodily response, often autonomic, pre-cognitive and preverbal in its detachment from language.[11] Affect is that which adheres to, sustains, grips and remains. Part of this description comes from Ahmed, who maintains that "affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects" ("Affective Economies" 29). Lisa Blackman suggests that affects are registers of experience that at first exceed cognition and conscious awareness (*Body* 5). Because of this, affects exist as the in-betweens of meaning-making that are often left unarticulated. Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg suggest that this is because affects lack a 'pure' or 'ordinary state' and instead are made up of multiple forces (1). Because affects exist and are experienced in the in-between in of being and becoming, they lack a definitive and concrete way of being, in recognition, intensity and outcome.

I draw from Brian Massumi and Erin Manning in their centralisation of bodily meaning-making in terms of how affect traffics and why it is characterised as 'precognitive' and 'preconscious.' Massumi sees affect as a part of the process of thought in motion. That is, a process of thinking vaguely, not yet fully formed (*Politics* 10). This theoretical placement is important because this study considers directly how the aesthetics of performance affectively charge the body, and how meaning is first made through how the body registers and processes experience. Affect is thus the thought in motion (still somewhat vague), and only through cognitive engagement does it become a more clearly identifiable emotional state. Massumi also positions emotion as only a partial expression of the affective experience (5). He claims that

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[11] Bruce Gilchrist explores how the body is engaged in a fluid process of thinking without language. He highlights what is between language and the ephemerality of consciousness: "What it means for any thought to be sub- or pre-conscious has yet to be resolved. Are sub- or pre-conscious thoughts completely unacknowledged or are they just infinitesimally fleeting, communicating in an ellipsis of a very few words or a partial image, our knowledge of them obscured by the reactions they trigger – one dim moment of consciousness lost in the glare of the next few brighter ones?" (Bricklin, 89).

emotion "only draws on a limited selection of memories and only activates certain reflexes or tendencies," arguing that "no one emotional state can encompass all the depth and breadth of our experiencing of experiencing – all the ways our experience redoubles itself" (5). We may label an experience as an emotion but, as Massumi claims, the affective bodily capacities to act do not just disappear, and all these feeling states cannot be expressed in one unified emotion (5). It is the body that makes us realise the thought, or rather the unthought. It is the body and the powers of affect that bring what is hidden into view.

Following Massumi's distinction between affect and emotion, I have separated the two terms linguistically in the study. I do so not to create fixed categories but rather to rectify the exclusion of affect and the blurring of the two terms in my attempt to explore affect in relation to the thinking and feeling body. Emotion has been thoroughly explored in research focused on learning and knowing (see Antonacopoulou and Gabriel; Reynolds and Vince; Vince), while affect as intensity remains relatively under-explored. As a term, I delineate "emotion" as a complex construction, strongly biographical and containing memories that rely on language. Emotion is therefore a structured state we are taught to recognise from a young age. Affect, however, is posited as something left untaught in our early development, at best misunderstood and remaining unarticulated in our understanding and mainly discarded from our meaning-making processes. Affect is dismissed as a domain of interest because it does not offer its recipient a clear set of guidelines or instructions. The binaries and fixed definitions we cling to in order to make sense of our world are not clearly grasped when we first try to make meaning of affects, how they work in our body, and how they may affect us somatically and psychologically. Affects are instead amorphous, an impingement that can often cause the body's physiology to reflect an internal state, such as a blush, a flush to the body or eyes cast down.

For these reasons, I identify affect as a bridge to emotion. Affect is the pre-experience to emotion, the two working interdependently with each other. What I experience in my body, often through affect, needs to be understood, processed and articulated for me to make meaning of my 'emotional states.' Affect is not separate from emotion but the ground for its recognition or construction. Affect is first experienced as a precognitive sensation, felt in the body and then processed through cognitive and critical engagements that translate it into something capable of being articulated. This way of thinking is in line with William James's understanding of

emotion in relation to affect when he stated that: "the bodily changes follow directly after the perception of the exciting fact, and … our feeling of the same changes as they occur as the emotion" (449). Emotions are therefore physical feelings that we have learned to attach a name to.

It is important to clarify, in this discussion of affect studies, how this study is less interested in how forms, aesthetics, cultural practices trigger affect, then in how the transmission of affect triggers emotion, thinking or meaning-making in the spectator. How specific forms, aesthetics and modes of performance trigger affect, is of course integrated into many of the arguments in discussion but the approach is not about seeing what form does to affect but rather what affect's of shame through the aesthetics of performance communicate to the viewer. Eugenie Brinkema's study in, *The Forms of the Affects,* challenges this approach, rejecting the more 'phemenological' felt-feeling analysis of the Humanities to ideas of affect, and advocates rather for a return to form in critical analyses in affect studies. Brinkema advocates that we have not yet reached a point where we have "asked enough of form" and have yet to "know what forms are capable of" (40) and because of this we should not negate an attention of it. Brinkema does not "treat affect … as a matter of expression, not as a matter of sensation for a spectator—in fact, not as a matter of spectatorship at all. Thus, not only is this book not offering a contribution to theories of spectatorship; it should be regarded as a de-contribution to spectatorship studies, an attempt to dethrone the subject and the spectator—and attendant terms, such as "cognition," "perception," "experience," even "sensation"—for affect theory (36). Despite Brinkema's argument being fundamentally in opposition to the sensory, material body and the spectator in affect studies, (all three approaches I engage with) my study still foregrounds the form of performance, and the form of the body as the mode in which shame's affect is articulated through and as a way of knowing. Even, though *The Forms of the Affects* is centrally concerned in further exploring the potential of form in generating affects (particularly in the genre of thriller cinematic motion pictures), Brinkema's argument does cross-over this study in its engagement of a close-reading of the form of performance and the body. Thus, despite my centralisation of the sensory and material body, I do not eliminate form in the study, but instead attempt to open up other possible modes of knowing in relation to affect studies and shame theory.

The key affect theorists identified in my discussion share similarities in the ways in which they link affect to shame. These theorists – Silvan Tomkins, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, Sara Ahmed and Elspeth Probyn – identify shame as a visceral bodily sensation, innate, integral to notions of self, and violent in its toxicity because of how it is numbed, interred, silenced and denied. I do not view shame as the evil stepsister of affects, something that should be prevented from entering our bodies and consequently affecting us. As pointed out in the introduction, shame composes/comprises human experience, it substantiates the body and ratifies the body's aliveness. Being aware of what shame is and of how it moves and exists in the body is not about stopping shame from entering so that no damage can be done. Shame, if engaged with and articulated, is a tool that enables a better understanding of self, of how shame has shaped our identity and our desire to connect with and be in relation with other human beings. I do not argue for shame to be used as a regulatory mechanism, for discipline and punishment, but rather for it to be perceived as a key affect in identity construction. Shame recalls us to our humanity; it is not something to be shunned or used to discipline, the function that shaming discourses and practices are typically made to fulfil.

I situate my study of shame's affect in Silvan Tomkins's definition of shame, which has directly impacted on Sedgwick and Frank's, Munt's and Probyn's thinking. Tomkins sees shame in relation to interest and born in relation. Shame thus does not exist without interest in and a desire for connection. Tomkins also argues for the biological bases of affect, evinced through sites of "opacity" or intensity (qtd. in Sedgwick and Frank, *Shame* 14). It is the work of Tomkins that has identified a range of discrete, primary affects, including contempt, disgust, enjoyment-joy, fear-terror, gratitude, interest-excitement, shame-humiliation, and surprise-startle. He argues powerfully that shame is a sickness of the self (see *Shame and its Sisters,* passim). Shame, if left interred, festers and becomes toxic in the body. Its visceral 'outworkings' begin to control and shape the body in powerfully formative ways, just as if the body were sick. Munt – in her reflections on shame in her childhood, growing up with a binary gendered and sexual identification – highlights how states of stress and anxiety worked on her body physically:

> The fleshly intransigence of shame means that it can take an unusual grasp of a person's whole organism, in their body, soul and mind, sometimes in eccentric

ways. I have suffered episodically from the disease Myalgic Encephalomyelitis [ME] for over 20 years now, and I suspect the cause of this to be lodged within the anxiety of my childhood, forever high on stress hormones the organism just cracked with disease, from carrying the shame of non-conformity. (2)

This visceral memory is what Munt identifies as shame's 'outworkings'; when one feels "estrangement and hindrance" in one's life and suffers from the disease of dis-ease induced by shame (2). Understanding shame and its internal outworking of dis-ease therefore opens up a passage to a better understanding of our sense of self.

Shame, importantly, also pertains to the whole self rather than to a specific act of the self. Many scholars, psychologists, sociologists and philosophers distinguish shame from guilt. Guilt is associated with a specific act (the doing), while shame is associated with one's being (the whole person). Guilt is therefore marked by the act that occurs outside of the whole person, whereas shame is a marking on the self. Anne McTaggart, drawing on the work of Sedgwick, articulates this distinction very powerfully:

> Shame, writes Sedgwick, is an affect that delineates identity – but delineates it without defining it or giving it content. Shame, as opposed to guilt, is a bad feeling that does not attach to what one does, but what one is … Shame is a bad feeling attaching to what one is: one therefore is something, in experiencing shame. The place of identity, the structure "identity," marked by shame's threshold between sociability and introversion, may be established and naturalized in the first instance through shame. … The experience of shame posits identity as material ("what one is") rather than moral ("what one does") but at the same time avoids biological reductionism and, above all, the circularity of the Foucauldian "repressive hypothesis": the mode of critique and identity politics that ends up enforcing and reproducing the dualisms it opposes. Indeed, Sedgwick argues that, far from constituting one term in an oppositional binary, "shame effaces itself; shame points and projects; shame turns itself skin side out; shame and pride, shame and dignity, shame and self-display, shame and exhibitionism are different interlinings of the same glove." In other words, shame upsets binary logic, paradoxically, because it is dual: it emerges between subjects and belongs fully neither to one nor the other, but is itself the interface between self and other, is itself "a form of communication" …. While guilt ethics presuppose an objective moral law distinct from the individuals subject to it, shame ethics are rooted in immediate, lived experience: in our bodily reactions, in our interpersonal relationships, in the complex and ever-changing fabric of social life. (123–24)

Aneta Stepien, who looks at shame and masculinity from a Polish cultural studies perspective, maintains that shame and guilt can intermingle and blur when actions about which we feel guilt influence the way we perceive ourselves. Guilt can become inseparable from shame to the extent that it reflects a self that is lacking or falling short of something (161). The difficulty people experience with articulating shame leads to a further blurring with guilt, since guilt is recognised as a more popularised 'emotional state.' What is problematic in coupling guilt with shame and thus masking shame with guilt is that attention to the self – 'I am the shame I feel' – is redirected and shifted onto the physicality of the action. It is therefore necessary to distinguish shame from guilt even though the terms may at times bleed into each other. The characterisation of guilt as associated with an act outside of the body, as opposed to shame as an act that defaces the self, must be retained as a necessary distinction (cf. Block Lewis 18).

Stephanie Arel, an academic who looks at the role of shame in theology and how shame has been used in the building of Imperialism and Christianity, develops the concept of "shame's interment or shame interred" (16). Shame resides as a biological source or affect in the body. Arel's use of the word "inter" signifies "the way(s) that shame becomes buried in the body when it is overlaid by other terms and experiences that mask or bypass shame. Further, the interment of shame in the body becomes problematic, because in this case shame goes unnamed" (16). Shame is intrinsically tied to and central to the self and the experience of shame makes the embodied self feel dis-ease and sick. In an interview with Antjie Krog during the TRC, a journalist summed up the notion of shame as it is used in this study by relating it to performance: "Shame requires an audience. Guilt does not" (262).[12]

The relationship between the body and affect has a long history. In the eighteenth century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau described shame's power when he

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[12] In thinking about the TRC and performance, I cannot ignore how these reflections have been informed by Catherine Cole's book, *Performing South Africa's Truth Commission: Stages of Transition* (2010). Cole employs a language of performance studies to analyse the TRC's principal feature: public enactment. She looks at how the TRC embraced embodied performances or embodied enactments to stage a notion of justice before its audiences, and identifies the TRC as a performance. Her study offers a way of understanding how the TRCs performative dimensions operated: "how the commission used restored behaviour, expressive embodiment, storytelling and retelling; how it called into being different audiences and arenas of witnessing; how it functioned as ritual for addressing a massive breach in the social fabric; how it drew upon existing genealogies of performance, particularly as the disempowered came into contact with the law in judicial or quasi-judicial arenas; how, in sum, the TRC served as a literal and figurative stage for South Africa's transition" (xvi).

stated: "I did not fear punishment, but I dreaded shame: I dreaded it more than death, more than the crime, more than all the world. I would have buried, hid myself in the centre of the earth: invincible shame bore down every other sentiment" (82). Rousseau's reflections demonstrate to what great lengths we are prepared to go to avoid and circumvent shame, often without regard for rational thought. Shame is undeniably a powerful force in human life and one to which we, unfortunately, give little or unsatisfactory attention (Rousseau 82). While in contemporary times Sedgwick and Frank have renewed interest in the work of Tomkins, shame has featured in philosophical literature since the Greeks. For Aristotle, shame is a "fear of disrepute," "a kind of pain or uneasiness in respect of misdeeds, past, present or future, which seem to tend to bring dishonour" (110). Spinoza avers that shame "is pain, with the accompaniment of the idea of some action which we imagine others to blame" (219). Descartes similarly defines shame as the feeling that arises when "the evil" that is in us "is referred to the opinion others may have of it" (33).

Probyn argues that shame is "the most intimate of feelings; it makes our selves intimate to ourselves" (41), while for Ahmed shame is "a self-feeling that is felt by and on the body." She continues: "the very physicality of shame, how it works on and through bodies, means that shame also involves the de-forming and re-forming of bodily and social spaces, as bodies 'turn away' from the others who witness the shame" (*Cultural Politics* 103). Shame makes us want to hide, conceal and cover up, and in doing so it breeds a silencing that further deepens its control (Sedgwick and Frank, *Shame* 231). Unrecognised shame can bind us, contaminating and debilitating our daily lives (Bouson 182). Moreover, Bouson claims, "the individuation of shame, the way it turns the self against and towards the self can be linked precisely to the inter-corporeality and sociality of shame experiences" (105). Remarking on shame's "sheer bodily intensity," Probyn similarly describes shame as a "powerful instance of embodiment" that is "called into being by, and then inflicts, historical and political circumstance" that makes us "reflect on who we are – individually and collectively" (*Blush* 8, 63, 79). Ahmed confirms the impact that shame has on the body, noting that it is a "self-feeling that is felt by and on the body," involving "the intensification not only of the bodily surface, but also of the subject's relation to itself, or its sense of itself as self" (*Cultural Politics* 60, 103–104). Indeed, it has been suggested that shame is "the most body-centred of affects" (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 61), starting with Aristotle's characterising shame as a "bodily condition." The body is something that we are, but

also, in an important sense, something that we have. The body in shame can tell us a great deal.

At the same time, shame is the affect that links us to our humanity, insofar as it is the shame experience that highlights our humanness. Shame is agentive in asking society to acknowledge its own humanity and not to hide from it, nor it from us. Shame recognises vulnerability and neediness – as opposed to our clinging to grandiose dreams of omnipotence and completeness – thus focusing on human misery. Shame therefore facilitates notions of mutual humanity and strengthens felt-feelings of humanness.

The alleviation of shame first requires an awareness of shame's ubiquitous presence in our lives. But because "there is shame about shame" and because we tend to "look away from the other's shame," those who write the story of the (female) body-in-shame are involved in a "risky business" (Bouson 103). Indeed, as Probyn comments, "shame is a painful thing to write about. It gets into your body. It gets to you" (*Blush* 130). Yet Probyn, who is concerned with how we "might envision writing shame as part of an ethical practice" and "fleshing out an ethics of response to shame," also sees the potential for transformation in the painful act of writing shame (131, 127). For although writing shame can take a "toll on the body that writes and the bodies that read," it also seeks to generate "new ways of thinking about how we are related to history and how we wish to live in the present" (140, 162).

It is important to note that affect theory does not reduce the mind to the body in the narrow, physical sense. It asserts that bodies think as they feel, on a level with their movements. "This takes thinking out of the interiority of a psychological subject and puts it directly in the world: in the co-motion of relational encounter" (Massumi, *Politics* 211). In attempting to better understand how affects traffic in the body, I therefore incorporate Body Theory and the notion of embodiment in my critique. I engage with the work of cultural theorists Blackman and Ahmed, as well as that of the social theatre practitioner and applied theorist James Thompson (2009), who looks at affect in relation to performance. These theorists validate a process of meaning-making that is pre-cognitive, sensed and registered primarily through the body. In centralising the body in performance, in meaning-making, and in how shame is experienced *in relation*, Antonio Damasio's treatment of the body-mind and his integration of thinking occurring in the body-mind breaks from the Cartesian tradition of mind-body dualism. Damasio's insights provide theoretical grounding for the idea of a thinking-feeling body, and for

how the mind affects and shapes the body. Damasio argues for an integration of the two, to the extent that the one informs and forms the other (*Feelings*).

In my articulation of the term 'body,' I use Blackman's deployment of the term to denote a sentient body, a "thinking through the body" (*The Body* 12). The thinking body raises the idea of the feeling body. It blurs the boundary between inside and outside spaces and of what is and is not contained in the body (13). Blackman suggests a need "to move beyond thinking of bodies as substances, as special kinds of things or entities, to explore bodies as sites of potentiality, process and practice" (5). Her writings introduce "the concept of feeling or vitality into the body" (10). Blackman argues that our sensing of the world is registered in affective states that exist prior to a particular individual's feelings and govern the range of feelings available (64). Feelings described by Blackman are "somatic manifestations of a person's orientation to themselves and others," and these feelings are often unspoken and can be passed between bodies without words (64).

The realm of cognition is thus inseparable from the realm of affect, since our existence in the world is, as Lévi-Strauss suggests, "learned, internalised patterns of thought-feeling" (qtd. in Ingold, *Perception* 161). Similarly, Ingold states, "to study cognition is to focus on the modus operandi not of the mind but of the whole body-person" (162). I therefore link Ingold's argument to my study, to show how intelligent actions are not confined to some interior space of the mind within the skull, but are rather processes that freely penetrate both the body and its environment (165). In doing so I attempt to situate the body as the primary site for "practice, process and potentiality" (Blackman, *The Body* 5).

In aiming to break even more decisively with the polarised and binary world I live in, I have recourse to the philosophical idea of thinking in terms of both/and, and not the binary position of either/or. This way of thinking helps facilitate an inclusionary and expansive approach to critique. In holding together seemingly contradictory ideas, there lies the possibility of seeing things anew, of producing a transformative and creative perspective. This means dualistic thinking without dualism. Eve Bannet uses the ideas of French feminist Irigaray in her imagining of the feminine and maternal-feminine body, and considers how this can help to develop an "other theoretical imaginary, a theoretical imaginary in which both/and can coexist" (101). Bannet uses Irigaray's description of the body as both an envelope and enveloping, with the feminine and masculine mutually enveloping each other rather than destroying each

other's envelope, as a way of visualising the philosophy of the both/and (101). Irigaray's image of bodies as enveloping and enveloped envelopes "allows us to think of opposite terms – self, other; text, context; utterance, language; individual, group; nature, culture; or whatever – both as distinct from each other in such a way that each makes its own finite and determinate kind of sense, and as imbricated in each other in such a way that each is unthinkable without the other" (101). This idea is consonant with my conceptualisation of affects, shame, embodiment, insider/outsider and the methodology of PLR/RLP, "where each becomes the cause of the other by giving the other the possibility of being a cause of itself" (Bannet 87).

Drawing on the analyses of key performance studies theorists (Schneider; Conquergood; Dolan; Thrift; Thompson; Fleishman), I look to performance as a medium wherein new insights about shame can be developed. Performance suggests a looking with the whole body, involving a connecting with the whole body as it interacts and engages with the world around it. The aesthetics of performance offer a way of processing mediated forms of intimacy and connection that typically recede from awareness. These mediated forms of aesthetic intimacy are often experienced through the sensory immediacy of feeling directly and non-cognitively. This is what David Bolter and Richard Grusin term "presentness," a word evoking presence in a way that "directly correlates to its etymological roots, from *praesens*, 'to be before the senses' (prae, 'before'; sensus, 'feeling, sense')" (Machon 40). "Presentness" is related to Gilles Deleuze's theory of "immanence" as "pure presence" (*Francis Bacon* 52). Deleuze is referring to a state of being "in the moment" brought about by visceral artworks that he characterises as "an absolute immediate consciousness" (*Pure Immanence* 27). In performance, the sense of "between-times, between-moments" comes about because of the felt, live(d) immediacy of experience in the moment and in the presentness of the audience/performer in a state of "absolute immediate consciousness" (29). Performance that "harnesses this 'live(d)ness' potentially actuates a lasting ephemerality, a paradoxical experience/statement" (Machon 40). Even though the live performance is fleeting and only of/in the moment, it can last in the attendees' embodied memory of the event, remaining as an impression, living on beyond the performed moment. These visceral moments are left as impressions for the attendee to reflect on and begin to question, and so better understand the self.

Performance theorist Jill Dolan makes a strong case for the importance of "exquisite moments" during a performance through which the audience member feels

"charged, challenged and reassured" (5). Dolan's discussion of the "affective and effective feelings" provoked by performance involves what she calls affective registers. It is these registers (both practice-based and analytic) that become the major focus in my analysis, which will delve not only into the "exquisite moments" but also into the disturbing and unsettling experiences engendered by performance. The study also questions what is left out when researchers work solely in the realm of effect: "[B]y failing to recognise affect – bodily responses, sensations and aesthetic pleasure – much of the power of performance can be missed" (Thompson 7).[13]

Vik Loveday presents an argument about the performative practice of shame that is compelling in relation to my own investigation. Loveday draws on Bourdieu's critique of practice when she looks at how shame might constrain ability, yet she acknowledges that shame does not completely remove the possibility of agency or resistance (1143). Furthermore, drawing on Probyn's work, she distinguishes between affect and emotion in terms of how the former involves being acted upon, between "*being* affected and *having* an emotion" (20, emphasis in original). Shame is thus performative in its *being* and doing, which means that for Loveday shame is an "affective practice" (1148). Shame's affective outworking is not merely a residual effect but is also part of the social practice that shapes perceptions, actions and notions of self. Loveday argues that shame should be recognised as a symptom of inequality and not as the property of an individual, for to take the latter path is to turn shame into a deficiency of the self, as opposed to a problem of society (1143). The affective practice of shame is thus intrinsically tied to embodiment, as shame is a lived experience felt through and in the body. A part of the performative capacity of shame is that it does not exist merely in the moment of an encounter or experience, but is also "experienced in recollection; its performative capacity existing in its ability to make itself felt,

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[13] Affect in performance has been debated since the turn of the twentieth century, with practitioners such as Konstantin Stanislavski and Michael Chekhov holding differing views on whether the performer had to tap into personal emotional recall to evoke emotion, or whether the body through gesture, posture and breath could evoke emotional responses. Method acting, a technique based on the concepts and teachings of Stanislavski, emphasised the actor drawing on personal emotions and memories as a way of connecting to character. Michael Chekhov's psychophysical approach to acting developed the idea that body posture had the potential to effect emotion. His concept of psychological gesture involves activating bodily gestures as a means of accessing the emotional, feeling and psychological life of a character (Chekhov 63–64). This study moves away from Stanislavski's approach of generating recall through emotive memories and centres embodied processes as an alternative way of understanding how affect affects the body. Affect and its relation to testimony, confessional trials, witnessing and story, post the Nuremberg trials and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission increased critical inquiry in evaluating the role of affect in the performance of narrative, testimony and account.

sometimes even unexpectedly years after the encounter" (1145). For Loveday, affective practice becomes performative as "shame feeds back into legitimated schemas of valuation reinforcing the 'deficit' view." By being experienced as embodied, shame "becomes a part of the habitus acquired through affective practice", and thus naturalises person-deficit (1151).

Anthropologist Kathleen Stewart writes that "power is a thing of the senses" (84). Rather than thinking about politics and power relations as a set of propositions sifted by rational, choosing subjects, affect theory sees power as a performance, or – first and foremost – as what Ahmed calls an "affective economy" ("Affective Economies" 119). Ahmed highlights how bodies coming into contact with each other in shared spaces experience affective readings and responses from each other, demonstrating the "relationship of the psychic and the social, individual and collective" (119). Even though shame is played outside of the body, it imprints on and into the body and thus remains in it and shapes it.

In further exploring how power is communicated and made manifest through the senses, I link shame's performativity to discussions on disgust by Martha Nussbaum, and discussions on abjection by Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler and Ahmed. By integrating theorisations of shame, disgust and abjection, this approach strengthens my argument about how shame traffics in affective ways that imprint, shape and remain on bodies that have been Othered, cast off or marked as unworthy. These three areas of discussion reinforce the affective economy at play in our social makings.

Martha Nussbaum separates shame from disgust by arguing that shame precedes any particular learning through social norms (185). Nussbaum suggests that feelings of shame and their development during infancy are rooted in shame's connection to a fear of abandonment by the 'source of good,' and the pain developed through internal thoughts of rejection, ostracism and disconnection from the social group (185). In contrast, Nussbaum argues that disgust develops through linguistic capacity, emerging only from four years of age onwards (15). Children do not show aversion to vomit or faeces but are instead fascinated and attracted to it. Disgust is only learned later through "a powerful social force that turns attraction to aversion" (94). Our daily rituals revolve around our aversion to the intimacies of urination and defecation, our need to cleanse and (de)odourise our bodies, and our preoccupation with cleaning and disinfecting our homes. Disgust highlights our irrationality in our daily

aspirations to embody a kind of being we are not (74). Disgust makes the bearer feel inhuman because it produces a feeling of animality and worthlessness. Aversion presents as a rejection of self which cannot be averted (just as shame is an innate affect), and this aversion in turn generates an internal dissonance. Kristeva would see this rejection of and aversion to self as an abjection of self, a dis-ease with the self.

Intersections between shame and disgust do, however, occur, especially in relation to the ways in which disgust supports traditional hierarchies and the constructs of social strata. Like shame, disgust is extremely visceral, and often reflects a crisis of self-assertion against inassimilable otherness and a contamination violently distanced from the self (Nussbaum 87). Disgust revolves around a wish to be a type of being one is not, "namely non-animal and immortal" (102). Disgust, like shame, reflects our societal policing of borders of human animality. This policing conduces to the emergence of extremists who want to rid society of contaminating humans. William Ian Miller describes the interrelationship between shame and disgust by indicating that shame is a response to disapproval of the other, whether manifested as contempt or disgust. When shame occurs, it often leads to self-loathing, a disgust with oneself, and as a result "the physical sensations of shame and disgust are indistinguishable" (Miller 34).

A clear intersection of shame and disgrace is visible in their affective roots in the development and reinforcement of prejudices and bigotry. Nussbaum's thinking on disgust is akin to Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, which supports my analysis of shame's affect in the post-apartheid state. Abjection is defined as the feeling one has for another person or thing that is seen as worthless or beneath consideration. Abjection sits in the realm of that which is not tolerable, possible or thinkable (Bouson 1). When shame is tied with abjection it becomes difficult to negotiate because the self cannot be expelled or rejected as easily as bodily waste.

Kristeva's ideas about abjection are developed further by Judith Butler and Sara Ahmed. Using their insights, I frame abjection as that which is not human, non-existent, dead and invisibilised. For a better understanding of how abjection is deployed in South Africa to validate exclusion and inclusions, Mary Douglas's theory about dirt as "matter out of place" can be applied to responses to poverty, and to notions that this 'state of existence' is somehow deserved because the person is 'just lazy.' Kristeva refers to the polluting qualities of the abject which threaten the hegemonic order. She argues that what causes abjection is not a lack of cleanness but "what disturbs identity,

system, order that does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (4). This framing of the human relates to conceptions of self and shame, as if a person is innately lazy or deserving of the dirtiness or state of poverty her life reflects. Moreover, I draw similarities between abjection and white middle-class South African anxieties about positions, rules, order, litter, foul smells, contamination, cleanliness, and efficiency. I discuss how the habitus of white, middle-class, English-speaking South Africans is maintained through a mutual respect of borders, positions and rules, so that whatever does not exhibit or maintain this behaviour is excluded. The way abjection is contextualised in this study is grounded in Kristeva's argument that, "the abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I" (1). Abjection like shame reflects a relation of interest. Even though the abject is expelled in a violent act like vomiting, this is done in order to establish the boundary line of the subject (2). The abject is thus not reducible to a particular object or body, instead "the abject relates precisely to the border which becomes the object" (4). Abjection, in the words of Frantz Fanon, becomes a working theory for how certain bodies are sealed into a lived state of "crushing objecthood" (77).

Judith Butler considers how abjection functions to produce a domain of unthinkable and unliveable bodies. Butler writes: "[T]his exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet 'subjects,' but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject" (*Bodies* 3). Reflecting on the views of Butler and Kristeva, Ahmed reflects that "what is required is precisely an analysis of how abjection – the unstable constitution of the domain of the liveable – brings into play multiple forms of social antagonism" (*Strange* 54). Ahmed's theoretical discussion of strange encounters opens up further avenues for looking into how shame traffics in abjection. Ahmed discusses how abjection is affective when certain bodies are constituted as liveable, through processes of incorporation and expulsion (52). An abject body is one that is "not at home," is not liveable (52). Shame's affect is felt when bodies withdraw from each other, the withdrawal registering on the skin, the border that feels. Ahmed discusses this affective moment when she notes:

> The economy of xenophobia – the production of the stranger's body as an impossible and phobic object – involves, not just reading the stranger's body as dirt and filth, but the re-forming of the contours of the body-at-home, through

the very affective gestures which enable the withdrawal from co-habitation with strangers in a given social space. The withdrawal remains registered on the skin, on the border that feels. (54)

This theoretical framework will be explicated more fully in the chapters that follow. For instance, the concept of touch that I spoke to in my introduction accumulates further dimensions in the course of the study. The human touch? To be touched affectively through affective gestures? In this context, touch has a very powerful trajectory in terms of its affective weight, as discussed in detail in the selected case studies. Most notable, discussed in the chapters on *Stumbling Block*, *Blood Diamond* and *Tshepang*, is the question of how touch affectively impinges in performance, gesturally touching a person's being and, in its palpability, influencing how a navigation of shame between audience and performer is performed. The analysis of the themes of abjection and disgust in *Stumbling Block* and *Woolworths* provides a fruitful perspective on how bodies are shaped through shame's affect. Finally, the concluding chapter of the study draws on the discussion of states of shame in its colloquial use, and offers a study of the undoing of shame in the work of young, contemporary performance-makers in South Africa.
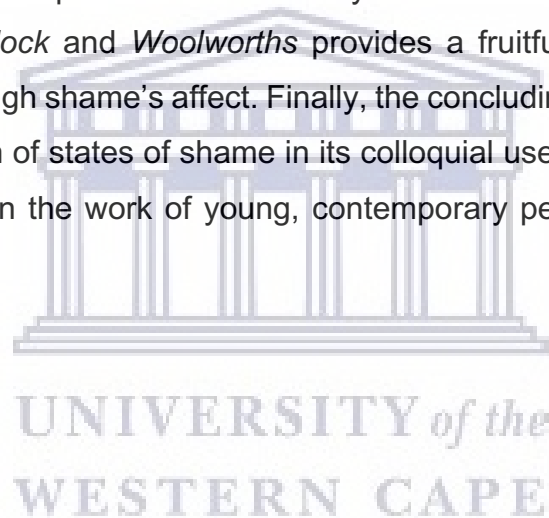
CHAPTER TWO /

'*BODY NOT BODY,*'[14] SHAME AND ITS DISSONANCE IN GABRIELLE GOLIATH'S *STUMBLING BLOCK*

The truths which intelligence grasps directly in the open light of day have something less profound, less *necessary* about them than those which life has communicated to us *in spite of ourselves* in an impression, a material impression because it has reached us through our senses.

Marcel Proust *In Search of Lost Time* (61 italics in original)

More important than thought there is 'what leads to thought' … impressions which force us to look, encounters which force us to interpret, expressions which force us to think.

Gilles Deleuze *Proust and Signs* (161)

This chapter tracks the impression that was to prove the starting point of this study, an impression that forced me to think, to the extent that I decided to step out on a limb and attempt a study (rooted in theory but based on a practical hunch) delving into the ideas of affect, shame and performance, and their possible intersection. This case study grounds the conceptualisation of the study and thus acts as a liminal space, a frame for entry into the thinking that seeps into all following chapters. The order of the chapters mirrors the development of my thought in relation to each piece, and how in turn these new ways of thinking/seeing and feeling informed the development of the inquiry in the case studies that follow on from it. The composition of this thesis is therefore a mapping of the starting point and development of my ideas. This chapter provides the conceptual framework for the thesis, foregrounding Proust's discussion of the importance of impressions which "communicate to us in spite of ourselves" (61).

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[14] The title is inspired from the keynote addresses of Professor Gabeba Baderoon '*words not words*' and Professor Jane Taylor '*Not I*' presented at the *Postgradlit Conference* held at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in May 2018. Both keynotes challenged ideas around dissonance and non-concurrence. Ideas raised by both speakers helped to consolidate this thesis. The idea concerned also works in relation to Ahmed's discussion of the 'I' and the 'not I' and how each is determined. Ahmed argues that they do not simply form "by the psychic processes of misrecognition and projection, but by the racialising of the ego (white) in relation to the materiality of other bodies (black)" (*Strange* 43).

In 2016, I attended the opening of the Institute for Creative Arts (ICA), at the University of Cape Town (UCT). It was here that I first encountered *Stumbling Block*[15] by Gabrielle Goliath.[16] I purposefully use the word 'encounter' in describing my engagement with this performance, for as Gilles Deleuze points out, an encounter does not involve recognition but is rather something that forces us into a position of feeling (*Proust and Signs* 139). Deleuze terms this "the encountered sign."[17] He specifically defines the "encountered sign" as something felt rather than recognised or perceived at some level of cognition (139). The felt experience produced by a body/object is not an end in itself but rather a moment that forces us to engage with the material in uncomfortable ways. Affect engenders a reflection on ourselves in relation to the encountered sign as it grasps us involuntarily. It is this heightened awareness associated with affect that makes us sensitive to relationality. It is therefore the sensation[18] felt through affect that acts as a catalyst. Arguably, Proust identifies an affect as a particularly effective trigger for thought because it communicates to "us in spite of ourselves" (61). In being positioned to feel things we may have not felt or things we may have chosen not to feel forces us to 'stick' with these uncomfortable feelings. According to Jill Bennett's analysis of Deleuze's discussion of the encountered sign, "Deleuze is not simply saying, however, that sensation is an end in itself, but that feeling is a catalyst for critical enquiry and deep thought … For Deleuze, affect and emotion is a more effective trigger for profound thought because of the way it grasps us, forces us to engage involuntarily" (7). Brian Massumi, a New Affect theorist and scholar of Deleuze, calls the affective moment a jolt which "shock[s] to thought."[19] This felt-thinking, Massumi suggests, has generative power: "Art does not illustrate or embody a proposition but produces sensations or affects that stimulate

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[15] Visual images and footage of the piece can be viewed at: https://www.gabriellegoliath.com/stumbling-block_documentation. I strongly encourage the reader to view this footage before continuing with the paper. Goliath's first performance in 2011, as well as the performance at ICA 2016 and her more recent staging at the ZEITZ MOCCA are all visually archived. Performances from 2011-2019 are catalogued here.

[16] Gabrielle Goliath is a PhD candidate at UCT and an ICA fellow. She has a background in Fine Arts and works in multiple mediums. She is the recipient of the 2019 Standard Bank Young Artists Award for Visual Arts and was awarded the Future Generation Award in 2019.

[17] This term at first may appear paradoxical if we consider that affects move and exit beyond signification and the production of meaning (Van Alphen, "Reading" 165). Furthermore, the sign is felt as opposed to what is "cognitively perceived, recognised or identified through familiarity with a 'code'" (165).

[18] Sensation is a term Deleuze identifies as modelling a way of thinking.

[19] "Shock to thought" is the title of a book on affect in Deleuze and Guattari's work edited by Brian Massumi: *A Shock to Thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari* (2002)

thought" (Van Alphen, "Reading" 165).[20] *Stumbling Block* evoked in me unexpected and uncomfortable feelings which in turn fuelled the intellectual inquiry of my research. It made me consider what these unexpected and uncomfortable feelings are and how they 'act' or perform in my body. This performance piece communicated to me in spite of myself, in spite of the structures I had established to safeguard myself from acknowledging my lived state of dissonance and its ghost of shame. Through a contemplation of the piece I began to identify and see how performance provided me with a complex and considered engagement with and processing of shame's affects.

In "Performance Remains" (2001), Rebecca Schneider addresses the relationship between live art and the archive and highlights the possibility of "other ways of knowing, other modes of remembering, that might be situated precisely in the ways in which performance remains but remains differently" (22). They are part of what Diana Taylor refers to as the "so-called ephemeral repertoire of embodied practices of knowledge" (19). This notion of performance and how it remains is relevant to *Stumbling Block* if affect is treated as the effect which sticks experience to memory. My analysis of the work responds to this sticky residue.[21]

Ahmed uses the metaphor of stickiness to evoke the visceral relation of shame to the emotions, to describe how the felt feeling draws the body in relation to something else – sticking to it (*Cultural Politics* 89–92). Sedgwick and Frank also use this notion of stickiness in their description of shame, as it is "both peculiarly contagious and peculiarly individuating" (*Shame* 36). In *Queer Attachments*, Munt describes shame as "gluey," "with a revolving cycle of separation-attachment-disattachment" (24). Stickiness, therefore, by definition, interrupts individuality; it describes the state of converging with something outside of yourself. Simultaneously, stickiness describes a

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[20] In the middle of 2020, I came across an email notifying me of the publication of *How to Do Things with Affects: Affective Triggers in Aesthetic Forms and Cultural Practices,* edited by Ernst van Alphen and Tomáš Jirsa. The title suggested crossovers in my own work, and I emailed Jirsa to enquire about a copy of the book. He kindly emailed me a digital copy of the book when he heard I was a PhD student in the final stages of my thesis. I was surprised and encouraged when I read Van Alphen's chapter on "Reading for Affects: Francis Bacon and the Work of Sensation." The chapter explored similar ideas to those I was probing in my thesis regarding Deleuze's "encountered sign" in relation to affect and meaning-making. The inclusion of Van Alphen's thoughts are retrospective to the chapter's initial draft and help to strengthen its central argument.

[21] At the *Great Texts/ Big Questions* (2016) lecture series in collaboration with the ICA at UCT, Mark Fleishman highlighted the notion of what theatre is outside of a written performance text or rather what is left when there is no text. In his lecture he spoke of "that which remains" outside of text and after the performance has ended (Schneider 22). I reflect on this lecture, for similarly the work of *Stumbling Block*, which occurs outside of any literal text, remained through its ability to effect affect when the work was encountered.

state of attempting to isolate one's self from another, because one cannot feel stickiness unless one attempts to become unstuck, which highlights the term's similarity to the experience of shame's affect. "Stickiness can also produce reflexive self-consciousness through an attempt to separate the self from the self, as when one's gluey fingers stick to each other" (Bernstein 223–24, note 25). Stickiness "entails a dialectical struggle between adhering to something and seeking freedom from it" (even, and especially, when that something is the self), as well as a struggle between contagion and isolation (224). To feel the texture of stickiness is inescapably to pay attention to one's body, to feel the relationship between one's body and the sticky substance or glue. In this moment it feels as if it is one's body that will need "to be washed or otherwise attended to, the self is defected, the self needs to be rubbed, scrubbed and cleansed" (224). Thus stickiness, like shame, produces a self-conscious sense of the borders of the self. Shame's stickiness makes us acutely aware of the boundaries of the abject. This discussion is central to my argument about what a performance like *Stumbling Block* and the affects it produces can possibly afford us in better understanding shame's affect.

This case study reflects on how performance as an art form that curates bodies' mutual relationality can offer a potential space of clarity for us to begin to consider the world, our position within it, and our position in relationship to others. It reminds us of how the body is a communicative instrument because it is the one thing we as humans all share. This performance and my interaction with it, brought into question my positionality, bearing with it questions of privilege, of what is human and of my interaction with power and other bodies.

Stumbling Block[22] is a powerfully simple performance art piece, consisting of one performer whose body is completely covered in a grey-and-white striped blanket[23] placed on a sheet of cardboard made from discarded packing boxes. The wrapped body 'sleeps' in the doorway or the entrance to the event. In order to enter, the 'stumbling block' has to be navigated by attendees in some way. I recall how on my

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[22] *Stumbling Block* has in subsequent performances been positioned in sites other than the doorway frame, particularly when it has been staged with multiple performers. *Stumbling Block* is inherently liminal regardless of where it is positioned as it speaks to a particular precarity and vulnerability.
[23] This type of blanket is iconic in its South African context. The blanket is distributed in prisons and is supplied by shops such as PEP Stores. As a cheap blanket that still gives warmth, it has become a symbol of poverty. Many homeless people are seen covered in this variant of blanket. The majority of the poor and homeless in South Africa are Black and People of Colour (BPOC). The blanket is therefore primarily associated with black bodies.

arrival at the opening of the ICA, on first noticing the body wrapped in blankets, I immediately thought it was a protest piece assembled by students, on account of the protests and demonstrations taking place on campus at the time. I was surprised, hesitant, unsure. As I stood by the stairwell and looked at the staged piece from a distance, thoughts of white privilege, what access privilege grants and what thresholds certain bodies can cross entered my mind. It was only when I needed to move from the stairwell lobby into the gallery hall that the transition generated an internal negotiation of unease and confusion adding to what I was already feeling in my body.

Do I step over or around? Should I not enter or address the person beneath the blanket? Or do I ignore the person completely and continue entering the room? Is there even a human body underneath or is it just bundles of newspaper?

I cannot remember if I chose to step over or around. However, in that transitory moment, one that I refused to acknowledge and see in the quickness of moving through the door-frame, I assumed I had entered unscathed. Only when I sat on the other side and started to process what the moment had done to me, did I start to see how this action of numbing and pushing aside an internal tension had occurred in me on many other occasions, not so distinctly curated.

Stumbling Block is a durational performance. The performance length is determined by the duration of the event where the piece is staged. As long as the event takes place, so too does the body lie in stillness. My interaction with the piece was one of the quickest engagements I have had with a performance, yet the emotional negotiation and negation engendered by that brief moment were profound. Applied Theatre practitioner and theorist, James Thompson, attests to the power of affect in unsettling audiences and provoking them to engage, ponder and reconsider. He argues that after the event has passed, "it is indeed through mediums of expression that agitate at a level of sensation that propels an inward demand to know more" (125). It is thus the feeling which affect produces that sustains and drives the ongoing thinking about the encounter. Perhaps such affective moments are more efficient vehicles for sustained engagement of thought than theories? Is it perhaps also the case that these affective moments resonate with what feels right, true and authentic, forcing us to reflect? It is perhaps precisely because of how performance's aesthetics affect us that the complexities of shame are laid bare in a way that theory cannot offer.

In a similar vein, Della Pollock suggests that "[p]erformance is a promissory act. Not because it can only promise possible change but because it catches its participants – often by surprise – in a contract with possibility: with imagining what might be, could be, should be" (2). This "contract of possibility'" is formulated in the both/and of performance, in how it is both staged and real, both a living and an aestheticised art-object (2). Performance blurs boundaries between what is known and unknown, between what is considered to be real or staged. Often this line becomes so indistinct that the audience is unable to distinguish between the two. It is this state of thinking with the both/and that Goliath introduces through her piece. I frame this understanding of the both/and as a way of holding two different (even opposing) thoughts together, seeing them as part of each other, each informing and shaping the other as opposed to being separate and removed.

Stumbling Block facilitates a questioning of how certain codes of reading or performance conventions (in terms of which we see a body as not real but as an object) are also used in everyday life, as a way of stopping oneself from feeling or processing what is felt. The attendees at the opening of the ICA interacted with the body in the performance piece as not a real indigent body. They stepped around and over the body while adhering to the rules of white cube spaces, where attendees do not interact with, touch or speak to the artworks. However, it is precisely this action of stepping over and around, in silence and inaction towards another body, that I had performed with real bodies in my day-to-day life. This passing around and over had occurred on the road just a few feet from the building where the piece was staged, a street where I had often passed by homeless people quickly and in silence, attempting to be unnoticed.

To speak only to the contextual moment in which I encountered *Stumbling Block* would reflect only one of the affective layers entwined in my meaning-making. Having completed my previous studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal – a university demographically representative of South Africa – I found UCT comparatively untransformed. Somehow its white heteronormative structures of governance co-existed uncomfortably with the discourse of decolonising the curriculum with which the campus was engaging. This historic moment placed UCT and the future of universities in South Africa in a petri dish, as it were, under the lens of imminent change. The years 2015 and 2016 will be remembered as pivotal in shifting inherited structures of oppression at UCT and in the culture of universities across South Africa. The shifting

was spearheaded by the student political presence of #FeesMustFall (FMF) and #RhodesMustFall (RMF). The start of my post-graduate studies at UCT in 2016 saw the iconic Jammie steps[24] dotted with placards and protesting students. In addition, during these first weeks of the semester, the destruction of campus property and assets included the burning of historic artworks housed in dining halls and residences. As a measure to restrict the cost of damage and maintain teaching, UCT introduced private security[25] and in doing so, created a militant war-time atmosphere.[26] Reflecting on this now I can see how, whenever I was on campus, I carried a feeling of unrest and tension, a tension arising from moving as a white body on campus. A feeling of discomfort was rising.

Stumbling Block has certain affinities with the work of German artist, Gunter Demnig, whose Stolpersteine, directly translated, means 'stumbling stones or blocks'. His work bears not only a similarity to Goliath's in title, but also in the human element of drawing awareness to those who may be forgotten or 'unseen' in our social frameworks. Demnig's work sees him placing brass plaques in locales where victims of the Holocaust were last seen living (by choice) before they had to flee their homes or were forcibly relocated by Nazi soldiers. Quoting the Talmud, Demnig believes that the work, through the inscription of the victim's name, creates a sense of permanency as "a person is only forgotten when his or her name is forgotten" (qtd. in Krzyżanowska 467). The work catches us in the act of forgetting and forces us to remember. For some it may act as a reminder of the complicity of Europeans, more specifically of

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[24] The steps of Jameson Hall, known locally as Jammie Steps, form part of the architectural face of the University of Cape Town.

[25] How the security were visually represented transitioned the campus from an institution of peaceful, collaborative learning to one of hostility, surveillance, fear and anxiety. The new outsourced security were all dressed in camouflage clothes donned with visible bullet-proof vests, hard hats and rubber knee and arm guards. They also held prominent full-length shields and weapons for their personal protection.

[26] In placing this discussion in a larger framework it is necessary to discuss events which occurred later in the year. On 15th September 2016 the #UCTshutdown protest started on Upper Campus. The aims of the shutdown were to prohibit academic teaching and access to campus in the hope of radicalising response to the lack of transformation. Several entrance points were blocked with barricades and protesting students forced evacuations from staff offices and lecture halls. On the 16th of September 2016 the UCT shutdown moved down to Hiddingh Campus (where the Drama and Art students are based), also known as Lower Campus. On that day staff were forced out of their offices and were not allowed to return. An alternative exit route for cars had to be made as the main entrance/exit point had been barricaded. It is important to note that Hiddingh Campus experienced a unique situation compared to the rest of UCT. A collective called Umhlangano staged an intervention on Hiddingh Campus. Teaching for the remainder of the year was forcibly suspended. The intervention occupied the buildings of Hiddingh Campus. By the end of November 2016, the movement embraced a decolonisation of tertiary intuitions mantra.

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Germans and Austrians, in Hitler's programme of genocide. The similarities between South African, German and Austrian history are glaring and brought to the foreground when one engages with *Stumbling Block.* All have been marred by a history of forced, engineered and ideologised systems of oppression. Similarly, the title of this chapter, '*Body not body,*' seeks to tie the work of Goliath, Demnig and my own experience of *Stumbling Block* to the ability of the arts to reclaim and re-figure that which is forgotten, erased or removed. In Goliath's description of her piece on her website, she states, "this is a piece that demands response" ("Artist's Statement" n. pag.). The work requires a response involving physical action. You have to make a choice about how you are going to interact with the work, even if unconsciously. In their physical interaction with the work, the attendees publicly perform an internal response. Do you see the body as human or object? And if you see it as human how do you respond? Yet in this instance, is it not justified to see the body as an aestheticised art-object? Or does the discomfort emanate from the body's being both subject and object, human and inanimate? Had I seen the work as art-object my reaction to the work would have been more calculated, distanced and observational. I would have been able to rationalise my response by convincing myself that this was merely a piece of art.

This idea of how shame affectively communicates the border between the abject, object, subject and abject object/subject in unspoken affective gestures is powerfully expressed by black feminist Audre Lorde, in the following extract from her writings about travelling on the AA Subway as a child:

> I clutch my mother's sleeve, her arms full of shopping bags, Christmas-heavy. The wet smell of winter clothes, the train's lurching. My mother spots an almost seat, pushes my little snowsuited body down. On one side of me a man reading a paper. On the other, a woman in a fur hat staring at me. Her mouth twitches as she stares and then her gaze drops down, pulling mine with it. Her leather gloved hand plucks at the line where my new blue snowpants and her sleek fur coat meet. She jerks her coat closer to her. I look. I do not see whatever terrible thing she is seeing on the seat between us – probably a roach. But she has communicated her horror to me. It must be something very bad from the way she's looking, so I pull my snowsuit closer to me away from it, too. When I look up the woman is still staring at me, her nose holes and eyes huge. And suddenly I realize there is nothing crawling up the seat between us; it is me she doesn't want her coat to touch. The fur brushes past my face as she stands with a shudder and holds on a strap in the speeding train. Born and bred a New York City child, I quickly slide over to make room for my mother to sit down. No word

has been spoken. I'm afraid to say anything to my mother because I don't know what I've done. I look at the side of my snowpants, secretly. Is there something on them? Something's going on here and I do not understand, but I will never forget it. Her eyes. The flared nostrils. The hate. (147–48)

Lorde's viscerally charged words speak to an affective exchange between two bodies shared amongst other bodies in a cramped subway train. Although the affective moment is often quick, passing outside of words and difficult to put a finger on, Lorde makes sense of this traumatic experience through what she feels. Although not fully comprehended at the time ("something's going on here and I do not understand") the thing that sticks ("I will never forget it") is the affective touch trafficked between her and the woman. Lorde experiences this in her body, and this felt sensation that solidifies and shapes her notion of self in relation to others is the affect she felt ("The hate"). The power in this shaming experience generates a looking away in the young girl, a secrecy and a fear in acknowledging or talking about what has transpired. A young Lorde knows that something has occurred. Even though she is unable to make sense of or articulate it, it does not diminish the visceral bodily knowing – "I will never forget it."

Because of the nature of my research methodology, I include the discussion I had about *Stumbling Block* and the *Stolpersteine* project with a fellow PhD student from Austria who spent several months of her research period in South Africa. After completing what I had considered a draft for review I asked if she could offer any feedback or comments on the chapter. Her response to the chapter and how it had affected her thoughts regarding her engagement with homeless people and beggars in Cape Town and the *Stolpersteine* project in her hometown Graz and in Vienna, Austria, was powerful and compelling. She noted how on moving to Cape Town, she at first felt uncomfortable about the very dominant presence of homeless people and beggars on the streets of the city, but quickly adapted by assuming the attitude of locals in their interactions; that is, for the most part, distancing, ignoring and disengaging. She mentioned how her discomfort came from feeling unsettled and strange about this interaction, that this was not right. She pondered what it must feel like for people who grow up with such high levels of homelessness and poverty and how this is navigated and negotiated? I had never seen a *Stolperstein*, but my Austrian friend had. Discussing her experience with the *Stolpersteine* project, she described how she did not take notice of the stones scattered across her hometown of Graz at

first. Why she did start to *see* them she couldn't say, but once she encountered them, she experienced them differently and continued to notice them scattered across Austria. She pointed out that while there were people who stepped on them and were apparently unaware of them, there were also others who kept the stones clean, polishing them and memorialising them with flowers (despite the high levels of anti-Semitism that persist in Austria). Reading her comments, I got a clear picture in my mind of someone labouring, scrubbing with precise diligence the brass stones in order to illuminate the names inscribed, lest they be dulled and not seen. In the construction of that image, I felt shame – shame that people were respecting and honouring the dead with dignity and diligence and that somehow here where I lived, I had let myself be assimilated into a way of being that gave little respect or dignity to those who are still living. The *Stolpersteine* project facilitates a way for people to feel the presence of someone (through the name, date and place inscribed on the stone) who is no longer alive. Goliath's work, on the other hand, draws attention to the presence of someone who is still living but whose presence we choose to deny. I wondered about putting elaborate floral arrangements (as seen at high-end weddings) around locales where homeless people lived. Would this in some way bring about an affect that could catalyse a felt-feeling of dignity in the bodies of the homeless and a recognition of that dignity by passers-by? I started to understand from Audre Lorde's reflections, from my interaction with *Stumbling Block* and now from discussion of the *Stolpersteine* project, how withdrawal from certain 'abject' bodies still touches the body, and that it is through this intimate affect that the transfer of shame operates.

In the words of Ruth Behar, "[n]ew stories are rushing to be told in languages we've never used before, stories that tell truths we once hid, truths we didn't dare acknowledge, truths that shamed us" (33). When I reflect on what *Stumbling Block* stirred in me, Behar's words capture my internal dilemma and add heft to the notion of a new way of knowing through performance, as it too offers new 'languages' to tell a story once hidden and shamed. The encounter with *Stumbling Block* began an agitation within me leading to a new way of seeing and a conviction that I would not be able to 'unsee.' The work communicated to me outside of words and theories. I sat and pondered how on many other occasions I had responded similarly? And why so? Where had this self-perpetuating habit in respect of which bodies I acknowledged and which ones I ignored developed? My personal action created a dissonance. I had thought that this fleeting and discreet action, occurring in a stream of moving bodies

entering and exiting the threshold, would make my interaction with the piece ephemeral, quick and indistinguishable from the responses implied by the hurried movement of other bodies. I had thought that this supposition about my interaction with the piece would make my action easier to forget, to erase and perhaps deny, and in this way remove a feeling of culpability.

But the action did not reflect my internal beliefs. It instead spoke to an undercurrent that proved to be more dominant. In my walking around quickly, keeping my eyes up, I chose to see the body as void, empty, lifeless. There was therefore a refusal to witness and, in witnessing, see. Instead, I responded in the silenced action of shame. I turned my head away. I looked down. I tried quickly to find a seat amongst the crowd, to blur myself back into the mass of bodies, back into the comfort of other bodies who had also stepped over, around or not even noticed the body blocking the doorway.[27] In sitting on the other side of the doorway I buried the tension and unease from that 'fleeting moment' deep down in my body. I tried to soften my internal vibrations by sitting quietly in the buzzing and full auditorium.

On my reading Jacques Derrida's words in *Spectres of Marx* my stillness became recognisable as a denial of what I felt. In that moment I believed it would be better to control my body into a stillness than to allow myself to think about what it was I was feeling, and in so doing remind myself of our nation's perpetuating of systemic oppression:

> For it must be cried out, at a time when some have the audacity to evangelise in the name of a liberal democracy that has finally realised itself as the ideal of human history: never have violence, inequality, exclusion, famine and thus economic oppression affected as many human beings in the history of earth and humanity. Instead of singing the advent of the ideal of liberal democracy and of the capitalist market in the euphoria of the end of history, instead of celebrating the "end of ideologies" and the end of the great emancipatory discourses, let us never neglect the obvious microscopic fact, made up of innumerable singular sites of suffering: no degree of progress allows one to ignore

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[27] In my two Skype conversations with Goliath a point I found interesting was her mention of the differing reactions by audiences to her work. Besides the general act of ignoring, there appeared to be two extremes, on opposing sides of the neutral 'ignore.' Some audience members kicked, poked, hit, unwrapped and spoke directly to the performer, making bigoted and racist comments. Others purged their emotions, crying for minutes next to the still body. Some asked if the performer needed water, food or if they could help in any way. Some even offered to pray for the performer. This interaction can also be viewed on through her live digital recordings of *Stumbling Block* uploaded onto her website indicated in footnote 15.

that never before, in absolute figures, have so many men, women and children been subjugated, starved and exterminated on earth. (Derrida 85)

There was something in these words that resonated with how I had shamed others and how I in turn had felt shame. The shame evoked in me through *Stumbling Block* was directly associated with the act of ignoring and (thus) silencing injustices I had witnessed. The realisation made me feel the further shame of acknowledging how my inaction had helped to perpetuate and entrench these injustices. Shame in this moment therefore did not just pass between myself and the performance piece, but was summoned from, arose from and was entangled with many other moments when I had acted similarly.

It is also worth mentioning how, because I encountered *Stumbling Block* amongst other bodies, I felt less exposed, seen or watched. Perhaps this is what the woman in the train described by Lorde, above, felt too, that her affective touch on and communication with the black child's body was concealed by the collective body crammed into the train with her. The crowd of bodies the night I witnessed *Stumbling Block* at the ICA opening made me feel a sense of commonality in being part of a community of bodies that had behaved similarly to mine (a habitus), in stepping over or around the body. What was of interest to me, was how I was more concerned for the collective body than I was about the body directly in relation to me and which was directly impacted by my actions. Though the performer beneath the blanket was blind to my action (the performer's body being completely concealed by the blanket), the action did not go unnoticed (as perhaps the woman in Lorde's narrative believed to have been the case). The interaction, although not 'seen' by the body underneath the blanket, was witnessed by both bodies in the action's felt-knowing.

It was in my second Skype conversation that Goliath shared how she mentally and emotionally prepared her performers before they participated in her work. She knew that this preparation was vital because of how affectively charging the performance was to her performers' bodies. In preparing her performers Goliath focused on trying to equip them with emotional and physical coping strategies to sustain their engagement with the work, in its duration and stillness, amidst difficult and challenging circumstances of being kicked, jabbed, stepped on, spoken to, touched; of feeling claustrophobic, or being asked to speak by spectators. The felt-knowing experiences of her performers were particularly noteworthy when she was

asked to perform the piece at the Nirox Sculpture Garden in 2018 (Goliath also performed during this particular staging of the piece). At the event Goliath had a total of six performers and each performer performed for five hours. All performers at this event were Black, brown, feminine, queer or non-gender conforming. The *Stumbling Block* was staged throughout the gardens and placed in hyper-visible positions, such as on the garden path from the entrance, on the red carpet, on the stage to the VIP lounge and in the picnic sitting area. One of the performers included in this staging wrote a very detailed and insightful self-reflection on performing the work.[28] The performer noted how the performance charged the body in a very direct and active way. The performer commented that even though stillness had to be maintained for a duration of five hours the body was anything but still internally.

Have you ever tried to fall asleep on the ground and stay asleep for five hours? Ever tried comfortably lying on a hard floor for an extended period of time without moving? Soon the pain of the body's numbness will take over the mind. My assumption that because the body underneath the blanket was still, the performer was therefore 'asleep' to feeling and thought, speaks for the privileged way in which I grant certain bodies the agency to feel, experience and engage in the world. Embarrassingly, as a performer myself, I know that to maintain such levels of stillness requires an acute state of centredness. The performer is therefore anything but 'asleep to feeling and thought.' Sustaining a durational appearance of stillness requires a heightened awareness and intense focus from the performer. This in turn produces a heightened sensitivity to the world inside and outside of the performer's body. Every physical twitch and exterior flutter is noticed and felt in heightened attention. The blanket did not shield the performer's body or cut him or her off from the outside world. Instead, the performance generated an extremely difficult set of terms for the performer to negotiate. I remember thinking that because the body was covered and concealed the performer would not be as engaged, connected to or aware of the reactions to their body of members of the audience as they passed by. I also remember associating the body as a black male. Perhaps this also made me feel less sensitive and attached to the emotional reality of the person underneath the blanket. Most noteworthy is that because the body was still, I felt justified in assuming the person was sleeping, not

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[28] The performer whose writing I am reflecting on granted me permission to read her reflection via email correspondence. For ethical purposes her name is not disclosed.

conscious and thus unaware of being judged. This assessment of marginalised bodies resulted from my rationalisation of discarding and disregarding the invisibilised body. I experienced thoughts such as: he/she/they cannot feel because they are numbed to feeling, they're probably drunk or high, they've stopped caring about themselves so why would they care how others treat them, they don't even know who they are, this definitely does not affect them the same way it affects other people. The marginalised body is seen as, interacted with, treated as an object. In *Stumbling Block* the performance of a heightened state of stillness amplifies how privileged bodies have deadened invisibilised bodies to affect, to feeling, to any form of agency or vitality. The work also promotes a hyper-visibility for the invisibilised body by positioning the work in salient placements that cannot go ignored by those needing to gain access to the event. The performance therefore directly confronts the fabric of the visitor's reality. By hyper-visibilising the body of a homeless person, Goliath's work asks me why even when the body's presence is made visible do I still ignore it and suppress external signs of my recognition of it? This lack of recognition speaks to a choice I made not to see the extreme vulnerability of the body because of the position in which it was placed. I chose to deploy my affective touch (in nearness, sensing of another body in relation to mine) in a gesture that did not acknowledge the person's being.

In Derrida's description of "hauntology," my relationship to *Stumbling Block* is given a language: it is revealed as a resurgence of my past (previous encounters where I have acted similarly or experienced similar affects) in order to destabilise the present and the hegemonic 'meta-narratives' that we tell ourselves. Derrida's theory of hauntology invokes the not-quite-present but not-quite-absent. This 'haunting' leads to an unearthing that disrupts and revises 'ways of seeing,' especially in terms of how we engage with bodies in our world. Haunting thus traffics in the affective realm and requires an embodied engagement and a sensuous knowledge (Fleishman, "Remembering" 205). Shame haunts us. Shame unfaced becomes the most harrowing of spectres. The sociologist Avery Gordon suggests that reparation only comes about because a ghost "is pregnant with unfulfilled possibility, with the something to be done that the wavering present is demanding" (83), a reckoning with the gaps and in-betweens, with that which has been lost or which we never had. The act of reckoning with the ghost is an attempt also to "offer it a hospitable memory out of a concern for justice" (64). It is important to note that Gordon proposes a hauntological analysis as a way to focus on how people sense, intuit and experience the complexities of modern

power (194). Hauntology therefore seeks to focus on "what is usually invisible or neglected or thought by most to be dead or gone" (194). This internal hauntology unearths a scaffolding hidden in historical amnesia – a scaffolding of shame used to silence and be silenced by. The scaffolding demonstrates how certain social affects, such as shame, are exploited politically and used in hegemonic relations to shape how we remember and how we think we have engaged with people and the world.

Stumbling Block reiterates these ideas as the performance piece requires an embodied engagement and felt knowledge in order to see, experience and talk to that which has been repressed but nevertheless still affectively haunts us (Fleishman, "Remembering" 205). The piece serves as an entry point into exploring how performance catalyses an articulation of the ways in which shame resides and traffics in the body and between bodies. Through reflection and striving to know more, my dis/engagement with the piece and denial in not acknowledging the body and its vulnerability beneath the blanket exposed internal relics of shame that I had kept buried from mindful processing and unpacking.

I grew up in a home where inter-racial relationships were encouraged and supported. My parents ran an inter-denominational, inter-racial church from the late 1970s. My father travelled weekly into townships to transport congregants. He also had close colleagues in Venda[29] who, when visiting, would stay with us in our home, as my father would in theirs.[30] On entering the schooling system in 1994, I made friends with learners from various ethnic groups. My parents never spoke in racially derogative terms. My father was one of the only ministers in the ministry he was affiliated with who ministered inter-racially and cross-culturally. In Grade 5, I became best friends with a black girl, and we spent many weekends staying over at each other's houses. She was the only friend with whom my parents gave permission for me to stay the night. I offer this brief and simplified narrative to begin to account for how my sense of self in the world of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa formed. Despite never explicitly being taught about power relations between bodies of differing colours in the home, as I grew up I started to acquire a positioning of self in the world and became more self-conscious, searching for assimilation and belonging. I started

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[29] VaVenda is an indigenous ethnic group of South Africa. Venda is found in the far north of South Africa close to the Kruger National Park and the border with Zimbabwe.
[30] This went against the ruling apartheid state's law. The Group Areas Act made inter-racial co-habitation illegal. Strict curfews were monitored to prevent this from happening.

school in the same year that South Africa held its first democratic election. I entered a multi-cultural Grade One classroom. I do not remember thinking in these formative years that other bodies unlike mine were different. Throughout my schooling I attended racially, culturally and religiously integrated schools. Nevertheless, in my small world it was the black body that occupied a lesser position. In the home environment Black people cleaned indoors and attended to the garden. At school they cleaned classrooms, bathrooms and maintained the school grounds. The only teacher of colour I was ever taught by during my 12 years of schooling was my isiZulu[31] teacher in Grades Five to Seven. Sadly, in my childhood world the body positioned to serve unnoticed and invisibilised always belonged to a person of colour.

As a white,[32] middle-class, English-speaking South African there is often a disengagement by people of similar background and upbringing in respect of the role 'we' played in the formation and perpetuation of race relations and prejudice in our shared history of South Africa. In the eyes of many liberal, English-speaking South Africans, the white Afrikaner[33] bears the weight of culpability and judgement for the systemic oppression of people of colour in South Africa's history. This serves to deflect attention from the significant role the liberal white English-speaking South African played. In my upbringing and in the social relations I had growing up, there were very few white, middle-class, English speakers who ever admitted to 'actually' being 'a part'

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[31] isiZulu is one of the 13 nationally recognised indigenous languages of South Africa. In primary school it is required by the education department to learn a 3rd additional language. As I was living in Kwa-Zulu Natal, isiZulu was the indigenous language spoken by the majority of the people residing in the province.

[32] In this thesis specific racial classifications are used that are reflective of the ideologies of the previous dispensation. The Population Registration Act of 1950 required that all people living in South Africa register their racial classification according to the apartheid's system of racial characteristics. This system of racial classification was divided into White, African, Coloured and Indian. Classification by racial group brought with it certain social advantages, with Whites garnering the greatest social benefits. On June 17, 1991 the act was repealed, but these institutionalised constructs of race classification continue in South Africa today. The terms are not reflective of my personal beliefs. I rather share the thoughts of Zimitri Erasmus regarding racial framing, when she states in her Editor's note, "[T]here is no such thing as the Black 'race'. Blackness, whiteness and colouredness exist, but they are cultural, historical and political identities. To talk about 'race mixture,' 'miscegenation,' 'inter-racial' sex and 'mixed descent' is to use terms and habits of thought inherited from the very 'race science' that was used to justify, oppression, brutality and the marginalisation of 'bastard peoples.' To remind us of their ignoble origins" (14).

[33] An Afrikaner is a descent of white settlers to South Africa. Originally rooted in the arrival of Dutch settlers in the 1600s, the cultural group now includes the genealogy lines of Khoi-San, Xhosa, British, German and Huguenot. As early as the 1700s there are records of European settlers identifying as 'Africaanders.' Afrikaans is a creole language spoken by Afrikaners as well as the Cape Coloured community. The reference to Afrikaner identity in this study is specifically to the white Afrikaner identity and the term Afrikaner applies to a group of people that was politically, socially and economically advantaged by the apartheid government. The term 'Afrikaner' has been debated in critical thinking around identity, with alternative terms proposed such as *Afrikaan, Afrikaanses, Suid-Afrikaan, Boer* and *Wit Suid-Afrikaners.* A more detailed discussion of Afrikaner identity is presented in Chapter Five.

of apartheid. Many voiced a rhetoric of non-racism, but within this liberal discourse there was a blanketing over of the role played by just being born white, a disregard of its inherent privilege. In the current context of South Africa, many white South Africans find a strong need to verbalise their identifying as non-racist.[34] I suspect that this heightened desire to label oneself as 'not racist' is heavily laden with haunting historical shame. The labelling of oneself as 'not racist' instead positions one to further conceal and push back the haunting spectre of our past. The label conceals years of systemic and embodied relations of racial framing. If you have lived in or were born in South Africa, you were inducted into a social construct of racism that silently shaped and positioned your body in relation to others. This construct of racism, whether we choose to see it or not, has created a system of exclusion, prejudice and a habitus of bodily relational power.[35] For many white South Africans there is consent to racism in their silence. It is the white body that has been granted a greater global currency.

We exist in daily co-movement with other bodies. It is thereby through our daily gestures and actions that some bodies are positioned as *more* than others. Wherever one might stand on the issue of prejudice, there is an undercurrent in South African society that Judith Butler has described in this way: "some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human" (*Bodies* 80). Certain bodies are thus liminalised. Returning to *Stumbling Block,* it is interesting to note how the body is positioned in a liminal space. Victor Turner classifies liminal

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[34] It is important to contextualise the use of this terminology in South Africa in light of the Black Lives Matter movement globally (#BLM) and the terminology, anti-racist, trending alongside the #BLM in 2020. Anti-racists do not only mark an active opposition to racism but a deliberate commitment to supporting BPOC (coupled with public action against racism). Anti-racist is therefore not merely lip service to opposing racism, but a label denoting action and activism. Prior to 2020, this terminology was not used in South Africa. Instead, people who believed themselves to be in opposition to a racist ideology referred to themselves as non-racists or 'not racist,' influenced by the liberal/communist supporters of non-racialism in the 1950s in South Africa. In current discourses non-racist/ not racist as a term used in opposition to a history of racism falls short in instigating a level of responsibility, acting more like a half promise. I use the term non-racist as it is contextually appropriate to the writing of this thesis chapter. Had I started this research in a post-BLM context I would have used anti-racist. My enlightenment as to the force of the term anti-racist occurred after my initial engagement with this chapter and performance. The use of the term also speaks to my racist complicity.

[35] It is impossible to write about the body without paying homage to Michel Foucault's work in positioning bodies as sites of power negotiations and contestations. His canonical book, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) opens up a discussion of bodies in positions of power. The contributions of feminist scholars in identifying the body as pivotal to the idea of gendering and control is also necessary within this discussion. For instance, Judith Butler's *Bodies that Matter* (1993) situates the body as a canvas for performing gender and – by implication – as a site for negotiating power.

spaces as "neither here nor there, they are betwixt and between" (95). The body thus rests in the in-between, in the doorway frame. The positionality of the body draws into question the tension Butler highlights (*Bodies* 80). *Stumbling Block* forces bystanders/witnesses/spectators into a position of negotiation where they are momentarily confronted with the necessity of deciding what to do – Step over? Ignore? Walk around? – thus disallowing their usual defences of denial. In the confinement of the doorframe, the narrowness of the passage and the proximity of two bodies meeting in a confined space, it is the act of transitioning through the liminal that generates an encounter between bodies. Turner identifies liminal spaces in ritual practices as experiences which initiate feelings of shared humanity that he describes as the experience of "humankindness" (qtd. in Levine, 42). The affect associated with the experience of "humankindness" builds a sense of solidarity and comradeship that Turner terms "communitas" (*The Ritual Process*). Those who share a liminal experience feel themselves bound in a communitas distinguished from the separation inevitably entailed by social structures (Levine, 44). The liminal placement in *Stumbling Block*, in contrast, made me more aware of the lack of humanness that I afforded people with less, seeing inequality as 'natural.' Yet the performativity of the piece raised my consciousness of this, confronting and challenging the dissonance within me, transitioning me into a place of "humankindness." Under the pressure of desire for transformation, liminality becomes "a time out of time, a pause in everyday life, in which habitual behaviours, attitudes and beliefs can be examined and transformed" (Levine, 45). The encounter catalysed an internal inquest into understanding why I looked away, ignored and pushed aside the sensation that it generated.

Stumbling Block offers a return to the materiality and experience of the body-mind looking to the 'something more' to make visible the invisible affect of shame. Blackman suggests embodied hauntology highlights the affect of performances on and in our body, which often remains unarticulated in an in-betweenness or not yet present state ("Researching Affect" 26). Maurice Merleau-Ponty offers a resonant contemplation with regard to the role the body of the performer and audience member play in their contribution to meaning-making through embodied ways of knowing:

Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument, and when we wish to move about we do not move the body as we move an object. We transport it without instruments as if by magic, since it is ours and because through it we have direct access to space. For us the body is much more than an instrument or a means; it is our expression in the world, the visible form of our intentions. (5)

Bodies exert and reinforce a power relation. In my refusal to acknowledge and 'see' the body beneath the blanket, in how I marked the body as not body, not a body like my body, my body's movement expressed a visible intention and expression in the world. It is this entanglement of bodies in which some are acknowledged and others not, that produces and shapes a relational state of shaming that remains unarticulated or silenced. Unfortunately, our belief that if words have not been uttered our gestures and bodily interactions cannot be articulated into a language of shame does not hold up. It is these actions that lead us into a life of dissonance.

Stumbling Block thus speaks to the ephemeral archive, all those moments we thought only existed in the moment in which they occurred, which yet linger like ghosts for years to come. If we are to pursue justice, as Derrida contends, "if he [or she] loves justice, at least the 'scholar' of the future and the intellectual of tomorrow should learn it from the ghost" (221). We therefore need to summon into consciousness our repressed affects of shame. The effect of shame is to impede empathy, to break our ability to form connections with people. But through performance, predicated on the connection of audience and performer, a possibility for repair lies, a possibility for repair by engaging with what your body is trying to tell you. Because of this work I now try without hesitation to acknowledge, affirm and recognise all bodies. When I wait at a traffic light and see a person by my window asking for help, I choose to see them. Whenever I am outside the walls of my home, no matter what human body I pass by I choose to acknowledge them with a wave, a hello or a smile. Perhaps undoing years of systemic oppression starts in this little act of choosing to see the bodies I have made invisible, and in doing so choose to see what would otherwise have been left 'unseen'.

I ask therefore that you give time to consider and reflect on how certain bodies have made you feel, how you may have invisibilised other bodies, or been made to feel invisibilised, and consider how these moments may have made you feel embodied shame.

Chapter Two discusses in some depth how the abject functions as a border and how certain bodies are sealed in a lived state of 'crushing objecthood.' This second case study also continues the exploration of what liminality in a performance reveals about how the affect of shame traffics, reflecting also on the nearness of shame's touch and how shame is marked on the skin.

In compiling this chapter I conducted two informal Skype conversations with Goliath on 23 October 2017 and 24 August 2018. Goliath was also sent the chapter to offer feedback and make any corrections.

CHAPTER THREE /

SHAME DISRUPTS BOUNDARIES: TOUCH, ABJECTION AND THE
GAZE IN BRETT BAILEY'S *BLOOD DIAMOND/TERMINAL*

[S]hame results from the experience of being objectified by others so that
one's status as a subject [is] ignored, disregarded, denied or negated.

Francis Broucek, *Shame and the Self* (8)

One side of my family has been here since 1674. They were probably slave
owners; they were complicit in everything that's happened here. My own
society, my people have been immensely enriched by a lot of these
atrocities. Also, I was born in 1967; I was conscripted into the army. The
role models at school were the priests, and the teachers who were putting
forward a philosophy of racism, of racial superiority. So, I can't ignore that
that's part of my cultural DNA, my intellectual DNA. I was brought up with
that. It's the soil that I absorbed as a kid. How do I unravel that? What were
the roots of that? What were the images that I was fed and that my ancestors
were fed in order to perpetuate this myth that one race is better than the
other? I wasn't out to deliberately create images of shame, except a lot of
the stuff I came across shamed me and then I tried to find the images that
articulated that.

Brett Bailey in interview with Anton Krueger, "Gazing*"* (3)

Because of the unique nature of this performance piece I start the chapter with a

description of the work to facilitate a visualisation of it. The performance debuted at

the 2009 South African National Arts Festival and had no other runs. It thus exists for

me only in the time and space in which I remember it.[36] *Blood Diamond/Terminal*[37]

(2009), directed and devised by Brett Bailey,[38] revisits colonisation's use of world fairs

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[36] The National Arts Festival is the largest arts festival in Africa.
[37] The performance was initially titled *Blood Diamond* in the festival programme, but later it was renamed
Terminal.
[38] Brett Bailey is a South African playwright, designer, director, installation maker and the artistic director
of Third World Bunfight. He has worked throughout South Africa and internationally. His acclaimed
iconoclastic dramas *Big Dada, Ipi Zombi?, iMumbo Jumbo* and *Orfeus*, and performance installations
Blood Diamonds/Terminal and *Exhibit A & B* interrogate the dynamics of the post-colonial world. He
directed the opening show at the World Summit on Arts and Culture in Johannesburg (2009), and from
2006-2009 the opening shows at the Harare International Festival of the Arts. From 2008-2011 he was
curator of South Africa's only public arts festival, 'Infecting the City,' in Cape Town. His works have won

and ethnological exhibitions in the form of human zoos to frame and 'show off' black bodies as object, other, exotic, unfamiliar and un-human, and also as a way of justifying the abjection of the black body. I identify *Blood Diamond/Terminal* as an incubator for the ideas and aesthetic that Bailey later developed and strengthened in his very controversial work *Exhibit B* (2010).[39]

    Blood Diamond/Terminal is a site-specific piece performed in two locales: an disused railway station and the bordering 1820 Settler[40] cemetery in Makhanda,[41] formerly known as Grahamstown.[42] *Blood Diamond/Terminal* is an immersive performance featuring a cast of 70 amateur actors from the community of Makhanda, with performers ranging from retirees to primary school goers. It is staged only at night and restricts admission to 35 audience members.[43] The tableau[44] is used as the central performative element. The performance consists of several constructed static tableaus positioned in different locales. The tableaus are each unique and frame motionless bodies. The performance is navigated in the dark by an isolated spectator who is led by one of the youngest members of the cast, a child of primary school age. A central consideration in the performance is its focus on the live exchange between spectator and performer. The relationship is positioned as intensely intimate, framed by the one-on-one physical contact and connection between the child cast member who acts as the guide, and the isolated spectator.

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several awards, including a gold medal for design at the Prague Quadrennial (2007). In 2019 Bailey was honoured with the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres award (Knight in the Order of Arts and Letters).

[39] The piece was originally called *Exhibit A* (2010-2013) but became *Exhibit B* when Bailey no longer focused only on German and Belgium colonial history but included French and British colonial rule, speaking to the specific colonial rule of the space/context where the performance was performed.

[40] 1820 Settlers were white British colonists who settled in the Eastern Cape frontier region. Many of the four thousand settlers left England poor in the hope of building a better life for themselves in the British colony. The relocation of British settlers was funded by a government-sponsored settlement scheme.

[41] *Makhanda* (also spelled Makana), is an isiXhosa word and is the name of a Xhosa prophet (born c. 1780, died 25 December 1819) who was also known as *Nxele*, meaning 'the left-handed.' He was a warrior, war doctor, philosopher, and prophet of the amaXhosa people.

[42] Grahamstown is a settler town in the South African province of the Eastern Cape. It is home to Rhodes University and has hosted the National Arts Festival for over 40 years. Its name was changed in July 2018 to Makhanda.

[43] Unlike most of Bailey's work this particular performance did not tour and was not restaged at a different locale in a different context. This performance therefore is intrinsically tied to this specific-site locale.

[44] Tableau, a French word, meaning living picture, or painted target. Theatrically the tableau is a static scene containing one or more performers, stationary and silent, usually in costume and carefully posed with props and/or scenery, and often theatrically lit.

Blood Diamond/Terminal works at actively dismantling the fourth wall[45] by subtly enveloping the spectator in the world of the performance. In doing so the boundary line between 'real' and 'staged' is blurred. Some tableaus are titled by a small sign below them; others are not. The titles included: 'Found Object #1,' 'The Civilisers,' 'Found Object #2,''The Next Three Seconds,' 'Crossing the Line,' 'A Long Illness,' 'At the Back of My Mind,' 'The End.'[46] The performance is not linked to a narrative, character or plot line, and silence is maintained at all times between performer and spectator. Through these staging techniques the spectator is drawn into a space of active awareness and consciousness. The immersive performance style destabilises established norms, muddles binaries and blurs the separation between found and live object. As a result, our standard mode of reading the real and the representational is undone and perceived boundaries and norms are challenged. The enigma of the performance arises from this blurring of distinctions between the real and the staged, living and artwork, and the question of what happens when the performance is neither but actually both? With both *Stumbling Block* and *Blood Diamond/Terminal* subverting my standard mode of meaning-making, I was forced to question how I defined the real and the representational. Just as the figure underneath the blanket in *Stumbling Block* is both real (a live person) and not (it is not an indigent person but a representation of the idea), so too does *Blood Diamond/Terminal* ask what this both/and state can offer in awakening affective complexities, especially those we leave buried in shame.

It was when I was pondering on *Stumbling Block* in the process of preparing my proposal for this research that I started to uncover other similar encounters, encounters with performances in which I had similarly experienced what Probyn calls the "physiological experience of shame intersected with the physicality of place" – to the extent that "the colour, the place, the history of bodies all come alive in shame" (*Blush* 40). Through a process of reflective engagement, I realised that Bailey's production on that wintery night some ten years earlier in Makhanda marked as my first affective experience of grappling with shame through performance in the post-apartheid era. Decidedly, it was this piece that made me start to probe what it was that I was feeling. I use Griselda Pollock's term "after-affects" to support the felt-sensory

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[45] The fourth wall is an invisible, conceptual wall created in performances that renders the audience member a voyeur looking into the world that the performance creates.
[46] These titles were emailed to me by Brett Bailey, in a file named *Text and descriptors*.

experience brought about by the performance discussed in this chapter (*After-Affects* 2). Pollock characterises "after-affects" as something which works towards a phrasing "not merely linguistic, but gestural, sonic or graphic, that produces encounters capable of shifting us both subjectively and collectively" (2). She conceptualises the encounter with the artwork as an "aesthetic wit(h)nessing[47] of traces or residues of what could not be immediately represented hence they exist as after-affects" ("The Missing" 27). Pollock usefully cites Bracha Ettinger by calling these moments *fascinance*,[48] a term she explains as "a prolonged aesthetically affecting and learning encounter" (*After-Affects* Preface).

The discussion by Pollock about how lingering aesthetic affects offer a learning encounter links to a thread of thought that runs throughout this study, that of the duality of shame, in that it both impedes and fosters attachment, opening up opportunities for growth and connection. This chapter therefore actively suggests that despite shame's grip in concealing 'after-effects,' the *fascinance*, the lingering aesthetic affects encountered in *Blood Diamond/Terminal*, could not be erased or pushed aside.[49] Sedgwick acknowledges the transformative/performative power of shame by suggesting that asking "good questions about shame and shame/performativity could get us somewhere with a lot of the recalcitrant knots that tie themselves into the guts of identity politics – yet without delegitimating the felt urgency and power of the notion of 'identity' itself" ("Queer Performativity" 618). This chapter responds to Sedgwick's prompt by exploring questions about shame and shame/performativity, about how the affects of shame in performance may be agentive, how performance may affect us differently when thinking about standard modes of representation and identity politics, and how shame is embodied in a post-apartheid context. In short, the chapter reflects

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[47] Ettinger conjoins two words, with and witness and with the bracketing of the letter (h) suspends it into an undecidable condition between the two words. In a performative sense, the role of wit(h)nessing in performance reflects on Ettinger's insight in seeing the word inspired in relation to gaze, a gaze formed in the connection between bodies (2006). Performance cannot exist outside of relationship, it is dependent on a shared connection and it is thus a gaze of wit(h)nessing. The gazer is unable to witness without a sense of being *with*.

[48] Pollock defines *fascinance* as follows: "a prolonged openness to being co-affected in the encounter with the pathos of the other, or to shared learning from the other and thus being transformed in the encounter, *fascinance* is neither voyeuristic nor fetishising, neither sadistic nor mastering ("The Missing" 269)

[49] I feel it is important to note that the analysis in this chapter analysis is based solely on these 'after affects.' I have not had access to any recorded visuals of the production and have found very few secondary resources on the performance. The analysis therefore speaks directly to the effectiveness (or not) of these 'after-effects.'

on how the affect of shame encountered in a performance can prompt difficult questions.

In attempting to recall the memories I have of *Blood Diamond/Terminal*, I struggle with a forward and backward movement accompanied by a deep-seated tension, unsettlement and discomfort. In recalling the meanings I made, meanings I repressed and meanings I chose to forget, I become increasingly more self-conscious. This back and forth movement of hesitation and insecurity produces further entanglements of shame as I try to give voice to hidden and secret feelings that have been kept safe 'inside.'[50] I believe my self-denial of this shame experience was made even stickier by the additional shame I felt arising from my fear of articulating an acutely personal response to a piece that has attracted contentious debates around censorship, curatorship, positionality, appropriation and representation.[51] This felt-feeling of shame is amplified by my working in an autoethnographic practice that voices intimate meaning-making encountered in a performance already graffitied in 'shame' in reviewers', attendees' and academic critiques about Bailey's mirroring of 'human zoos.' My response comes wrapped in the vagueness of remembering and the smudgy singularity of my subjective experience. My state of shame is amplified further by my self-doubt about working with this case study in the confines of an institutional history of academic writing that has worked hard to efface the affective entanglements of the researcher in the research process. It is the stickiness of shame that rears its head when one is working with reflexive self-consciousness. I struggle to separate the self from the self in my felt-feelings experienced as a result of the performance. This reflective feeling-state echoes Bernstein's notion of shame's being gluey in how it sticks to the self, making one hyper-aware of the self and self-conscious before its scrutiny (223–24, note 25). Similarly, how I feel about shamed memories "entails a dialectical struggle between adhering to something and seeking freedom from it" (224). But in order to work through and identify what it was I felt in the

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[50] It is important to note that, because of my conflicting emotions regarding this performance, *Blood Diamond/Terminal* was not included as a case study in the first draft of my proposal.

[51] Megan Lewis's article on *Exhibit B,* offers a concise summary of this tension when she writes, "Bailey's display of black and brown bodies was (mis)read as the very practice it aimed to critique, and, simultaneously he was not prepared for what the fault lines revealed when the assumed ideal audience included Africans who were tired of the very depictions his piece aimed to expose. Bailey's South African whiteness simultaneously positioned him in an impossible identity and, perhaps, taught him about the stakes of representation at the price of international reputation" (133). Lewis also exposes the fragility of censorship when she addresses how works that are read as 'oppressive' are censored when they actually powerfully challenge systemic institutions of exclusion and privilege.

performance, I am required to pay special attention to my body and shame's residual stickiness adhering to my skin's surface. This process requires attention to my self-consciousness and to the border and boundaries of self.

Despite this initial insecurity and equivocality, the study's PLR/RLP process (involving a pattern of folding in and folding out of thoughts) has allowed for growth and movement. The analysis therefore speaks not only to archived embodied knowledge but also to the self-reflective and cyclical methodology of research that informs the practice and in turn develops what is internally performed, shaping what is written and helping to dislodge shame's affective silencing.

> The Grahamstown Railway Terminal was built in 1878 on this boundary line between Us and Them. It sits directly below the Settler cemetery – an inter-zone between Here and There. The last train pulled out of the station in February 2009, and the empty platforms of this dead end, like the vandalised graves nearby, are haunted by memories trapped in airless limbo. (Bailey qtd. in Krueger, 16)

There are parts of the performance I remember well, others more faintly and some I have forgotten all together. I struggle to understand and make sense of what it was that I felt. The feelings feel loaded. I sit confused. I mull over sparse and fragmented images as I try to piece the parts of the performance together. They came to me jumbled, unnamed and entangled in thoughts and feelings, making it difficult for me to shape a coherent and clear picture. Because the division between what was real and constructed was blurred, I struggle to recall what was the performance and what was not.

I drove to the performance on the outskirts of Makhanda, located in a derelict railway station. In the car with me was the cast of a performance piece I had co-devised and co-directed from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal's Drama Department that had been staged through the Student Theatre initiative funded at the time by the National Arts Festival.[52] The play we were performing at the festival was entitled *Draw Wings* (2009). The piece told the story of a young girl's journey to where she ended up living on the streets of Durban. The piece centralised the performance style of physical theatre to tell the story in a way meant to position the audience to engage

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[52] Sadly, this platform is no longer funded by the National Arts Festival and as a result many university drama departments have had to pull their participation.

with the innocence and imaginative world of a young child. Stop motion animation drawings projected onto the wall behind the stage revealed the imagined stories the child told herself. In devising and researching the production the cast worked alongside a street child organisation called *Umtombo*[53] based in Durban,[54] Kwa-Zulu Natal.[55] Through this collaboration I was introduced to an NGO[56] based in England called Momentum Arts, which I later supported in a creative project that worked with Deloitte in organising and facilitating The Street Child Soccer World Cup in Durban, ahead of the FIFA Soccer World Cup in South Africa. It was with these thoughts and experiences that I stepped into *Blood Diamond/Terminal.*

I pass through the threshold of the doorframe into the railway waiting room, on entering the performance space I am unsettled. The room is eerie in its silence. A card from a pack of playing cards is placed in my hand and I am told to sit on a pew, remain silent and exit only when the conductor on the other side of the waiting room reveals my card from the pack of cards she holds. In that brief exchange I am jarred into a position of submission. I feel little to no agency. It is this constructed positionality shaped by the performance that makes me feel vulnerable, regulated and controlled. As I sit waiting, I realise this constructed positionality of servitude, objectification and lack of agency is aggravating my discomfort. The enforced and maintained silence makes the durational time of the performance feel 'outside of time,' existing in a vacuum, a sub-world to the one I exited when I entered the railway waiting room. The protracted waiting heightened by the exit of audience members at seemingly random intervals, assigned by the order of a pack of cards, makes life appear like an ad-hoc game actively working at diminishing my agency. In witnessing the audience shrink, one member at a time, I feel apprehensive, I feel the same dreaded weightiness I get before I have to sit an exam.

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[53] *Umthombo* is an isiZulu word meaning fountain. At the time (2009–2010) it was based on Point Road in Durban, a notorious area for prostitution and drug trading. Founded by Tom Hewitt, its main focus was getting street children off the streets, acting as a mediator between families, social welfares and the state. It also seeks to give skills to street children, creating alternative options to children living on the street. A key factor of this organisation is that it is run by former street children. (*Umtombo* has unfortunately closed but Tom Hewitt has started another NGO called Surfers not Street Children).
[54] Durban is a major city in South Africa.
[55] Kwa-Zulu Natal is one of the 9 provinces in South Africa
[56] The NGO Street Child United headed the organising of the event. Momentum Arts was a side NGO which helped in using arts as a way for the street children to connect with other children (who were participating in the event) and with the children they met through schools who agreed to host teams at their school during the school day. The following two sites provide more information about the event: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0aA8wqX2GA;https://www.streetchildunited.org/our-sports-events/past-events/street-child-world-cup-durban-2010/;
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xHM7EM4J3tY

In reflecting on these thoughts I see how ingenious Bailey was in psychologically setting up an internal stage in his audience. It was in all these curatorial details that I was pulled inwards, stilled by my silence to hear only my breath. It was this state of silence that positioned me in an agentive role in my meaning-making. The silence magnified my connection to my sense of self, to who I was and what I was in relation to this world.[57] In his interview with Anton Krueger, Bailey comments on his application of silence in the performance:

> The mind has to be stilled in order to absorb things. You need to start to listen, you need to listen to your breath, you need to feel comfortable with silence because I'm really wanting you to be perceptive. I'm wanting you to read. If you've got a whole lot of other stuff going on in your mind, that stuff is with you. I want you to sit and be quiet and just start to feel the silence and the presence of other people in silence around you . . . I've done meditation courses over the years, and meditating by yourself is great, but meditating amongst people is amazing because there's the presence of silence, of concentrated energy all around you. It's creating a community of people in silence, in a way, that you can walk out of and stay in silence. (Bailey qtd. in Krueger 12–13)

Bailey's use in the performance of curated tableaus of silent and motionless bodies further intensifies this state of connection to self in relation to the image. The usual shared experience between audience members and performers is undone in this performance and instead I enter into an intimate state with the performers I watch and the performer's hand I hold. Although I felt as if my agency had been taken away when I entered the waiting room, Bailey had positioned me in a way that obliged me to rely on my agency in leaving me to make the meaning in his performance. In an atmosphere of silence, I was left truly to listen and observe and learn. Bailey's strategic use of silence prepares the body to feel, but also prepares the attendees to transition to the role of witness, to see with new eyes, as the rush of thoughts is stilled and the body as meaning-maker is centralised, drawing the attendee to focus on the felt-sensory experience as opposed to words or descriptors that tell us how to think. Elyse

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[57] Of interest is how the performance turned me to reflect inwardly, in a curated meditative state. This state of being links to ideas in Confucianism that conceptualise shame as an emotion as well as a human capacity that directs the person inward for self-examination and motivates the person towards socially and morally desirable change. So this curated meditative state necessitated and facilitated a vulnerability to the experience of shame in the performative.

Lamm Pineau's observes how performance requires one to think because it is "a deliberate act, a self-conscious act," requiring one to think about "how and why their bodies are behaving in the ways that they are (51)." Her words sum up how I made meaning in relation to this performance, and resonate with my experience in *Stumbling Block*, where the performance made me self-conscious about how and why my body was behaving in the way it was. Similarly, the silence in *Blood Diamonds/Terminal* makes me sensitive to my body. This silence makes me meditative, reflective and circumspect. I have the space to feel and consider at some basic level what it is that I am feeling.

I am made aware of the silence and stillness of the performers. Their state of silence and stillness reflects their own active state of bodily attunement. I reflect back to *Stumbling Block* and how the stilled body of the performer wrapped in blankets communicated resistance. Their stillness did not mean inaction or passivity, but rather a highly attuned state of connection to the body in order to maintain a lengthy state of stillness. This extended period of stillness is similar to what is expected of the performers in *Blood Diamond/Terminal*, who sit in their motionless tableaus for a protracted period as 35 attendees pass by them in an unrushed procession at regular intervals. How does a performer's silence affect a state of shame? This idea will be developed further in my discussion of the character of Ruth in my analysis of *Tshepang* in Chapter Five. As noted previously, I felt uncomfortable in my own silence as well as that of everyone else. But it was this state of silence that transitioned me into a heightened state of awareness of the space and of the other bodies that surrounded me, asking me to think about what it all might be saying. The fact that I can recall this performance some ten years later is testimony of this.

The philosopher Stanley Cavell examines silence and suffering and its role in meaning-making. He suggests that to study social suffering one must study society's silence toward it and how this perpetrates suffering (xvi). Thus Bailey stages the perpetuation and reception of suffering through the performance's active state of silence. The performers' silence marks their suffering and the attendees' silence perpetuates this suffering. In the political arena, remaining silent is widely regarded as an act of complicity. It is therefore the performance's performed and embodied action of silence that articulates a deep-seated shame in the referenced cycles of suffering. It is my embodied silence which reminds me of my social and political complicity and passivity in the face of social injustice.

I wait for what seems like 30 minutes before my card is pulled from the pack of cards. I walk through the door towards the railway tracks and step out into the blackness of the night. I am caught completely by surprise and left somewhat stunned, when a small black boy[58] *comes running from behind me and grabs my left hand. I can feel his hand is cold. I feel displaced by the presence of the boy. The action of him placing his hand in mine makes me feel unguarded, vulnerable. I am hesitant. Is this staged or real?*

Contextually, having a young child join me in the performance at a time of day and area I would consider unsafe to be walking in, felt peculiar. It felt strange to have him witness the performance with me. The immediacy of his touch and the affective state this produced in me was palpable. I can still recall it now as I write these words. I felt intimately connected to him, perhaps because I already felt vulnerable and hesitant about the companionship he offered me but was jointly comforted by it. It was also the power relations at play in this encounter with the child performer that unsettled me. In the performance the child is deliberately cast to represent the many impoverished children in South Africa (through his worn and tattered clothes). Bailey's choice to use primary school children in the performance, I suggest, deliberately echoed and doubled psychologically with the prominent presence of young, impoverished children during the National Arts Festival who create street performance routines at different locales as a means of generating some form of income. A contributing factor to the presence of children from the surrounding areas of Makhanda is impacted by the festival occurring during national school holidays. The inclusion of young children in the performance amidst the reality of impoverished children performing street acts on the streets of Makhanda during the festival helps blur the binaries that the performance attempts to dismantle, with the aim of questioning the lived binaries of our post-apartheid state.

In grappling with the ethics of the inclusion of young children in Bailey's work I felt uncomfortable. As stated previously this inclusion made me hesitant, asking: Are the children being compensated for their work? Is it not too late at night for a child to be a guide? Is this safe for them? Should they be exposed to what they see? In thinking these things, I remember feeling the heaviness of shame weigh down on me.

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[58] Bailey included school children from a nearby school to guide the attendees.

Why do I care now about what the boy sees?

It was from my position of privilege and under the auspices of a play funded by the National Arts Festival that I 'allowed' myself to feel the reality of Makhanda's citizens who lived beyond the railway tracks.

Why do I choose to feel now despite having numerous other encounters with impoverished black children throughout the festival which I have dismissed, deemed irrelevant and fobbed off as 'not what I came to the festival for.' Why am I still unsettled by this reality? Why still, after all the work I've done in bringing a performance to the festival that wished to humanise the plight of street children?

Of particular interest is how the child's 'invisible' position in the day-to-day of the world outside the performance is flipped inside the performance. The child is given the authority in the relationship between the audience member and performer. It was in the boy's act of touch, when he clasped my hand, that this very intimate and relational state facilitated an affective connection to him in a very immediate way. His touch was not just limited to the specific cutaneous touch but also simultaneously moved inwards and then again outwards between our bodies. This act of touch affectively charged the relational state that shame's affect was triggering in me. The child's act of touching me physically echoed my feeling of shame in my desire for social connection despite my internal habitus, which triggered a dissonance. With staged intervals of attendees exiting the waiting room, one by one, I did not encounter any other attendees throughout the duration of observing the tableaus. This isolation added to my discomfort and hesitation, intensifying my vulnerable state. On reflection, this dis-ease could well have been worse had I walked alone. There was therefore some safety and comfort implicit in the hand holding mine. The child to whom I attributed little agency in my daily life was now not only my guide but a source of safety and assurance. In co-experiencing the performance with me, the child transitioned further into the position of witness to my engagement with the performance. Because of the positionality of the child as a co-witness I felt an urge to protect him from what he saw. I felt self-conscious. This internal state of self-awareness grew with each

tableau he paused at, as I saw him watching me looking at the motionless bodies with my 'invisibilised' ancestral gaze, as though looking from a measured distance.

In his much-celebrated political philosophy work *Leviathan* (1651), Thomas Hobbes declares that the origin of all thought is that which we sense, "for there is no conception in Man's [sic] mind which hath not at first totally or in parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense" (21). Hobbes thus probes the complex relationship among the senses, knowledge and ideas. He worked hard at actively dismantling the dismissal of sensory knowledge as trivial, ephemeral or 'merely' subjective. John Locke agreed with Hobbes's "claiming that the entirety of human experience was derived from two sources, sensation and reflections" (qtd. in Paterson, Dodge and MacKian *Touching* 1). Had the boy not clasped my hand during the duration of the performance, would the affects I experienced have been the same? I strongly doubt it. It was this act of touch that made my body come alive to feelings, feelings which unsettled me in ways I had not experienced previously on seeing similar scenarios in everyday life. In the introduction to *Touching Place, Placing Touch* Mark Paterson, Martin Dodge and Sarah MacKian suggest that the:

> primacy and living immediacy of sensory experience does not reside solely within the boundaries of the skin, somehow locked within discrete, disconnected bodies. … The senses are not equivalent to the tissues and cells of the sense organs themselves, nor reduced to nerves that connect to the brain. The cultural chronology of the formulation of a 'sensorium' necessitates that the senses are ineluctably social: felt individually, but also always shared intersubjectively. (2)

My senses and my state of shame were heightened by being in relation to another and in a shared physical act of feeling: "Shame turns itself skin side out" (Tomkins, qtd. in Sedgwick, "Shame Theatricality" 51).

Caroline Jones proposes that a "sensorium" is the seat of sensation and the sum of an organism's perception: "the subject's way of coordinating all the body's perceptual and proprioceptive signals as well as the changing sensory envelope of the self" (8). What these insights offer this analysis of *Blood Diamond/Terminal* is another perspective on shame that may not be readily available in theorising it, in this case, how this very relational and sensory exchange of touch with this 'impoverished' child generated an awareness of shame's affect. As suggested by Paterson et al. and

Jones, this sensory moment, maintained and extended through the duration of the performance, facilitated an intersubjective relational knowing while also signalling shifts in the changing sensory envelope of the self. It was intimate. This act of touch connected the borders of the body together and further worked at blurring my sensory ability to demarcate the real from the staged, as the child's touch offered me a very present and real feeling of warmth and comfort. It was the act of touch that heightened my awareness of my 'self' in relation to the boy, a sensory state heightened by the enveloping silence. I am no longer protected or concealed by my position of class. I can no longer hide and take cover in the collective body of my whiteness. It is this simple act of touch that touches the entrance to what shame forms in me: the self. In this way shame's affect is "stimulated and modulated in relationship;" it is also through relationship that shame can be "repaired" (Arel 32).

This act of touch also served to break the fourth wall, a staging device best known in the work of Bertolt Brecht as *verfremdungseffekt (V-effekt)*. Theorists have argued that through employing a distancing device in the theatre, Brecht provoked his audience to think rather than sink into the sentimental complacency enabled by "the willing suspension of disbelief" (Coleridge). The use of this staging device challenges the spectator to think and feel differently. It would appear that this staging device foregrounds an affect of discomfort. Just as Brecht attempted to separate *gestus* from gesture and actor from character, he separated affect from sentimentality and in doing so gave rise to unsettling and unsanctioned forms of emotion. It is important to note that it is the experience of affect that makes the spectator aware of the ways in which he or she bears the ideological or psychic marks communicated through the performance. Thus, as Elena del Rio argues, "through a certain distance that allows for examination or contemplation, the spectator is paradoxically affected and moved in a more genuine and individualised fashion" (72). It is through the performance's aesthetic that an estrangement is formed, a distanciation that leads to contemplation. This is an argument I include in my discussion of how certain performative choices affectively charge the body. When the child stepped across the figurative stage and clasped my hand, he not only physically bridged our two spaces but also affectively awakened my internal contemplation of self.

Blood Diamond/Terminal therefore strategically breaks from the proscenium arch not only to engulf the spectator in the physical affect of spectacle and actor but, as Antonin Artaud in *The Theatre and its Double* (1938) argues, to dissolve the

hierarchy between actor and spectator, enabling social relations to be politicised by performative practice. This aesthetic choice therefore points to my embodied shame about how borders, structures and boundaries are formed, as the site-specific performance drew attention to the correlation between aspects of the site and the larger political/social context in which it is situated.

Speaking of shame's transformative potential, Elspeth Probyn argues that the felt-feeling of shame "makes us question what we are feeling, the nature of the loss of interest, and fundamentally – as many have argued – who we are, as a re-evaluation of the self" (*Blush* 64). It is this affect that enables self-transformation, as Probyn continues:

> It would be hubris to say that this leads to a 'better' person or indeed that the person who has felt shame will always reflect consciously on the mechanism that caused him to blush. Such a view would be too overarching and would again, reduce the body to a knowable, limited entity. I won't go that far, but shame undoubtedly makes us feel temporarily more fragile in ourselves. And that acknowledgment of fragility may serve as a basis from which to re-evaluate one's existence. As I've mentioned, the viscerality of the feeling body shakes up our habitus, causing us to question at various levels its seemingly static nature. (*Blush* 64)

The question raised here of the static nature of our habitus or apathy generates what Dominick La Capra refers to as an "empathetic unsettlement" (qtd. in *Blush* 122). "Empathetic unsettlement cannot be passive or accepting, it is a practice that requires a mode of relating that upsets easy narrative or harmonising narration as this mode of relating can be painful and hard" (122). It shakes up and forces us to re-evaluate who we think we are. It is through listening to affect that an "ethics of response" is brought into question (122). Echoing the idea of shame as hauntology, La Capra claims that "the after-effects – the hauntingly possessive ghosts – of traumatic events are not fully owned by anyone" (qtd. in Sedgwick and Frank, "Shame" 2).

> The narration of shame distributes its effects all over the place. It connects people and places in strange ways. Shame creates tangled lines of relation. To flesh out an ethics of response to shame requires a hyper-awareness of the way it moves and the connections it makes. This is what shame does: it makes our bodies horribly sensitive. (Probyn, *Blush* 147)

Perhaps this was exactly what the presence of the child was achieving during the performance, making me horribly sensitive to myself. My sense of self and its relation to shame viscerally 'touched' as the child's hand connected to the border that physically marked my internal feeling of 'self.'

Before examining the tableaus in *Blood Diamonds/Terminal*, it is necessary to elaborate on ambiguity and positionality as key features of response to Bailey's oeuvre in these tangled lines of shame's affect. This was briefly touched on by Lewis in a footnote at the beginning of this chapter, when she noted the contentious responses Bailey's work has become known for evincing. As deviser and director of performances that attempt to confront taboo socio-political issues in South Africa and the post-colonial world, Bailey's positionality is inherently ambiguous. The ambiguity arises, at least in part, from the fact that he is a white, middle-class male director and curator who uses BPOC bodies to tell stories.[59] Bailey's performances provoke heated volatility and sensitivity along racial lines. I use the word ambiguity, first because in interviews and statements about his work, Bailey often withholds judgement, stating that he seeks only to represent what has happened in history, passing the task of judging to the viewer; he also is acutely aware of his positionality and is not naïve to it, stating how authority figures in his life have influenced his thinking. He refers to his "family, teachers and wider institutional figures, such as the police," who all complied with a framework that did not simply separate whites from blacks but constructed an ideology that legitimised the 'othering' of black people (Krueger 3). Yet despite Bailey's acknowledgement of the injustices perpetuated by apartheid and his personal grappling with repairing this, the fact remains that he is white, and this problematises his ability to represent black lives. One is reminded of the very basis of Dean Hutton's *#fuckwhitepeople* (2016), which was first conceptualised and performed as part of

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[59] Art historian Yvette Greslé, in reflecting on *Exhibit B,* argues that: "Bailey appears unaware of one of the most critical questions of post-apartheid South Africa: Who speaks, for whom and how? His own complicity in this history is absent from his work." This criticism hinges on the premise that Bailey is utilising the bodies of his performers merely as props in a theatrical project that tells a version of colonial history that is constructed by him, the white director. Furthermore, Greslé highlights an ethical question that has long animated critical discussion of Bailey's work: can a white South African director present black African culture and historical experience without laying himself open to accusations of voice appropriation? Greslé believes the show was unethical in its use of black bodies to represent black history and trauma: "If your intent is to subvert the long history of human zoos, why are you still using Black bodies? Why not address the white gaze?" (Yvette Greslé, "Twenty Pound Spectacle: Brett Bailey (Exhibit B)," *3:AM Magazine*, 27 August 2014, online.) I however am of the opinion that Bailey is instead extremely aware of his complicity and the privilege he holds in being the white male conceptualiser and director to BPOC performers.

Hutton's minor project in completing a Master's through UCT's Michaelis School of Fine Arts on an ICA fellowship. The piece attempted to demonstrate how in merely being born white, the body is privileged above others. The central idea of their[60] Master's project was *#fuckwhitepeople*, which is a black and white bold letter pattern text, reminiscent of agitprop advertising propaganda, which reads "fuck white people, white people fuck, white people fuck white people." Hutton was also invited to exhibit the piece at the Iziko South African National Gallery (2017). The work raises interesting questions about which bodies are given access to white cube spaces such as galleries and tertiary institutions, which bodies are given the position to speak and which bodies are silenced. Hutton is verbal about where the phrase for the performance piece *#fuckwhitepeople* came from, reminding us that it was taken from a slogan a student leader at the University of Witwatersrand during the RMF (#RhodesMustFall) movement had scribed on his shirt. The shirt read "Fuck White People" on the back and "Black lives are shit" on the front. The shirt was worn by a black male student, Zama Mthunzi, whose action was reported to the Human Rights Commission. *#fuckwhitepeople* in its performativity visibilises historic systems of privilege. Because the work is embodied by a white body, despite being a gender non-conforming body, which is a marginalised body, the body's whiteness still plays out its social power. Hutton is able to reconstruct the idea inscribed on the black male student's shirt into a patterned motif which they shaped into curated printed mediums, one a paper poster and the other a textile. Hutton uses the textile to sew a jumpsuit which they wore on numerous occasions to campus while enrolled as a master's student. Hutton thus falls into the exact double-bind of Bailey, as the thing Hutton wishes to critique through the artwork becomes their fragility because they use their privileged position to do so. Their position of privilege does not shift. The lines written on the WITS student activist's t-shirt (openly plagiarised by Hutton) become the premise for their Master's dissertation and degree, wherein Hutton graduated with distinction.[61]

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[60] Hutton does not use the pronouns he, she, her, him but in destablising our gendered world Hutton uses the gender-neutral pronouns they, them. Hutton identifies as genderqueer is a non-binary transgender identity.

[61] http://2point8.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Dean-Hutton-CV-2019-copy.pdf. Hutton's thesis, *Plan B, a gathering of strangers (or) This is not working* was also turned into an income-generating commodity when German publishers i*walewabooks* turned the thesis into a published book.

Similarly, through historic privilege, Bailey accesses resources denied to the bodies to whom he seeks to grant visibility in these spaces. The question this raises, addressed in an article by Rina Arya, is, can Bailey position himself as a constructor of the narratives of black lives? In my reflections on *Blood Diamond/Terminal* I suggest that the affect working through this performance engenders a way of knowing that is uniquely founded in performative engagement, and that it is this affect that produces a transformative potential for positive change. One cannot claim that Bailey is a silenced bystander to his shame, since he is an artist who bravely chooses to bring contentious and volatile subject matter into the public domain. Miki Flockemann argues in support of Bailey's work, highlighting how the performative dimension and the role of the body in meaning-making grant individual agency to the body/bodies involved in the performance ("Repeating" 410). Marion Arnold writes that artists constantly have to negotiate questions of "What can I represent? And what language might I use?" (137). These are particularly pertinent questions in a landscape of shared histories. According to Colin Richards, "shared history" is the prime reason why white South African artists portray black people or cite the black body in their work (171). This history, he writes, is "unevenly shared, yes; unfairly, yes; deniable, no; erasable, no; avoidable, no" (171). In its absence from visual expression "such invisibility" would amount to an "act of denial of obscene proportions" (171). Bailey's work and his device of the tableau is not 'fixed.' If we do read performance as 'fixed' the agency of meaning-making between bodies in live performance is nullified. I would refer to artist Penny Siopis's thoughts on the challenges of the representation of black women in feminist discourse, when she asks whether the female body has been, "so completely and relentlessly colonised under patriarchy that its representation always serves its subjection?" (247). In response, she refers to Minh-ha, who asks: "can knowledge circulate without a position of mastery? Can it be conveyed without the exercise of power?" (qtd. in Chen 41). Minh-ha suggests a 'both/and' position, which finds rich ground in the liminal and interstitial, even as these interstices reveal pain and failure. Bailey in this work gives the bystander the opportunity to debunk or reinforce a history of subjection, and the complexities of representation highlight yet again how access to certain bodies is granted or denied. This thinking therefore affirms how it is still the white body that speaks.

Bailey's choice to retitle the piece *Terminal* suggests a liminality similar to that raised in my discussion of Goliath's *Stumbling Block*, where the performance is

positioned in the liminal in the hope of offering the recipient of the work a transitory movement out of an in-between state towards a transformative positionality. Liminal spaces often reflect a withdrawal from normal modes of social action, where the given structures of a society can be temporarily suspended. This recalls my earlier comment, when I suggested that the performance made me feel as if it occurred outside of time. This 'out of time' state is mirrored in the title, which reflects images of airport terminals, points of exit and entrance. It also suggests the use of 'terminal' in the context of illness, where dying and living overlap. In the performance, all three main locales are liminal – the waiting room, the railway station platform, the overhead crossing and the neighbouring 1820 Settlers cemetery. Both *Stumbling Block* and *Blood Diamond/Terminal* were intimately connected to a physical place, a history and a social construction which triggered multiple sensations in me. *Stumbling Block* was encountered on campus during a significant time of student activism for redress regarding institutionalised exclusion and privileging. *Blood Diamond/Terminal* took place at an inactive railway station, a site in South Africa that locates the movement of the working-class/labourer's body in accessing low-cost transport. The South African railways are fraught with mismanagement, inefficiency, constant delays, crime and vandalism. My privilege is evidenced in my never having had to take a train as a mode of transportation.

Furthermore, images of Holocaust victims being transported in cattle trains cannot be separated from my thoughts when contemplating notions of invisibilised bodies in the setting of a railway station and the termination of life in a cemetery. These thoughts also make me think about refugees and the plight of their movement, about the liminal state in which refugee live while they journey, and the extended liminality of their position when they finally reach a destination. It also reminds me of how the working-class and labourer's body is invisibilised in structures of power and positioned at the bottom of a capitalist society. The body who makes use of the South African railway is most disenfranchised. Goliath and Bailey's using liminality in both performance pieces actively draws attention to invisible bodies by visibilising them in these liminal spaces. Additionally, the decision by Bailey to stage his work in three locales intensifies possible meaning-making because the attendee also embodies the

locales by physically moving through them, entering and crossing over lines that divide and separate.[62]

It is the railway tracks in *Blood Diamond/Terminal* that form a physical border to the literal and embodied division still present in the town of Makhanda. Commenting on his intention with the piece in his director's note Bailey says:

> Somehow, in the popular consciousness of white South Africa, the 1820 settlers have managed to retain a butter-wouldn't-melt-in-the-mouth innocence. As if they were any less rapacious, opportunistic, violent and bigoted than other 'civilizers' … In Grahamstown the faces of black poverty and white wealth gaze at each other from opposing banks of a stinking stream as they have done for close on 200 years. The city starkly illustrates an elemental fracture in the South African soul. (Thurman, n. pag.)

The railway tracks separate the middle-class citizens of the town from the impoverished. This division marks a visual divide both physically and in racial identification. The lack of integration in housing demographics reflects how little racial transformation in 'post-apartheid' South Africa has taken place. In staging the performance at night Bailey works at visually and physically reinforcing the stark realities of how entrenched separate living conditions along racial lines still are, and how sadly this is still normalised in South Africa. The ambiguity of South Africa is perhaps best felt at night where demographic integration is hardly seen. The illusion maintained by day of racial intermingling is soon exposed when the enveloping darkness of night once again separates racialised bodies back into the areas which were previously classified as 'Group Areas.'[63] I remember feeling so naïve to think formative change had occurred in South Africa when I knew and was reminded through the performance of how much had stayed the same. I had participated in a production funded by the National Arts Festival, a festival representative of 'forward' thinking, yet the space still performed a stark *apart-heid-ness.*

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[62] It is Interesting how both performances echo Holocaust imagery. *Stumbling Block* in linking it to the work of *Stolpersteine* and *Blood Diamond/Terminal* is using the locale of a railway station.
[63] The Group Areas Act was implemented by the Apartheid government in April 1950. The apartheid government led by the National Party was in power from 1948-1994. The Act prohibited the mixing of racial groups in residential areas and saw town planning sectioning off areas designated for Coloureds, Indians, Blacks and Whites.

The boy performs his role. He leads me in silence to the first tableau and then pauses. The first two tableaus both exhibit middle-aged black women selling fresh fruit and vegetables in an informal, make-shift street-side stall. They are seated on black crates. The ordinariness of the activity is shifted by placing the two exhibits in a cage and titling the first piece 'Found Objects #1' and the second 'Found Objects #2.' The two women look off into the distance. Their faces are motionless and void of expression. I feel a heaviness and sadness. I see a deep tragedy weighing down on their bodies.

The activity of hawkers on the streets of South Africa is a familiar daily scene, but seeing them placed in cages brings a new perspective to the encounter. The limitations of the two women are now visually depicted – limitations that restrict their livelihoods, economic opportunities, social development and status. This restrictedness echoes the positioning of the women as not-quite-human, not-quite-human in terms of the level of dignity and respect that is socially ascribed to their bodies. I see a complex dynamic in Bailey's use of the both/and in the performance, in his curation of the familiar with a twist of estrangement, in the cast being both locals and volunteers, amateurs and performers. Because of these choices, the distinction between the real and staged is obfuscated. The performers' in their vulnerability as amateur actors display an innocence and novelty in their performances that further communicates a confusion between what is real and staged. I recall how the images of the old Black ladies, sitting on plastic crates selling fruits and vegetables while placed inside a cage did not enrage me. The two women were performing and embodying an image I had seen many times on the streets of South Africa, here almost photographically recreated. This realisation unsettles me now for it makes me wonder whether in that moment in the performance the women were more object than human? More artwork than living? Or was it because the reality of their day-to-day life was so distanced from mine that I could disengage from the subject and see them as I do when they sit on the sidewalk as I drive past in my car on the way to the grocery store?

After the tableaus of the informal female street sellers, there is another tableau also staged in a cage. I see a white woman sleeping in a single bed and an older black man, who stands alongside the bed holding a radio to the side of his head, as if in the frozen motion of removing it from the room. Both faces are covered with stockings. I am unsettled by what I see.

Is this tableau reflecting back to me my internal psyche? Since I was a young child, many of my nightmares have followed a narrative of being broken into and robbed by a black male. If I awoke at night, I would begin to hear and see things from my bedroom that made me believe someone was trying to break into my home, and the figure was always represented by a black male face. Darkness, night-time and having to sleep in my own room away from my siblings and parents, carried with it an imagination that made me very scared as a child, a fear rooted in the image of a black man breaking into my home. Still today, if I dream of intruders breaking in, the face of the intruder is always black. As I stand observing the tableau the depths of my racial Othering is made all the more apparent. How and why is this face always rendered black?[64]

The next tableau is of two women who have stopped ironing, their irons steaming while they stand motionless. The radio between them is playing one of Sibongile Khumalo's songs Their faces are covered with nylon stockings, concealing their eyes and the contours of their facial features, rendering them faceless.

The role of domestic workers in South Africa in relation to their middle-class employers is highly contentious. Many domestic workers earn meagre salaries, while employers believe they are supporting and uplifting the employee by giving them work in a country with extremely high levels of unemployment. Employers appease their conscience by believing they are treating their domestic workers 'well' when they give their used, worn or broken items to them. Despite domestic workers occupying a deeply intimate relational capacity, in their very inclusion in the private domain of the employer, very few employers enter or know intimately the world of their domestic employees. The domestic worker in this sense remains faceless in the spaces she occupies. I remember how the tableau made me question whether this burden of the faceless domestic would ever change? Would the employer be brave enough to familiarise themselves intimately with the world of the domestic worker?

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[64] This reflection is particularly interesting in relation to Michael Adams's psychoanalytical study of race and the unconscious which foregrounds the extent to which unconscious desires, fears and fantasies are racialised. Adams asserts the necessity of addressing 'racism' not merely in terms of sensitisation but also in terms of the workings of the unconscious and the association of socially taboo desires and feelings of fear (xx).

The two domestic workers' silent defiance and motionless resistance is powerfully felt. It lingers with me as I cross over the bridge and leave the railway platform.

As I walk up the stairs to the railway bridge, right in the middle of the railway tracks is another tableau. There is a group of young children dotted about, seated and sleeping in a massive pile of rubbish. The pile of rubbish reaches upwards almost touching the bridge. There is also a boy swinging from a rope that dangles from a beam above us. He is dressed in an elite school uniform, blazer, tie, school badge. This piece is provocative. I am unsettled by the both/and of what the performance centralises. How do these children exist in the same space? While I know that the children in the tableau do not physically live on the streets, I am viscerally moved by what I see. I can't cut myself off as quickly as I may have elsewhere. Had I seen children playing in piles of rubbish next to the portable toilets lined along the highway of the N2 or N7, alongside the informal settlements of Dunoon, Khayelitsha or Nyanga[65] I would have been able to deaden any feelings that arise. I feel a revulsion. I want to rip my passive and apathetic self from myself.

Elena del Rio identifies the tableau as a "disruption of the natural condition of mobility thereby creating a distanciation effect that awakens the spectator's critical consciousness of the body's unconscious participation in social processes" (68). The tableau has a concentrated energy, reflecting a suspension of narrative and (less obviously) a containment of force. Del Rio argues that "the tableau is therefore a tense compression of vital affective energies" (69). Following del Rio's insights, I argue that in the performance's use of tableau, the performer exerts agency in effectively containing movement. This works to magnify a history of racialised repressed movements and formalised spatial relations. Furthermore, it is in witnessing the containment of certain bodies through a tableau that shame's affect is communicated, through the onlooker being granted the power to move and look on at a body manipulated into stillness. It is this relational placement and positionality that heightens a possible affective experience of shame, because the onlooker is given a moment to

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[65] The N2 and N7 are two national highways in South Africa. Highways became strategic geographical structures when the apartheid government introduced the Group Areas Act. Dunoon, Khayelitsha and Nyanga are informal settlements/townships in Cape Town. They are densely populated and overcrowded. The dwellers live in corrugated iron houses built on beach sand. These informal structures do not have access to running water. The government therefore provides the dwellers with ablution facilities. These ablutions are often located in a long line parallel to the highway.

consider what societal power they have in relation to the bodies they witness. This moment offers room to consider our embodied record of when other structures of self were sharply shaped by relational situations that shamed.

Observing the use and role of living tableaus in Bailey's work, Lara Atkin notes how the "dominant emotional registers articulated by white audiences were shame and discomfort, feelings which result from Bailey's use of one-to-one encounters, a frame-breaking device which dissolves the boundary between actor and audience, positioning the audience within the narrative presented in the exhibit" (139). This close and intimate positioning of spectators as witness to the tableau, strengthened by its one-on-one directness, is a performative device capable of shifting the everyday experience of seeing and what is seen to something rather different. The shift in participation is further enhanced by the willing buy-in of the witnesses when they purchase a ticket for the performance, signalling their willingness to participate and enter into an understanding of the terms of performance. It is this staging device that transitions the spectator into an active viewer.

Furthermore, in being positioned as witness, I was placed in an active state of subjective transition and thus transformation. The *withness* in the position of witness brought me into relation and connection with the live bodies in the tableau. This recalls La Capra's view of what being receptive to the affects of the piece affords the witness. In this relation of aliveness my felt sense of self was amplified. I was unable to cover over my shame and remain apathetic and disengaged. The performance steered me into a place of engagement and visibility, a position in which I could not take cover.

The liveness of the performance stirred and sharpened my shame in relation to others, a shame felt in the exchange of being looked at and looking: I looking at the tableaus and the young boy looking back at me looking at the tableaus. In this self-reflection I realise how shame is a felt condition which has to been *seen* to be felt. Paul Woodruff in *The Necessity of Theatre* comments on the art of watching and being watched:

> [T]here is an art to watching and being watched, and that is one of the few arts on which all human living depends. If we are unwatched we diminish, and we cannot be entirely as we wish to be. If we never stop to watch, we will know only how it feels to be us, never how it might feel to be another. Watched too much, or in the wrong way, we become frightened. Watching too much, we lose

the capacity for action in our own lives. Watching well, together, and being watched well, with limits on both sides, we grow, and grow together. (10)

Blood Diamond/Terminal therefore places the attendee in a relational state that watches in order to consider what it might feel like to be another, or rather the 'Other.'[66] This is what activates an internal movement of action towards self.

In discussing the colonial history of the gaze, Rita Barnard makes a point that helps us understand how shame's affect is charged in the use of the gaze in *Blood Diamond/Terminal*. Barnard, drawing on Timothy Bewes's set out in *The Events of Postcolonial Shame*, notes that "abjuration of authorial invisibility is a gesture we must understand in terms of the colonial history of the gaze, in which brute power offers, among all its other benefits, a protection against being looked at" (162). Bewes's analysis is influenced by the reflections of Jean-Paul Sartre in his famous introduction to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, where Sartre draws into question the ethical implications of the European reader who is "confronted with a work whose contents should produce in him or her a sense of shame" (Bewes 162). Analysing Sartre's thoughts on the role of the gaze, Bewes observes: "'[T]he first stage in the decolonization of Europe is the strip tease of our humanism,' an operation that makes visible what was once invisible: that which never previously had to endure 'the look,' that which, in the colonial period, only administered it" (5). Studies on the concept of gaze highlight how the gaze has historically been conditioned by racial discourses. It is the power to gaze as a strategic mechanisation in covertly administering shame that Bailey attempts to make visible through this performance.

Hashemi Yekani (2011), who discusses the gaze in relation to white privilege in a colonial context, argues that the privilege of looking is connected to Whiteness, calling it the "licence of looking openly." Yekani states: "[I] would add that White male privilege is also connected to the notion of being looked at without becoming objectified" (83). Perhaps it is these reflections that are at play within *Blood Diamond/Terminal*. The performer's eyes do not look at the spectator but instead out into the distance.[67] The position of power to look is given to the attendee but also to

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[66] In *Blood Diamond/Terminal* the performers did not look back at the audience. That was a device Bailey employed a couple of years later in Exhibit A and Exhibit B. In *Blood Diamond/Terminal* the performers either looked out into space, were 'asleep,' or were watching other characters.

[67] In directing the performer to look off into the distance, the line of connection between the spectator and performer is disrupted. It is this use of the gaze which heightens the affect of discomfort, dis-ease

the black child (the most vulnerable and socially invisibilised person present), who navigates the performance for the attendee. In activating the gaze of the attendee and having that gaze mirrored by the child, power which has been rendered invisible is made visible. The power I have to gaze at the 'Other' is made known through the constructed conventions of performance. I thus become self-conscious of the gaze of the child. It is this gaze that makes me feel a discomfort; a discomfort with my sense of self and the historical/social positioning my body is granted. Emmanuel Lévinas's account in his essay "De l'évasion" [On Escape] (1935) of the symbolic significance of the gaze in its use by the coloniser and its role in constituting colonial identity, as repeatedly emphasized by Albert Memmi and Fanon in particular, is performed in the relational placement of attendee and performer in *Blood Diamonds/Terminal*. In this gazing I feel as if I look at the tableaus with the same position of power as my ancestors. I am still in the privileged position. My shame is amplified when I consider how little has changed in my positionality in the post-apartheid world. I feel shame in never considering, outside of this performance, how my gaze has shaped the internal psyche of a generation of children who have looked on, silenced and disempowered. I feel shame in wondering what the child experiences in having to perform a role that embodies generational subordination, being once again positioned as a guide to his ancestral oppressors.

Of assistance in navigating very sticky and constricting thoughts regarding shame and self-consciousness, is the discussion by David Attwell, Annalisa Pes and Susanna Zinato in the Introduction to *The Poetics and Politics of Shame in Postcolonial Literature*. The authors refer to a passage in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* where he "describes a third type of self-consciousness … one that, with the other as its condition of possibility, is intersubjectively mediated. Shame draws on this third kind of self-consciousness since its 'content,' or raison d'être, is constituted only and exclusively through the subject's encounter with the 'Other'" (7). For Sartre shame is intrinsically experienced and characterised in relation: "shame is shame of oneself before the other … shame makes me aware of not being in control and of having my foundation outside myself. The other's gaze confers a truth upon me that I do not master, and over which I am, in that moment, powerless" (*Being* 312). Thus

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and shame. The self in relation to the Other is cut off. In Bailey's *Exhibit B* performance he changes this direction and instead makes the performers look directly at the spectator.

Blood Diamond/Terminal made me experience and examine the shame of my self-conscious recognition of my Othering, feeling "not in control" with "my foundation outside of myself." Attwell, Pes and Zinato remark of Sartre's scrutiny of shame that it notices that "what is at stake is not so much the tenor of the Other's evaluation but its shame-inducing objectification" (8). Sartre goes on to say that:

> Pure shame is not a feeling of being this or that guilty object but in general of being an object: that is, of recognising myself in this degraded, fixed, and dependent being which I am for the Other. Shame is the feeling of an original fall … I have 'fallen' into the world in the midst of things and … I need the mediation of the Other in order to be what I am. (*Being* 302)

What is most interesting is how I experienced the mobility of shame in being the witness that stood outside the frame, as I suddenly became the object within the performance. In that moment of shame's mobility, shame ripped through the contours of my subjectivity, blurring the object/subject relation, "throwing into disarray formal distinctions between inside and outside, background and foreground" (Sheils and Walsh 7). The Other therefore also confers a boundary on me. Sartre's discussion highlights the two-way, precarious predicament of the vicariousness of shame. The Other affirms my sense of self and being. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre describes what I experienced in being the witness outside the frame, which in turn placed me as the object of the frame, when he notes that shame reveals to me the Other's look and me at the end of that look (*Being* 282).

The choice of title for the first two tableaus – 'Found Objects#1' and 'Found Objects#2' – reflects engages in this question of objectification/Othering. The use of the theatrical device of tableaus and the physical contact of a performer amidst silence powerfully highlights accepted and expected structures of power. Invisibilised individuals are spotlighted, just as Goliath hypervisibilises the presence of a person who would otherwise go unnoticed. It is the conventions of performance, and the possibilities that lie within them, that obliged me to engage with my sense of self in a way that gave me room to contemplate my convictions, vulnerabilities, barriers and contradictions. These performative conventions simultaneously subtended an ethical awareness, prompting diverse and unsettling questions such as, what moves or fails to move me in this post-apartheid state?

It is only now in concluding this chapter that I see a new meaning in the title choice, Terminal. Inasmuch as it speaks to the liminal, in its site-specific locales, the

piece also speaks to and reflects on the terminal psyche of some of its observers and their terminal state of division, othering and refusal to acknowledge their fellow humans as equals. It drags into the light the state of terminal inconvenience that we and our shared past are to each other. It highlights a terminal state of illness, a body paralysed by shame, unable to move forward as a multicultural, democratic South Africa; a state of illness birthed by social constructions and abjections which make us hide our fellow interest in each other, instead consolidating our apathy towards the 'Other'.

The young boy has run off. I now stand still and alone. I watch how other attendees also stand at a distance from each other, looking similar to me, solitary and still. I think about the tableaus I have just seen, the bodies in silence, motionless, with blank and concealed expressions and eyes that look off into the distance. This visual staging of a moment of 'silence' between bodies in the post-apartheid state rings loudly in my ears as I yet again participate in its silence. I am silent. Limp. Apathetic. Is it I in the post-apartheid white South African body that is unable to achieve a repositioning of self that is different? Is it my body that continues to live as a derelict railway station, reliving impressions and memories of a world washed in whiteness? Perhaps the dulling of my senses to the day-to-day inequalities I live among and my apathetic state of limpness towards these inequalities is because I still hold the belief that the democratic transition of South Africa was enough in settling the past. I feel a deep sadness that comes from a place of knowing that the distance between my world and the world Bailey is trying to show me is a distance that the boy's hand in mine can't cover.

It has taken me over ten years to complete the meaning-making I felt that night. I think the overarching weight of shame came in knowing that the child who guided me was actually watching me watching the performers, watching the performers watching me. In the words of Sartre, "[t]he Other's gaze confers a truth upon me that I do not master, and over which I am, in that moment, powerless" (*Being* 260). The child was the witness of us all. And in his own silence he too had to watch the oppressive gaze being played out before him again and again. Feeling this tragedy, I hold onto Woodruff's words quoted earlier in this chapter: "[w]atching well, together, and being watched well, with limits on both sides, we grow, and grow together"(10). Perhaps it is the aesthetics of performance that offers both the experience of shame and the

opportunity for its repair, for in the curated act of performance I can watch in a way that does not merely extrapolate my separation but enfolds rather the possibility of our growing together in the connection the performance has formed between us, and perhaps bridging a distance that the hand indeed can cover (10).

This chapter section was emailed to Brett Bailey on the 23 February 2020 to ensure all information about the work was correct (as I had seen the performance over ten years previously with no visual documentation of the event to refer to). I also engaged in an electronic conversation with Bailey via email and Whatsapp.

CHAPTER FOUR / *TSHEPANG: THE THIRD TESTAMENT,* SHAME ON THE LIMP AND APATHETIC BYSTANDER

> I want to move away from the idea that telling shameful stories is concerned only with the person telling them.
>
> And yet, shame always plays on that doubleness. It is the most intimate of feelings; it makes ourselves intimate to ourselves. Equally, it is social and impersonal, or at least, as Benjamin puts it, no more personal than the life and thoughts that carry it. The promiscuity of shame, heightened through its telling, broadens notions of what is personal and what is social. The body is key here because it generates and carries so much meaning and in ways that academics have not really attended to. We have tended to overly privilege the body's cultural meanings and have not really tried to tell the psychosomatic body's stories.
>
> If shame highlights what it means to be human, we need ways of using and relating to shame that make our history more humane: stories of individual and collective aspiration, fragility, and humiliation.
>
> Elspeth Probyn (*Blush* 40, 41 and 113)

Tshepang:[68] *The Third Testament* (2004) is directed and written by Lara Foot, acclaimed South African theatre-maker, multi-award winner and CEO of the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town. The play performs the events of and leading up to the tragedy of a nine-month old baby rape that headlined in South African media in October 2001. The play's fictional story (based on true events and extensive research conducted by Foot during her Master's studies) is performed by two characters, Ruth and Simon, and centralises the performer's body as the main mode of storytelling and meaning-making. *Tshepang* performs Probyn's contention that we concern ourselves not only with the person who tells their shameful story, but also with how the shameful story is connected to others. Foot employs the style of physical theatre to tell the story in a way that encourages a collaborative, body-centred approach to a story about how "the psychosomatic story" of shame is reproduced culturally (*Blush* 41). *Tshepang* weaves

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[68] Directly translated, Tshepang means hope or saviour in Setswana.

individual stories within the collective of the community of Louisvale to expose our interconnectedness. It situates the characters of Ruth, Sarah, Alfred Sorrows, Margaret and the rest of the Louisvale community as a both/and, both victim and perpetrator, in order to compel its audience to reinterpret their assumed position of shaming judgment.

I start my analysis of *Tshepang* with a collection of fragmented screen memories that infiltrated and influenced my thinking in to this chapter and about my felt and embodied shame. I use the term 'screen memory' in the Freudian sense (1899) of how an overdetermined memory lays itself over another yet more visceral and grim memory, recording and concealing. I also work with a psychoanalytic framing of the term, where screen memories speak to "a compromise between forgotten, repressed elements and resistances that distort" (Cappiello 453). Screen memory works at re-evoking absent memories in the self-experience. A key moment of self-experience it preserves "is the sense of a self as a viewer and rememberer," meaning that a screen memory is a recollection of the self watching the self (454). In sharing screen memory recollections, the private, one-person way of thinking (deeply tied to self and watching reflective of the act of shame) is brought into contact with the two-person way of thinking. In this instance, I connect the reader to my internal thoughts/memories, and they in turn experience an immediate response to an otherwise repressed self-experience. In studies on screen memories, theorists have argued that screen memories offer an ability to "understand preverbal development" and "non-verbal and somatic communications." I therefore use screen memories to assist in a conversation about shame's somatic and embodied experience (Cappiello 456). In identifying shame as a repressed and often forgotten affect, the inclusion of some detailed tracing of my screen memories acts as a material palimpsest of how shame's non-verbal, somatic and felt feelings overlay themselves on the body over and over.

It was September 2018, and I was driving home when I heard on the radio of the *Dros*[69] rape incident.[70] A 20-year-old white Afrikaans male had raped a seven-

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[69] *Dros* is a family-friendly South African franchise restaurant. *Dros* is an Afrikaans word meaning, dry. When a person uses it, it often suggests the person is thirsty for an alcoholic beverage. *Dros* would be very similar in atmosphere to a British pub. *Dros* can also mean to stay away from work (or in the army) without leave. It is also associated with running away – an idea that can be linked to the avoidance of shame in this particular context. *Dros* also has a residual association with dross in English which means residue or waste. This idea has a bearing on my discussion regarding the abject. The site for the rape thus becomes a site for the abject act of child rape.

[70] The incident took place on Saturday 22nd September 2018.

year-old black girl in the bathroom of a *Dros* restaurant. The report stated that the man had been drinking at the bar with his friend, when he noticed a young girl leave the child-friendly play area and enter the nearby toilet. The accused left the bar and followed the girl. It was said that he raped her in an 'out of order' toilet cubicle. He was so covered in blood that he stripped down in an attempt to hide the evidence. He exited the toilet cubicle, still covered in blood, clothes in hand, but was intercepted by a group of men.

Hearing these details narrated over the radio makes my heart vibrate with a heavy pounding sensation, similar to the feeling I have when I wake from a disturbing dream. The horror of the event freezes my exterior body for a moment while my heart beats more violently inside. I want to scream in rage. The reality of this tragic event makes me question my fellow humanity. I feel an internal severing – a physical pulling. My heart pounds with vibrations of fear, anger, grief and hopelessness.

I repeat the name of the accused in my head and go home to Google it to see if there is any more information about the incident. While scanning through links flagged by my search, I come across the video recording that the men who intercepted the accused had made. The video has gone viral.[71] I load the clip. I watch the footage of the accused as he is intercepted by his 'witnesses.' I start to feel physically sick. In witnessing the 'liveness' of a body who had just raped a child so soon after the atrocity; the body and the human it represents cannot be undone in my somatic connection to the memory.[72]

After seeing the eyes and body of the accused, still freshly covered in the young girl's vaginal blood, I was reminded of the character of Alfred Sorrows, the rapist in

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[71] The trial for this case is currently under examination in the Supreme High Court in Pretoria (during the writing of this thesis (2018-2020).

[72] In reflection, some two years later, I draw similarities in affective feeling to the experience encountered when watching video footage of George Floyd (2020), who was murdered by a police officer in the state of Minnesota after the officer pressed his knee to Floyd's neck (while pinned to the ground) for over eight minutes. The footage captured Floyd alive and moving, as well as the moment he erped breathing and goes into cardiac arrest. What is particularly powerful about this footage is that it 'holds' in a moment a state of 'liveness,' the 'real' lived reality of living bodies being afflicted by hegemonic systems of brutality and oppression. In concretising a moment which has often escaped the public domain, the footage blatantly exposes cycles of self-perpetuating blindness. It is such visual material that makes social 'blindness' to oppression and hegemonic power harder to not see. In watching Floyd's minute-by-minute demise, from living to dead, the refusal to acknowledge systemic problems with police brutality specifically directed towards African Americas becomes harder to maintain. One is reminded of the words of Peggy Phelan quoted in the introduction to this study: "[w]hat constitutes the border between the visible and the invisible? How does our blindness to the opacity of the not-seen frame our experience of the visual?" (qtd. in Smith 293).

Tshepang. The memory performed and narrated in the play, of which I was reminded, was an image of a three-year-old Alfred Sorrows whose body is so badly beaten by his father's *houvrou*,[73] Margaret that it is broken into a heap of pieces left in a pool of his own urine (Alfred's body is represented by a broom-stick). It was in turn the impact of the *Dros* incident that augmented my approach to and interpretation of *Tshepang*. My revulsion towards the perpetrator in the *Dros* incident reminded me of how Foot used *Tshepang* as a way into telling the story of both the violator and the violated, of the shamer and the shamed Other, of the visibilised and invisibilised, within a community entangled in shame. My visceral response to the *Dros* rape made me reconsider my reaction to *Tshepang* as perhaps to do with shame. In order to break the cycle of shame I needed to enter into a relational state of connection and not shaming, one where I could see the both/and.

Of equal auto-ethnographic importance to this consideration of a community entangled in shame and the both/and positioning of perpetrator/victim that *Tshepang* opens up, was my daily search in 2019 for information pertaining to a missing UCT student named Uyinene Mrwetyana, whose body was found burnt and dumped on the outskirts of Khayelitsha[74] two days after she was reported missing. On Saturday 24th August Mrwetyana was last seen outside her UCT residence before going to collect a parcel from the Clareinch Post Office, close to the Claremont Police Station. Two weeks prior to her death, on 8th August, Mrwetyana had made enquiries at the Clareinch Post Office about a parcel she was expecting from an international clothing company. The accused served her that day and asked if he could get her number so as to contact her when the parcel arrived. The parcel arrived on 16th August, the accused logged the parcel on the system and sent Mrwetyana a message asking her to come to the Post Office on 24th August at 13h00 (after the official closing time). The accused had made arrangements for his colleague to leave early that day. He was therefore alone in the Post Office when Mrwetyana arrived. He locked the door behind her as she entered. Mrwetyana proceeded to the counter to receive her parcel and

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[73] A *houvrou* is an Afrikaans slang word when directly translated means a prostitute(hou)-wife(vrou). It is used colloquially to label women who are paid through food or gifts to perform sexual favours for the man who has taken them into their household. The role is similar to that of a paid mistress. She is not seen as his wife but as someone who performs sexual favours and gets boarding and payment in return. Furthermore, the word is a term of contempt. The condition is abject. The *houvrou* is situated in a context of internal self-loathing which manifests itself though violent outbursts of abuse.

[74] Khayelitsha means 'our new home' in isiXhosa. It is a partially-informal township on the outskirts of Cape Town.

pay the custom duty. The accused stated in his testimony that when he approached her and made his intention clear, Mrwetyana ran to the door. Unable to escape she fought as hard as she could.[75]

After the accused had raped her twice and bludgeoned her to death with a postal scale (because she did not stop screaming), her body was left overnight in the Post Office safe. Early the next morning the accused returned to clean the blood that had seeped onto the carpet. He waited in the building till evening and requested special permission from patrolling security to park his car at the entrance to the Post Office. He placed Mrewtyana's body in a large postal carrier bag and loaded it into the boot of his car. He drove to a site close to his home where he doused the body in petrol, dumped it into a hole beside an unused railway track and set it alight. Blood was found in the Post Office safe and on the shoe of the accused when he was arrested. The felt-feeling towards this event (unlike others where the perpetrator is never found, the victim's attacker never known and a detailed plea never given) was dramatically altered when Luyanda Botha (the rapist and murderer) retold in his court testimony the intimate details of his interactions with Mrwetyana on the day she was murdered. An invisibilised moment from the public psyche was made visible. The character of Simon, the narrator in *Tshepang,* draws the audience's attention towards the community of Louisvale by telling their stories on behalf of them, dismantling Louisvale's abjection of self and the State's abjection of Louisvale.[76]

The South African Post Office service is a state enterprise and offers a national service to all its citizens. It has an iconic presence in the South African psyche, with a branch in nearly every town and city across the country. As a nation we have grown up with memories of time spent waiting in a Post Office queue, either to post letters, pay bills or collect parcels. The South African Post Office is a boring and dull place, a space of mindless waiting in queues next to face brick walls, familiar and repetitive.

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[75] This is detailed in the court report by Luyanda Botha.

[76] Even in retelling the events in this thesis, I feel my heart pounding and my body struggle with the sense of discomfort I feel volting through it. A detailed account of Luyanda Botha's court testimony of his rape and murder of Mrwetyana can be read here: https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2019-11-15-in-his-own-words-luyanda-botha-this-is-how-i-killed-uyinene/ and the reading of Botha's testimony in court can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYpOBkMZtco. The plea by Botha is said to be a pocket of excellence on the part of the State criminal justice system.

The South African Post Office thus resonates with the representation of the community of Louisvale, when its people speak of the town as a place where "nothing ever happens. Nothing at all" (Foot, *Tshepang* 25).

Social media pages were soon flooded with outpourings of support for Mrwetyana and her family. The nation for a moment stood still and looked on shocked and dazed. It had happened again. A nation's normalisation of violence and rape had told its story yet again in the ordinariness of the act of going to collect a parcel from the Post Office. What was of interest was how surrounding and leading up to the Mrwetyana case there had been many other victims of violence and rape. However, this case impacted the public psyche differently. I believe it was the uncanny retelling of the rape and murder by the postal clerk in his testimony that thrust the event like a bodily experience into the consciousness of the public. Each moment of the murderer's time with Mrwetyana was uncovered, noted and told. Through this telling many apathetic and limp bystanders (to violence and rape) were positioned to bear witness and in witnessing experience a communal shame. A shame deeply rooted in recognising how normalised violent rape is in our country. A normalisation that has stopped us from feeling its impact.

I maintain that the media outcry did not necessarily speak to a shift in middle-class apathy towards socio-culturally invisibilised bodies but to the middle-class protection of its own body. Mrwetyana was a UCT student, a university affiliated with affluent alumni, with financial reserves to which few other South African universities have access and representing a collective body of historical privilege. The incident also took place in Claremont, a wealthy southern suburb community of Cape Town. With Mrwetyana being the daughter of academics based at Rhodes University in Makhanda, the horrific tragedy of her passing also touched the middle-class nerve outside the UCT community. Many listeners could visually position their own body in these familiar locales, heightening an embodied engagement with the details of the events. I suggest that because of this embodied familiarity, the middle-class could not remain an apathetic and limp bystander.

The #FEMICIDE campaign went viral after information about how Mrwetyana had been murdered was revealed. A public march was organised. The streets of South Africa saw citizens come out in droves to show solidarity in opposition to domestic violence and abuse towards female/queer and non-normative bodies. Of interest to me was that, through reading various articles, Instagram posts and WhatsApp status

updates, my interpretation of the #FEMICIDE campaign, which was directly influenced by my social media's middle-class lens, saw an otherwise limp middle-class society suddenly rise up against issues of violence towards female, marginal and vulnerable bodies. The question that this sudden act of solidarity raised for me was whether it merely expressed a concern to protect the middle-class body.[77]

I recall, as a third-year student at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) in 2008 a heightening fear about rape on campus, specifically for students living in residences. One horrific event, ineradicably etched into my memory, involved a fellow female history student, a visiting international student of Asian descent who was at UKZN on a semester exchange from the United States. It was during the second semester exam period that after one late night study session the student had gone to take a shower and was intercepted by her perpetrator in the residence's communal bathroom. She wore glasses and struggled to see without them. Her perpetrator broke her glasses and went on to rape her. Just three days prior to her attack she returned to her campus residence after having an emergency appendectomy. Her stitches tore and needed to be resewn after the rape. One of the senior lecturers in the History Department took the student in. The lecturer was threatened telephonically by ghost callers (after speaking out against internal tactics to reduce the alarming rape statistics at UKZN), forcing the lecturer to resign from the position held at the university.

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[77] At the time of the outcry in September 2019, social media platforms in South Africa were trending a black square, used as a social media status profile, status story or on newsfeed/grid. I specifically use the word 'trending' as it implies a social consciousness as opposed to an individual awareness. This term reflects a person's 'performed' public stance of solidarity with little to no internal contemplation of how they might be contributing to a toxicity. This public act of solidarity signified how public acts facilitate a way out for people from feeling complicit or compliant in cycles of shame. The black square represented a public act of solidarity with the #FEMICIDE protests. I also felt at the time that people used social media platforms as a way of 'performing' solidarity without taking direct action, action that would actually effect change and impact on their day-to-day behaviours. I also believe when a campaign is labelled as 'trending' it turns into something which the person feels publicly 'cool' to be associated with. This fellow solidarity I argue does the opposite of its 'intention' and instead undoes the seriousness of the event. Even though it might appear to be a collective act of solidarity being performed on social media platforms and through marches protesting against gender-based violence, the silence that falls after the masses of bodies have scattered from public attention rings all too loudly in the social fabric of South Africa. This viral action of 'trending' once again reared its head in the #BlackLivesMatter movement following the atrocities of racially framed police brutality in the United States, peaking with the death of George Floyd in June 2020 during the global COVID-19 lockdown. When I saw various social media platforms exhibiting their black squares during the Mrwetyana case, it felt to me more like a surface action, a public branding of support with little to no actual personal inconvenience incurred through action and support. The backlash to the blackout/black square campaign on social media in June 2020 in support of #BLM has been interesting for me to reflect on, as many BPOC voices spoke out about this very inactive/passive kind of support – something I had felt the previous year about the public's response to the #FEMCIDE campaign in reaction to the Mrwetyana rape and murder. Perhaps this similarity in response speaks to middle-class behaviour regarding incidents with which they feel shame in their complicity.

Concurrently with these events, I was majoring in Drama and had many late-night rehearsals on campus. At the time of increasing rape cases on campus the private security company employed by UKZN had been linked to internal structures involved in concealing rape incidents and rape statistics. I vividly remember how, after late-night rehearsals on campus, I would walk through a silenced campus to my car, car-key in hand, pointed straight out, ready and alert to attack anyone who might approach me. I watched the security personnel manning the gated entrance – I never dropped my guard or key. During these formative years as a student on campus pre-empting sexual attack was a habitus I had been conditioned into.[78] What I learnt was to trust no one – not the university's Vice-Chancellor, not the private security company and definitely not Jacob Zuma, who had been acquitted of rape in 2006 while serving as our Deputy President (taking up the Presidency in 2009 and serving two terms). These compounding actions taught me how systemic the oppression was and that if you spoke out you would be silenced and removed.

I sit in my own pool of wet shaming silence.

Some eight years later in 2016, when I walked up the iconic Jammie steps of UCT to register for my master's degree, I felt as if I was re-walking my steps as a young student at UKZN. As I climbed the steps, I read the slogans, "UCT airs its dirty laundry," graffitied onto laundry decorating the area. These statements were directly linked to five cases from December 2015 to February 2016 where women had been raped and murdered in the Rhodes Memorial vicinity, a vacant piece of land which borders UCT campus, three of the victims having been UCT students. This demonstration confronted me once again with the reality of my country and it felt as if nothing had changed. The seemingly perpetual confrontation, sadly, did not end there. While enrolled in the second year of my PhD at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), I read not only the harrowing details of the Mrwetyana case but also a few

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[78] What is of interest in this layered and complex debate, but one I cannot touch on in this chapter, is that the Gender Studies Department (a department already fraught with institutional pressures and challenges in attempting to exist as a recognised and acknowledged department) was shut down at UKZN in 2009, shortly after the rape of the international student. A member of the Gender Studies Department who had given very prominent support to the isolated lecturer in the History Department came under grave attack for her support. The Gender Studies lecturer was also asked to leave the university.

weeks later of the death of Jesse Hesse, a first-year theology student at UWC who was brutally murdered in her flat. Hesse was raped and then strangled to death, alongside her grandfather who was also attacked and murdered.

In the author's note to the playtext *Tshepang,* Foot describes the newspaper article from which she first heard about the tragic event that inspired the play. Foot had just given birth to her first child when she read the news headline. I too, became a mother in the year I wrote this chapter, giving birth to my first child on 23rd January 2019. The fact that Foot and I had both carried a baby, in close proximity to our creative journeys with the work, this felt-knowing of a child growing inside you and in seeing a life birthed out of a body that has nurtured and protected it, brought another dimension to the embodiment of shame I experienced while analysing the play. My months of pregnancy and the birth of my child brought a deeper embodiment to my analysis of this text and the affect of shame's toxicity that the play seeks to visibilise. I experienced a deep-seated heaviness. Of being weighed down. An internal ripping as I desperately wanted to disengage my body and not recognise how the purity of innocence had been torn and destroyed. Foot writes:

> In 2001 South Africa was devasted by the news of the brutal rape of a nine-month-old child by the name of Baby Tshepang. It was thought that she had been gang raped by a group of six men. Later it was discovered that the men had been wrongly accused and that the infant had, in fact, been raped and sodomised by the mother's boyfriend. Once the story of Baby Tshepang hit the headlines, the scab was torn off a festering wound and hundreds of similar stories followed. Each was equally horrific. 'A five-month-old baby,' 'A two-year-old girl' – and so the list grew. (vii)

Despite there being other horrific cases of child rape and gender-based violence in South Africa, it was the rape of Baby Tshepang that stuck to the conscience of the national psyche, unwrapping the bandage that concealed a 'festering wound.' Why was it this story that stuck? Why was it because of the news coverage? Perhaps the affective charge from the details of this event, with child's sexlessness and extreme youth vibrating too loudly in the bodies of its readers to remain unnoticed?

These tangential thoughts may appear irrelevant to my analysis of *Tshepang*, but the reflections have in fact informed my reading of the play. In reflecting on incidents of gender-based violence and of state, social and institutional complicity with

this in South Africa, I came to understand how they opened up a more complex interpretation of *Tshepang*, one that makes shame, its abjection and its relation to violence in South Africa central. My embodied state of shame results from acknowledging that, sadly, the South African psyche has been deformed by a pathological culture of post-colonial patriarchy, manifest all too often in rape and gender-based violence. This felt-feeling and felt-knowing of shame is therefore intrinsically tied to the psychology of how bodies and particularly female/queer/non-normative bodies navigate their way in, through and about the polity.

When I was thinking about the community of Louisvale, the place where *Tshepang* is set, I started to see how the interconnected web of shaming and being shamed is tied to the ways in which communities are Othered and thus made separate from other South Africans. In South Africa communities are shamed when their social ills are made to appear as essential aspects of their being rather than the by-products of social and economic forces. The community of Louisvale is unable to detach itself from this shaming representation as its social ills, born from its history, are construed as an essential aspect of its being (Dutton 15).

Tshepang opens in darkness. All that can be heard is an insistent, rubbing, grinding sound. When the lights go up, we see the character of Ruth. Ruth is the mother to baby Sieisie, and the *houvrou* of the rapist, Alfred Sorrows. The day her baby is raped, Ruth denies Alfred Sorrows sex and instead goes to the local shebeen[79] to drink, leaving her baby alone in their tin shack. The opening image of the play is of Ruth surrounded by a pile of salt as she mechanically and repeatedly rubs salt into a cow's hide. The gesture provides Ruth with a voice in the play. This central performative motif leads one to wonder whether her skin has carried shame's affect so deeply that she now rubs salt into an uncured animal hide as a metaphor for her attempts to prevent herself from feeling shame's touch and penetration on her skin. Or does she rub salt into her wound, reminding herself of her shame in order to preserve and hold onto the memory of her daughter? I interpret the motif as reflecting her desperate longing to transform her skin into a leather by-product, cured and impenetrable, as opposed to a living, porous, affective skin. It is the voice implicit in

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[79] Shebeen is derived from the Irish word *síbín*, meaning illicit whiskey. In 1927 black South Africans were not allowed to sell alcohol or enter licensed premises that sold alcohol. The word sheeben was thus associated with taverns frequented mainly by black South Africans. In present day South Africa many shebeens have liquor-licenses.

the gesture that communicates to the audience Ruth's desire to render shame's affect trackless.

Next to the pile of salt Simon sits on a rusty steel-spring bedframe. The story of baby Siesie is told by Simon, who is both the main character in the play and the narrator. Whilst Simon sits and waits for customers to buy his nativity sets he tells the stories of the community members he sees pass by his makeshift stall. This narration establishes a feeling of interconnectedness despite, as it were the attempts of the community and the media to cut off the shameful Other from the self. Simon's gentle and reflective storytelling draws the audience into relation with himself and his community. He does so by centring himself in his narration, effectively acting as a go-between linking the world of the audience with the community of Louisvale. Simon speaks directly to his listeners (the audience) as if he were speaking to friends. By dismantling the fourth wall a feeling of fellow vulnerability and intimacy is created between audience and performer, positioning the onlooker to form a possible connection to the humanity and spirit of the 'demonised' community of Louisvale.

It is Simon's narration in interconnecting the events and individual lives of the people surrounding the rape of baby Siesie that transitions me out of a story wrapped in shame – where I Other, separate and distance myself from the individuals involved – to one where I not only connect to the person sharing the story but also to the rhizome of overlapping narratives and histories. Simon presents me with a way to understand and share the feelings of another. I feel differently because of I how I can 'see feel' Simon's feelings.

Simon and Ruth live on the outskirts of the community. Simon's nativity sculptures border the main road that passes by the community of Louisvale and leads to Upington.[80] The literal boundary of the road and Simon's sculptures form a visual border that separates their abject bodies from the community of Louisvale. Simon and Ruth sit and wait in a wasteland setting that contains nothing but desert sand. What is of interest is that the community of Louisvale is itself historically an 'abject' development, formed out of necessity by the apartheid state. Coloured[81] bodies were

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[80] Upington is the name of the town closest to Louisvale, in the province of the Northern Cape.
[81] Coloured is a term used in South Africa as a marker of identity. After 1994 there has been a movement away from using 'Coloured' as a racial term so as to see it as a cultural identity. Coloured is not a stable category. It is historically associated with apartheid, when it was used to refer to people of mixed descent. Zimitri Erasmus's book, *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured*

not allowed to live in the white area of Upington, but white bodies needed BPOC as labourers. Louisvale was therefore formed to house the abject body. Sadly, Louisvale repeats the cycle of shamed abjection, expelling the body that has shamed its community.

Simon, speaking to a female journalist who has come to the town to interview anyone who may have known the mother of the raped baby, narrates and acts out the scene below (Simon performs both parts):

> Excuse me, do you know the mother of Baby Tshepang? I do, I did. And what do you think of the shame she's brought to your town? Shame? Yes, shame! Shame that you so ugly, lady. Shame on you! Shame on all of you! Who do you think you are? Coming here with your cameras and your accusations. Pointing your painted ugly finger at us. Where were you, where were you? What are you doing here? Get out of here! Take your cameras and get out! This town was raped long ago. This town was fucking gang-raped a long, long, long, long time ago. Shame on us? Shame on you, shame on all of us! (Foot, *Tshepang* 40)

In this brief passage, Simon powerfully characterises the toxic shaming cycles prevalent in South Africa, cycles birthed in divide-and-rule policies of colonial rule and a governing system of Afrikaans ethnicity and white supremacy, where the worth of a human being was marked by the colour of their skin.

But what of a people shamed? Born into a place of nothingness? Of hopelessness? In J. Brooks Bouson's discussion of Dorothy Allison's semi-autobiographical work *Bastard out of Carolina*, many of the feelings of her poverty-stricken white family in the US are echoed in the fragmented stories told by Simon about the Louisvale community. Describing what inspired her book, Allison recalls the following childhood memories:

> The poverty I knew was dreary, deadening, shameful … men who drank and couldn't keep a job; women, invariably pregnant before marriage, who quickly became worn, fat, and old from working too many hours and bearing too many children; and children with runny noses, watery eyes, and the wrong attitudes. … We were not noble, not grateful, not even hopeful. We knew ourselves despised. My family was ashamed of being poor, of feeling hopeless. What was

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Identities in Cape Town, does an excellent job of characterising Coloured identity as ambiguous, in-between and residual.

there to work for, to save money for, to fight for or struggle against? We had generations before us to teach us that nothing ever changed, and that those who did try to escape failed. … Skin fear, pulling back, flinching before the blow lands. Anticipating the burn of shame and the shiver of despair. Conditioned to contempt and reflexive rage, I am pinned beneath a lattice, iron-hard and locked down. Believing myself inhuman, mutant, too calloused to ever love deeply or well, born to shame and death. (Bouson 36)

The sentiments voiced by Allison, a white working-class American, articulate an abjection comparable to that which Foot attributes to Louisvale. The necessity of abjection to maintain the order of the white middle-class body appears to be universal.

In a paper on child rape, Helen Moffett explores how abjection was used in the media's depiction of the Louisvale events: "[I]f there is one thing that might garner general consensus, it is the notion that anyone who rapes a child is by definition a monster" (6). The media employed the 'monster narrative' as a means to stifle its discomfort and facilitate a way of speaking the unspeakable. By doing so it rendered the reader 'innocent' and the community 'responsible' in an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy. The rapist could be placed outside the boundary of the human and marked as monstrous. This 'rationale' absolves the wider collective human body from feeling responsible or implicated. Jessica Dutton[82] notes how the media mobilised shame to create a distant Other in opposition to the responsible and moral self (5). It was through the media that an image was constructed and imprinted in the public mind of what took place that November night. In the media tying the rape of baby Tshepang so intrinsically to the community of Louisvale, Louisvale offered South African onlookers a scapegoat. Their silent, short-lived and passive response to the atrocity of the rape of baby Tshepang could be appeased by the media's representation. The media had cut the community off, so too could the state.

What *Tshepang* does in choice of text, style of performance and staging is break a cycle of distancing and disengagement with the shameful Other through the relational quality of performance. *Tshepang* does not establish an opposition between the distant Other and the responsible and moral self, but instead tells a story in which the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of us all are experienced and visualised

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[82] I am very thankful for the work done by Jessica Dutton in her master's thesis - *Thinking Through the Politics of Shame as a Contemporary Form of Colonial Discourse: Analyzing Media Representations of the 'Baby Tshepang' Rape Case*. Dutton looks at gender and rape in South Africa critiquing the media and their representation of gender-based violence.

through the performances of Simon and Ruth. The play challenges 'Othering' discourses by questioning patterns of complicity, systemic perpetration and silencing, community neglect and abuse of the vulnerable – acts and conditions that implicate us all. The community of Louisvale repeats a refrain in the play, both prior to the rape and after, that "nothing ever happens here." This phrase reminds us of the memories that Allison shares (quoted above) when she reflects on her community and the shame of the hopeless feeling that nothing ever changes, that nothing will change, because this is just the way things are. The apathy towards bodies from communities like Louisvale who exist on the socio-economic margins of society is reproduced in cycles of indifference and inaction.[83]

It is the medium of performance that repositions the marginalised so as to be seen. Josette Féral's notion of performance as margin reflects what *Tshepang* does to those who watch and listen (178). Féral uses the word margin not to refer to what is excluded but in the Derridean sense to mean what to "the subject is most important, most hidden, most repressed, yet most active as well" (178). This idea suggests that theatre, through its aesthetic quality, has a way of pulling into the foreground, for those who sit and watch, what is important, most hidden and repressed and thus also most active. Aesthetic experience produces a unique internal awakening. Through the performances of Ruth and Simon, *Tshepang* actively engages the body in meaning-making, bringing into view the unthought and revealing the power of affects that have been hidden.

Unlike the media that are unable to sustain a protracted public engagement with an event, *Tshepang* through the ritual of performance keeps the shameful memory alive and in relation with other bodies. The media used shame as a form of moral reproach, whereas *Tshepang* tries to goad people into action through meaningful connection and engagement. *Tshepang* stops the audience from subsiding into a non-thinking, non-feeling and non-perceiving position. The play depicts what the South African psyche wishes to escape, our interconnected histories and complicity in each other's pain. *Tshepang* keeps its listeners engaged in confronting and not forgetting our shameful past. It ensures that our national slate of shame is not wiped clean.

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[83] During the global pandemic of COVID-19, Goliath through her Instagram page asked the president the following question: "When will violence against the female body, rape, domestic violence and violence against children in South Africa be declared a state of national disaster?"

It is therefore through the performances of this play (now spanning 15 years) that audiences are asked, perhaps for the first time, to engage with or to reflect upon their own memories of the event or memories of similar events, and in doing so to connect with the sensations that the work makes them feel, and in feeling, think. The event upon which Foot based her play headlined in newspapers in November 2001. *Tshepang* was first performed in Amsterdam in 2003[84] and the playtext was published in 2005. *Tshepang* has been performed throughout South Africa and had extensive tours internationally, the last performance to date taking place in October 2018 at the Baxter Theatre.[85] The durational quality of performance suggests that performance as a medium (unlike the media clothed in words) opens the audience to a durational process of engagement with the event and the community of Louisvale, offering a possibility of shifting, transforming and re-establishing connection and interest in our shamed history.[86]

But how to tell a story that connects the audience to the characters whose lives are the story, especially when the story is so painful that many cannot bear to hear it, let alone relate to it? *Tshepang* does this by using the sensory aesthetics of performance to affect people, getting them to feel again and thus helping them to deal with the subject of the rape of a nine-month-old baby. In grappling with such a shameful subject matter, Foot's centralisation of the body in narrative and performance reflects on the very physicality of shame, drawing the audience/reader into the somatic feeling of shame. According to Probyn, shame works at a bodily level to open and close lines of connection (*Blush* 105), and as Ahmed writes, "[t]he very physicality of shame – how it works on and through bodies – means that shame also involves the de-forming and re-forming of bodily and social spaces, as bodies 'turn away' from the other who witnesses the shame" (103). The audience sits in an intimate theatre space and watches the bodies of two characters perform a narrative they would have in any other context chosen not to witness. Because of the communion established in the theatrical relationship between audience and performer, one of embodied witnessing and listening, the experience of shame is perhaps harder to repress.

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[84] At the 2019 Naledi Theatre Awards, *Tshepang* won best production. It took a total of 15 years of performing this work for this subject matter to receive the recognition it deserves. It also suggests a shift in the response of audiences/critics to the work.

[85] The Baxter Theatre is a public theatre partially subsidised by the University of Cape Town.

[86] This returns us to Tomkins's theory that shame exists because of interest. Without the emotion of interest, we do not experience shame.

In centralising the body as meaning-maker, Foot makes use of the performative style of physical theatre. Physical theatre traces its origins in recent times to ideologies and manifestos that sought to reverse the dualism and hierarchy of word over body. It is a construction of forms, beliefs and dispositions that takes its place alongside other ongoing suspicions of the word as the embodiment of Enlightenment (Murray and Keefe 7). First recognised in the early 1960s, it has since grown steadily in prominence. The context of the 1970s directly impacted on how theatre-makers started to reimagine the process of construction and what could be overlapped and intersected in performance-making. The rising postmodernist movement directly influenced this performance style, as it sought to destabilise established practices, cross boundaries and open up thinking and imagining. As a plurality of forms and practices, physical theatre sought to transcend limits and cannot be confined to one set definition. Perhaps this is why the style works so effectively in affectively charging bodies, since both exist outside precise and comforting definitions.

In South Africa, the performance style has been shaped by the socio-political and cultural nuances specific to the country. In a multilingual landscape this embodied form of communication has for some time been preferred over linguistic modes of expression. Theatre-maker and academic Mark Fleishman suggests that for most people making theatre in South Africa, the written word alone is insufficient to portray or explain the full complexity of the reality they face. Rather the demands of this reality should be met or understood through the physical engagement of the body. Fleishman further suggests that theatre in South Africa has often been guilty of simplicity – and that instead of simplicity and literalness, what is needed is the opening up of dialogue through demanding an actively imaginative personal response from the spectator ("Dramaturgies" 16). Magical or illusionary physical theatre encourages this personal response by providing the spectators with a sensory experience. It also speaks to the power that dance has in the context of South Africa. Physical theatre grew in popularity during the State-of-Emergency years in the 1980s as artists had to find ways to create outside of State funding and spaces. Physical theatre has since become foundational to how artists make, perform and engage in performance. In a multicultural and multilingual social landscape, the style speaks outside of linguistic constraints, reimagining a theatre where people who did not necessarily speak English or Afrikaans could understand and make meaning independently.

In discussing what physical theatre facilitates in the aesthetic of this work, I think it important to note that when I started teaching *Tshepang* I had not yet seen a live performance of the work. I make this distinction in my analysis of the performance, as there are numerous debates about the shortfalls and differences attendant on the translation of written text to performative text, about what is lost in transcription and what is left unwritten in the delivery of a performance.

In a lecture given in 1932 titled *La mise en scene et la metaphysique*, Antonin Artaud pointed to the necessity of Western theatre to reconsider its over-emphasis on dialogue and the neglect of "everything which cannot be expressed in words or … not contained in dialogue" (98). Artaud reiterated how the theatre has its own "concrete language" and that this language needed to be foregrounded in the theatre-making process (98). Closer to home, at the *Great Texts/Big Questions* lecture series in collaboration with the ICA at UCT (2016), Fleishman highlighted the notion of what theatre is outside of the written and performance text, and what is left when there is no text, "that which remains" (n. pag.). I was particularly drawn to this description as it suggested a stripping down of performance to the bare essentials, to the affective encounter. This expression also highlights the traces of performance that remain in the body of the attendee. In Fleishman's discussion he referenced the one-woman play *I Turned Away and She Was Gone* (2015), a Magnet Theatre Company production in the style of physical theatre. Fleishman made use of this play in his discussion by including live extracts performed by Jenni Reznek. The two offerings, a lecture-based analysis of the playtext and a performative version of it, brought the debate vividly to life. Fleishman and Reznek are the co-founders and directors/creators of many of the works developed by the Magnet Theatre Company. Another performance of theirs, *Every Year, Every Day I Am Walking* (2006), highlights the difficulties of transcribing 'accurately' what is 'felt' in the live moment, and in what the performer creates within the space of the performative moment. The playtext cannot but lose many of the affective qualities of this performance. The difficulty in discussing a play in terms of the text and the performance of it is that it is precisely the performativity of performance for which there is no analogue in text. This again emphasises the affective dimension produced by Foot's using physical theatre as her performance style. Embodied modes of meaning-making are conveyed between bodies, allowing for nuanced and individual responses and engagements with an event the media wanted to separate into a 'boxed monster narrative.' By centralising

the body, decluttering the stage of distractions and using an ensemble cast, Foot uses physical movement to transcend the limitations of verbal or written modes of communication in articulating shame. It is through the bodily movements of Simon and Ruth that an affective haunting of shame is narrated.

At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned how the image of a three-year old Alfred Sorrow's broken body lying in a pool of his own urine affectively charged my body into a position of empathy instead of shaming, in understanding the both/and of the perpetrator/victim. Simon narrates the incident:

> Alfred's father had a very young *houvrou* called Margaret. Margaret was angry all the time. Especially when Alfred wet his pants, because it was she who had to do the washing. One day when Alfred was about three we were playing in the yard with Jaintjies Jacobs. Now Jaintjies was the best ugly face puller in the whole of town, he had a face like a piece of chewing gum. Now Alfred loved laughing at Jaintjies' funny faces. That day, Jaintjies was in good form, and Alfred was laughing and laughing and laughing. Then suddenly, Alfred was standing in a pool of liquid, which happened to be pee. When Alfred realised what had happened he started to shake. He was terrified. And then it happened, Margaret, the *houvrou*, came round the corner and saw Alfred standing in his pee. From nowhere she grabbed a broom and started to beat Alfred. *[He acts out the beating of the broom]*. At first I thought it was a joke, and then I saw her face. She had become the devil. I ran and hid in a big drainpipe, and watched as she pummelled Alfred until his small body lay quietly in a pool of piss. Then she stopped and, for a moment, reflected on what she had done and then … [87]then … AYEEEEEE! She began to beat him again. [*The broom breaks, and he looks at it in horror. It takes on the form of the broken bones of little Alfred*]. It was my mother who took him to the hospital, and it was my mother who nursed his broken body for many months. On the day he came home from the hospital, I went to visit him. He was making a noise like a small dog. (Foot, *Tshepang* 28–29)

On hearing those lines spoken by Simon, what I experienced was not revulsion at 'the monster,' the shameful Other and disgusting paedophile, but rather an overwhelming feeling of grave sadness and understanding. Margaret, a *houvrou*, a term that embodies contempt, finds herself in a position of sexual and domestic servitude, bound to a social practice of oppression and shaming. Her actions are tied to the power

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[87] Elipsces used in the text from *Tshepang* indicate pauses and not content omission.

struggles she finds herself wrapped in. Alfred Sorrow's body repeats the toxic cycle of shaming he was taught and shaped by.

Foot ingeniously uses a wooden broomstick to symbolise Alfred Sorrow's broken body and again the broomstick is used when Simon re-enacts Alfred Sorrow's raping baby Tshepang. Simon mimes the rape by inserting the broomstick into a loaf of bread. Through Foot's staging I was unable to separate the horror of the raping of baby Siese from the history of Alfred Sorrow's life. Through the doubly purposed use of this prop, I could not dehumanise him and turn him into a monster because the collective memories of his past were tied up and connected to the objects used. I felt. I could not deaden my feelings of empathy towards the perpetrator. I, just as much as the rest of the community of Louisvale, was implicated.

The *Dros* rape report reminded me how I felt when I first read *Tshepang* and came across those lines spoken by Simon about Alfred Sorrows. I slowly started to feel and think similarly towards the 20-year-old man who had raped a seven-year-old girl in a toilet cubicle at a family-friendly restaurant, a girl who minutes earlier had been playing in the children's play area. I stopped dehumanising him. I stopped wanting to pummel him with my fists. Instead, I started to see him too as a human with a very specific story that had wrapped him into this shamed moment. What had been the cumulative and no doubt broken history of the broomstick in his life, I asked?

Jill Bennett's description of the affective moment articulates this precise experience. Bennett uses the word "squirm" when she reflects on the moment of "seeing feeling," the point when "one both feels and knows feeling to be the property of another" (43). I am particularly drawn to this choice of word as it vividly represents the internal struggle, whether to feel or not to feel. This "recoil," as Bennett suggests, is not a retreat but a negotiation to enable one to feel the impact of the image (43). Foot's use of affective imagery in the play instantiates Bennett's theoretical analysis of it. Through Foot's creatively using multi-purpose props in retelling the events surrounding the rape of baby Tshepang, the audience is thrust into a meaning-making process where thought arises from the body. In centring the body as the meaning-maker, *Tshepang* explores how the audience's affective investment can be drawn outside the confines of their character and habitual modes of perception. Even though I squirmed and recoiled in the moment I read and witnessed the rape performed by Simon, I felt differently, my habitual modes of perception shifted.

In discussing how embodied modes of meaning-making in relation to rape may elicit alternative responses to an otherwise traumatising, distancing and visceral experience, it is necessary to include *Karoo Moose* (2009) a work written and directed by Foot six years after *Tshepang*. *Karoo Moose* also attempts to visibilise gender-based violence and rape, performing the gang-rape of Thozama, the central female character in the play. Thozama's father has accumulated a long line of gambling debts, and to deal with his indebtedness he gives permission to each of a group of men (his debtors) to rape his daughter. Foot visually represents this scene by placing Thozama in a metal bath, filled with water, while the group of men kick a soccer ball at her. Thozama stands in the metal bathtub, still wearing the little dress pegged to her costume (representing her childhood), though by the end of the scene she has assumed an adult-size dress. The creative use of performance aesthetics (in representing a very shameful, taboo and traumatic event) enables a positioning where the audience can bear witness differently, where the audience 'feels sees' and its members can negotiate what it is they feel.

Shame's affect is particularly physical and peculiarly bound to the body, demarcating, as Tomkins suggests, our welcome of or withdrawal from "other-ed" bodies. Remarkably, it is Ruth's silence which works at untying shame's cycle. In the entire duration of the performance, Ruth speaks only one word, the final word of the play, 'Tshepang'. As mentioned above, instead of using literal words, Ruth speaks a physical language of remorse through an insistent rubbing away, cleaning and curing, in the repetitive action of rubbing salt into a cow's hide. Ruth at times stands and looks into the abyss of the horizon, while at other times she fusses over a miniature wooden cot that is either tied to her back or cradled in her arms. Ruth's silence causes the onlooker to reassess how she is marked as the shamed Other. It offers a rendering of shame beyond language. Her inability to put words to her shame places her in a position where the audience is able to make a connection, a position that encourages empathetic engagement. Instead of penitent words, there is the monotonous scratching sound of salt being endlessly rubbed into a cow hide. The result is an unsettling of the sober process of confession and absolution. Remarkably, it is Ruth's silence that works at untying shame's cycle: through her performance of a gestural language, the spectators are encouraged to turn their faces towards her rather than from the abject mother.

I watch her movements carefully and try to listen to what her body is trying to tell me.

The character of Ruth does not offer a confession but instead articulates her shame in her repetitive rubbing of salt into the cow hide. By not directly speaking her shame through words, her actions open the audience to be active meaning-makers of her shame. This, I suggest, strengthens the connection between Ruth and the audience. Ruth's rubbing action becomes a compartmentalised form of articulation – the endless rubbing of salt acting metaphorically as a rubbing of salt into her own skin's wounds, as a way to numb, heal, mend or undo. When Simon speaks to the baby's rape, Ruth rubs the salt especially vigorously.[88] Seeing Ruth react in this way made me see her humanness in her attempt to physically 'cure' her shame by inflicting further pain on herself.

David Attwell pursues Timothy Bewes's insight into how shame in writing acts as a gap, an absence, an impossibility. Shame, Bewes suggests, alerts us to a lack rather than to a presence (qtd. in Attwell, "Writing in" 39). It is therefore the "blocked language of shame" that "maps directly onto the structures of narrative, where it becomes a distorting force-field rather than a subject of and for discourse" (Attwell "Writing in" 49). Attwell argues that there seems to be "no relief from this recursive and obsessive power that casts a distorting shadow over any attempt to give it form and, thereby, reshape it" (49). Ruth steps outside of the order of words and verbal language and instead makes her shame known through shame's visceral language, undoing the power of shame to repeat its silencing through words.

It is through the physicalisation of Ruth's actions that the somatic torment of shame at work on and in the body is revealed. This idea is further explored in Simon's description of Ruth after she has reported Alfred Sorrows to the police, some months after the rape of baby Tshepang. Simon narrates the details:

> When I got to her house, the four-room, before I even walked through the front door, I knew something was wrong. The door was standing open and there was a terrible silence and a terrible stink. Ruth was lying on the single bed, the one with the pink bedspread. The one where Siesie had been raped. Next to the

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[88] I make use of the word 'to' instead of 'of' because Simon addresses the audience and does not speak directly to Ruth. Simon does not address Ruth directly throughout the play. It is only at the end of the play in the final lines when Simon addresses her "Ruth, I am going to the tavern'' (44-45). This address precedes Ruth's only word spoken in the play, 'Tshepang.'

bed was an empty Star Pilchard tin. The lid had been three-quarters opened and its sharp round edge was covered with a reddish-brown gooey stuff. It was Ruth's blood. Her chest was covered in the same gooey stuff, her hands, her face. She had cut out her one breast and tried to do the same to the other. As I stood there looking at her mangled body, pieces of breast and nipple lying on the floor . . . (Foot, *Tshepang* 43).

When I consider how I experience shame, shame is often most weighted in my chest. A crushing weight that beats against the inside of my chest, seemingly trying to suppress my ability to breathe. I can now understand why Ruth cut away at her physical body, removing one breast and attempting to remove the other. Ruth also cuts at her breast as an ever-pressing reminder of her shamefulness as a mother, nurturer and protector. The centralisation of the body in the narrative and performance reinforces somatic meaning-making as the central mode of engagement in the play. As Probyn says, we need to think about shame as "truly corporal" (*Blush* 27); and as Charos goes on to emphasise, "as truly human and as indicating our *interest* in communing with one another." It may thus allow storytellers "to tell transformative stories in ways in which language is no longer delimited by words of shame" (302, italics in original). In reflecting on the character of Ruth and how she desperately tries to cut out her shame, I reference Bouson's reading of the character Del Jordan in Alice Munro's semi-autobiographical novel *Lives of Girls and Women*, "a coming-of-age novel of an adult female narrator and writer, who provides a portrait of herself as a young artist" (19). *Lives of Girls and Women* "describes the shame that is felt by and on the body as it focuses on Del's growing awareness that to be made of female flesh is to be well-schooled in the abjections and humiliations of embodiment" (19). A "self-feeling that is felt by and on the body," shame involves "the intensification not only of the bodily surface, but also of the subject's relation to itself, or its sense of itself as self," as Ahmed observes (*Cultural Politics* 103, 104). Encompassing the entire self, shame "fills up the self – becomes what the self is about" (*Cultural Politics* 105). In terms akin to Ruth's attempt to inflict her felt-feeling of shame on her body, Del becomes profoundly overwhelmed by her shame: "This shame was physical, but went far beyond sexual shame, my former shame of nakedness; now it was as if not the naked body but all the organs inside it – stomach, heart, lungs, liver – were laid bare and helpless. … And shame went spreading out from me all through the house" (Bouson 23). This line echoes the visual narration of the moment Simon finds Ruth

with her insides lying outside her body, laid bare and helpless as her shame spreads out and fills the space of her small tin shack, lying on the very bed on which her baby was raped.

Abjection and shame's corporality is felt and communicated in an embodied way when Ruth cuts away at her abject body, making it leak and ooze out through its customary borders of containment. This imagery also speaks to Ruth's attempt to fight against the restrictions placed on her by her community when they mark her as an outsider to the community of Louisvale. The threat that Ruth's presents to this community is registered on the skin, so the leaking out of shame is mirrored in Ruth's performance in the play. Her mound of salt seems to spread out, leaving a fine layer of dust over the stage. The salt reminds us of our attempts to stop ourselves from feeling; or is it that we feel too much in how these memories are preserved, creating a disruption and interruption?

I, like Ruth, rub salt into the cow hide as I try to rub away the shame I feel for the parts of my 'self' that have been formed by, in and amongst a history where I am privileged for being born white. I rub at judgements made that voided the recognition of this privilege. I rub away at an indefinite state of shame linked to my complicity in apartheid ideologies and perpetuation of oppressive social relations and attitudes. I rub salt so I do not have to feel.

The metaphorical relationship of the cow hide (skin) to touch, affect and the shame Ruth carries on her body as the *houvrou* of the rapist and the mother of the child visually also performs a transitioning of skin to a by-product. We have noted how Ruth cures the cow's hide as an embodied action to render her own skin trackless to shame's affect. I also propose that this visual imagery suggests a collective embodiment of how social ills among the people of Louisvale are made to appear as essential aspects of their being rather than the by-products of social and economic hardships. Ruth is therefore also performing how the 'being' of Louisvale is shamed by shame's stifling presence in making its dwellers believe their 'being' is essentially worthless, dead and less than fully human.

What further solidified my feeling of shame in reading and watching the play is the choice to rename baby Siesie, Tshepang, meaning hope or saviour. The people of Louisvale give her this name not because the baby acts as a symbol of hope amidst a depraved and soulless humanity, but because the child brings hope to the

community in attracting national attention and interaction between the people of Louisvale and the outside world – a moment of upliftment. That such a moment can uplift is a tragedy in itself. The previously neglected Siesie is now the community's hope: "That Siesie was the girl Christ. The Saviour. That she had taken the sins of the world, just like Jesus – and from now on all children would be saved … The girl Christ had come." (Foot, *Tshepang* 39)

That the community could make money from something as depraved and traumatic as an infant rape brings with it a double bind of shame. Because of the increase in visitors (media, reporters) sales spike. Businesses pick up, children sell makeshift crafts and the people of Louisvale feel 'seen' again, through interactions with strangers, seeing their name in the media and their faces appearing on television (39). The fact that this atrocious event was seen as a form of deliverance by the people of Louisvale, in feeling recognised and seen again, indicates the extent of their sense of displacement, isolation and separation from a larger community, forsaken and forgotten. As we have seen, their feeling of insignificance is marked by their repetitive use of the refrain that nothing of value or importance ever happens to them. One of the key feelings of shame the play produces derives from our powerlessness to prevent human beings close to or far from us from becoming victims of atrocious power dynamics. The town of Louisvale reflects this. It is Simon who draws the listener into the play. In Simon still feeling, Simon shows us the humanity of the town, the humanity of the rapist, the humanity of the mother who drinks at the shebeen while her baby is left alone in a shack, and the humanity of the witness, the mother's friend, Sarah, who has been the local prostitute for all the adolescent boys when she was growing up and who does nothing when she sees Siesie being raped. It is this felt sense of humanity embodied in Simon's performance that produces an 'empathic unsettlement.' Simon narrating:

> It all started the day Dewaal was untangling fishing gut in the veld opposite the old kerk. He was walking backwards when he tripped and fell over Siesie. He screamed blue murder . . . I saw Dewaal sitting in the sand, his hands clasped together viciously, praying with all his might, and there, next to him, in the dust . . . at first I thought it was some part of a sheep . . . a sacrifice of sorts . . . and then, slowly, the picture became clearer – an arm . . . some fingers, two tiny little arms . . . hands . . . a small little crumpled face . . . a little pot belly . . . fat little thighs . . . and in between her thighs . . . lay a mass . . . like a cauliflower;

red, gooey . . . her derms . . . all bloody her tiny, tiny little . . . split open. (Foot, *Tshepang* 36)

Dewaal has earlier attracted our sympathy when we are told about the loss of his son and his extended ,embodied mourning as he spends his days untangling fishing nets (with no intention of ever going to the sea, which is some 500kms from Louisvale). Describing Dewaal to the audience, Simon notes how the children loved him and that he acted like a grandfather to baby Siesie. Simon goes on to say that the children were drawn to him because he made them feel important. Simon also notes how it was Dewaal who felt *It* when it happened. *Long Silence.* When baby Tshepang was raped. When we later hear Simon's account of Dewaal's grisly discovery, we are drawn in because we have already accepted Dewaal's humanity. He is one of the community members we have chosen to see because we have experienced his ability to feel. Simon's narrative of the lives and livelihood of the people of his community has humanised them and given feeling to people who have been 'invisibilised to feeling.'

Simon observes how when the ambulance arrives at the site of the mutilated baby's body, the two paramedics attending the scene react viscerally to what they see. The first paramedic vomits, but it is the description of the second paramedic's reaction, the driver, who performs the felt-feeling many of us feel in hearing, let alone seeing, the details of baby Tshepang's rape. Simon narrates:

> The fat driver, as black as Goliath was white, was listening to the radio inside the ambulance. He got out and walked round to close the ambulance doors . . . But before the doors were shut, through the gap . . . I saw the big white man, Goliath, kneel down next to the baby. He put his forehead on her forehead and then he began to cry. A big heave of a sob! Like an earthquake, he cried. (Foot, *Tshepang* 37)

A feeling of shame comes in my realisation that I have not, and probably will never, have to confront the day-to-day hardships and challenges that face a community such as that of Louisvale.; the realisation that the life of a child born into the community of Louisvale is in no measure comparable to the life of my child because of his being born into my home. A shame in knowing that even though I am unable to understand their hardships, challenges and daily struggles, I still judge and see the community as a people who deliberately choose to perpetuate cycles of abuse by repeatedly making bad choices. This play draws into question shame's toxicity in

South Africa. The people of Louisvale are shamed in how they are Othered by the outside world. In this Othering, South Africa is given a collective body to place their shame on. Louisvale in turn carries the nation's shame. What would our nation look like if we stopped needing someone to carry our shame? With the title of the play *Tshepang: The Third Testament* and in naming the baby 'saviour,' 'hope,' the play highlights how the shame needs a body that will carry its weight, Tshepang our saviour.

What sets this text and performance apart from others, is that shame is not put to work in generating reconciliation, as we saw in the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) hearings. An argument made by Caitlin Charos in relation to the character of Lydia in Achmat Dangor's novel *Bitter Fruit* opens up a further perspective on Ruth's silence: "Lydia's personal, 'silent' archive is a welcome alternative to public confession and exposure, which would compel her to speak in terms of shamefulness. Lydia's elected silence is ironically broken by the text itself, which opens her archive to Mikey and to the readers, making them uninvited spectator[s] to Lydia's suffering" (158). Foot employs a similar device by having Simon speak for Ruth. In giving Simon the voice to speak on her behalf, the circularity of shame is undone, its double capacity for covering over and recovering speech does not happen. Furthermore, in centring Simon's body as the vehicle through which the story is retold, the ways in which shame has been played out in narrative discourse are presented differently. New somatic intimacies generating human closeness occur, offering potential transformations in how individuals connect to the story of baby Tshepang.

The philosopher Martha Nussbaum claims that narrative art has the

power to make us see the lives of the different with more than a casual tourist's interest – with involvement and sympathetic understanding, with anger at our society's refusals of visibility. We come to see how circumstances shape the lives of those who share with us some general goals and projects; and we see that circumstances shape not only people's possibilities for action, but also their aspirations and desires, hope and fears." (88)

Similarly, Jill Bennett concludes that certain kinds of art "by virtue of its specific affective capacities" are capable of instigating "forms of embodied perception in order to promote forms of critical inquiry" (10). This conjunction of affect and critical awareness may be understood to "constitute the basis of an empathy grounded not in affinity (*feeling for* another insofar as we can imagine *being* that other) but on a *feeling*

for another that entails an encounter with something irreducible and different, often inaccessible" (10, italics in original). The theatrical style of physical theatre therefore positions the spectator as translator, filling in linguistic gaps through decoding what is visually and physically communicated on the stage. In doing so there is a "rupture of the distribution of the sensible" (Rancière, *Aesthetic* 17). What brings about this rupture is how the events in *Tshepang* are 'felt' in comparison to how they may have been told through the newspaper or word of mouth. The audience cannot be a bystander to the event because it is positioned as an active meaning-maker. The fourth wall is broken. Multi-purpose props and choreographed gestural bodies activate the audience's body to make their own meaning. Simon speaks and positions the audience as witnesses to his story. In Foot's choosing to stage the performance with only two actors and in a small theatre space, the dynamics of the performance produce a felt intimacy. This intimacy is largely constructed through the use of staging devices that affectively position the audience to feel part of the performance and thus part of the story. *Tshepang* draws the audience in as a witness rather than a passive 'responsible and moral' bystander. Janine Hauthal does not ascribe to audiences the status of witness, arguing that the fictionality of theatre is what "differentiates spectators in the theatre from witness in the real life" (Hauthal 349). I therefore see the positioning of the audience as witness in the theatre as an opportunity for its members to see what happens in daily life anew, from a different perspective that enables them to see what they might otherwise choose to ignore. I endorse rather Carole-Anne Upton's interpretation of the audience, in terms of which she sees audience members as not 'just' spectators or onlookers but as "engaged witnesses, with the disposition to take action in response to what they see" (3).

I first taught the playtext of *Tshepang* to a matric class in 2013. I had moved to Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, from Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal,[89] and accepted a new teaching position at a school in the area. This particular year group were the first 'born frees' to complete their schooling in South Africa. 'Born frees' is a term used to demarcate the fall of apartheid and the first group of children born into the new era of democracy in South African that began in 1994. It is meant to suggest that they were the first to experience a demographically integrated and 'equal' society, one freed from a politically oppressive government and its racial laws. The students seated in my class

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[89] Mpumalanga and Kwa-Zulu Natal are the names of two provinces in South Africa.

had been born into a political discourse of *simunye* ('we are one') and a national philosophy of being a rainbow nation. Through this rhetoric, citizens of South Africa were made to feel a utopian sense of interconnectedness. What I realised while teaching the play was how remarkably *Tshepang* manages to step outside of this post-apartheid narrative and offer a different reading of the social landscape. Foot circumvents verbal vocabularies of connectedness and instead traces shame's connectedness in the communal realm of performance. Through her unique imaginings, she constructs a performance centring the visual, visceral, somatic. As Charos writes, "if the call to nation-building in South Africa is one that will resist the transience of the rainbow, then it must not demand an eradication of shame but acknowledge its persistence in the post-apartheid moment" (116). Charos addresses a key aspect of the role of the TRC in relation to shame discourses and shame silencing when she refers to Zoë Wicomb's article "Shame and Identity." The article engages with how shame is entangled in the problematic construction and historical determination of Coloured identity. Wicomb identifies how shame exists in the racial labelling of Coloured, as the term does not belong to 'white' or 'black' but is a label of displacement. Wicomb endeavours to speak to the nuances of shame wrapped up in the cultural history of the Coloured.

In the light of Wicomb's work on shame in relation to Coloured identity it is interesting to note that Foot did not cast Coloured performers but instead cast two Black South Africans in the role of Simon and Ruth (Mncedisi Shabangu and Kholeka Qwabe). *Tshepang* is a play that documents the lives of a marginalised Coloured community. In reflecting on Wicomb's argument, and in *Tshepang* attempting to visibilise Coloured bodies, does the use of Black South African bodies in the performance of the work visually displace the Coloured body and render it invisible once again?[90] Is this not another layer in the process of how certain bodies are shamed in not being made visible? This discussion is important in light of the shame experienced in Coloured identity's being linked to the concept of miscegenation; in the Coloured body being labelled as not white or black, but the bastard offspring of neither. I believe the state of shame carried in the Coloured community's displacement and

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[90] In this discussion I am not stating that 'Coloured' is that which is first seen, implying the use of the 'look' as a marker of race (Erasmus, *Race Otherwise* 49). What this discussion attempts to highlight is the invisibilisation of Coloured bodies in performance spaces, be it in plays about Coloured lives, Coloured performers or Coloured directors.

invisibilisation historically in South Africa is endorsed by Foot's decision to use Black bodies. By way of comparison, a very timely and contentious performance regarding the physical, historical and visual displacement of Coloured bodies in South Africa appears in the play *Kudu* (2017) by Liwanda Sindaphi. *Kudu* deliberately makes visible the Khoi-San and their historical placement in the making of South Africa. *Kudu* questions the notion of an homogenised blackness and foregrounds the antagonism, erasure and ignorance surrounding the Khoi-San heritage, while questioning the legacy of prominent groupings in South Africa such as the amaXhosa. *Kudu* calls for an acknowledgement and legitimation of multiple knowledge systems. The play highlights debates about collective and individual identity, and the eradication of nuance by nationalist discourses.

Another possibility is that Foot deliberately sought to avoid stereotyping Coloured identity through their representation in the play. Does she avoid stereotyping but obscure the identity of Coloureds in using African (Swati and amaXhosa) bodies to perform them? I do not believe that a culture, ethnicity or language is contained in a specific colour. I have personally cast performers in roles against the race profiling of the playwright's character. While the very style of physical theatre performances renders racial and gender categories redundant, this discussion nevertheless opens up a wider debate about who gets to represent what and what codes of meaning are invoked when a Black body performs a Coloured body. Foot's decision was perhaps prompted by having to cast strong physical theatre performers and having no budget to develop the work. Being close friends of hers, Shabangu and Qwabe, were possibly more willing to take a risk and workshop the piece in her home with little or no guarantee of pay.

Pursuing Wicomb's thoughts, Charos goes on to describe how the TRC represented South Africa's attempt to 'heal' the nation through a process of reconciliation which "put shame to work in the national narrative of 'feeling better,' [therefore authorising] leaders to transform testimonies of systemic and personal trauma into a 'narrative of recovery' (278). Charos argues:

> Drawing on the postcolonial trope of recovering 'unwritten' histories, Wicomb reveals that uncovering shame and textualising its pervasiveness interrupts or precludes cohesive 'narratives of recovery.' In South Africa, initiating a process of national 'recovery' and rapprochement was the task of the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission: through a series of hearings, many of which were publicly televised or available through the internet, the TRC allowed victims to testify to the violences committed against them during the apartheid years; perpetrators also came forward to request amnesty for political crimes. With the aim of producing reconciliation between citizens who, in the 'New' South Africa, would be compelled to share spaces and shift perspectives, the TRC required what Ingrid De Kok calls the 'language of the "clean break"' – a language that expressed the 'imperative to have the story – often called by [TRC] commissioners "this chapter of our history" – closed.' It makes sense that South Africans might want to turn their backs on the disgraceful past of apartheid and the shameful feelings a past of violence may have evoked—to start over with a ''clean slate.'' However, by bearing witness to the crimes of apartheid, the TRC makes the very move that Ahmed cautions against: the 'desire to move on' expressed in the TRC's wish to have 'this chapter of our history closed' risks moving over and out of shame, repeating apartheid's censorship by once more 'passing over' that brutal history. Containing the violence of apartheid within a closed narrative that displaces shame and yet ostensibly serving as a forum for voicing shameful history, the TRC became ironically complicit in stifling a discourse on shame while exposing those who had been 'shamed' to the public eye. (Charos 280)

Because shame is experienced in the body, and is so intimately involved in the self, when the new democratic South Africa put shame to work in the TRC hearings this intimacy was undone. Shame was used to politically force-feed an agenda to a newly formed 'democratic,' 'rainbow nation,' manufacturing artificial points of connection. In turn, the personal boundary of self produced an abjection to shame, "spitting it out and casting off the affective intruder with extreme violence" (Charos 283).

Charos's insights have a bearing on *Tshepang*, as we shall see in due course. She suggests that the TRC represented a failed attempt by South Africa to 'heal' the nation through a process of reconciliation which "put shame to work in the national narrative of 'feeling better'" ("States" 55). Because this attempt was confined to a specific time and place (within the testimonies heard by the TRC), other narratives were not heard and individuals in a nation ravaged by decades of shame were told to wipe their slate clean, move on and close that section of our collective history. Shame as a feeling was passed over and our shaming history was once again censored. In putting shame to work in a national narrative of feeling better, the people of South Africa fell into political apathy, limbo and limpness. How shame was used and abused

in the TRC hearings, I believe, has numbed many South Africans to feeling, placing them in an apathetic state of affective self-containment. This state of being has unfortunately only worsened a shaming culture, where South Africans perpetuate cycles of violence by physically and affectively projecting undesirable feelings, such as shame, onto others (55).

The TRC hearings took place in 1996, two years after the first democratic election in South Africa. It was thus a mere five years after putting shame to work in the national narrative of 'feeling better' that children were making national headlines due to being gang-raped.[91] The atrocity of these acts seem to have unnerved the people of South Africa so deeply because they were a reminder of how little had really been done to repair and reconcile a depraved national psyche within the selves of individuals. It was therefore the media headline of a nine-month-old baby raped in the town of Louisvale in the Northern Cape in 2001 that began the unravelling of a stifled discourse of shame capable of enabling South Africans to feel again.

Adrienne Sichel, a theatre reviewer, writes in the foreword to the playtext about the first time she watched *Tshepang*, having been invited to a private viewing in 2003 before Lara Foot toured with it to Amsterdam:

> It was 16 June – a chilly winter afternoon on the public holiday that commemorates the start of the student uprising of 1976. Lara Foot-Newton had invited me to see a full run days before it was to have its world premiere in Amsterdam. There we were in a freezing Scout Hall in Irene, near Pretoria. The play had travelled from the Newtons'[92] garage up the road, where it had been created with great passion and scant financial support. At first glance the serenity and gentility of this walled-off security-conscious traditionally white suburb, with its English country lanes, was at odds with the turbulent history of June 1976, as it was with what ensued thereafter. Not for long. Nothing prepared me for the devastating honesty, the searing innovation about to be unleashed within those colonial walls. (xiii)
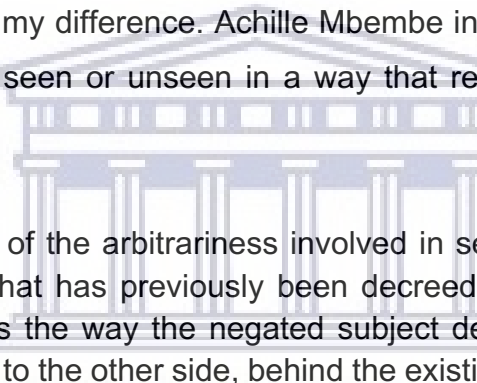
Re-reading the above passage, it is only now that am I able to identify with the feeling expressed by Sichel. I think I too, like Sichel, was brought into a place of connection

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[91] In the playtext Foot cites how 20 000 child rape cases were recorded the same year Tshepang's rape headlined in South Africa.

[92] Foot's surname at the time of the creation of Tshepang was Foot-Newton. After her divorce from Lionel Newton she reverted to her maiden surname Foot. For this reason, she is referred to as Foot elsewhere in the discussion.

with an existence and way of life from which I wanted to separate myself despite being extremely ignorant of it. How could I separate myself in terms of superiority, sophistication, morality, humanity and fellow feeling, when I knew so very little about the community of Louisvale.

There is a therefore a shame I feel in knowing that I am part of an oppressive system where race wins, class wins and capitalism wins. If you are a person of colour, living in poverty and unable to work, what is made visible is not your humanity but rather your poverty and community-inflicted violence. I too am like the community of Louisvale, which ostracises the Other, which removes Ruth from the community because she is too great a reminder of their vulnerability and complicity. I feel comfort in building bigger walls, in not using public transport, in socialising with people who are like me, who think like me, dress like me and live like me. I choose not to go to places that remind me of my difference. Achille Mbembe in *On the Postcolony* notes how certain humans are seen or unseen in a way that recalls Phelan's discussion earlier in the chapter:

> One is the burden of the arbitrariness involved in seizing from the world and putting to death what has previously been decreed to be nothing, an empty figure. The other is the way the negated subject deprived of power, pushed even farther away, to the other side, behind the existing world, out of the world, takes on himself or herself the act of his or her own destruction and prolongs his/her own crucifixion. But what does it mean to do violence to what is nothing? Or what does it mean for one who has been enwrapped, or has enwrapped himself/herself, in the pure terror of the negative, been consigned to the work of a slave, to give himself/herself a premature death, a death without apparent meaning – whether that death be suicide, or homicide, or genocide? What is the relationship between these two gestures? It is hardly possible to answer these two questions without returning to the starting point: what does it mean to partake of human existence? Who is a human being and who is not, and by what authority is such a distinction made? If one is not a human being, what is one? And what is the relationship human beings should or can have with that on which it has not been possible to confer the attribute of humanity, or to which it has been denied? (173–74)

Mbembe's words, "[B]ut what does it mean to do violence to what is nothing?," encapsulate my realisation of the shame I experienced because of this play – the idea that it is not just the brutal rape of a baby that inflicts violence on this marginalised community but that the community has been the object of violence for many years. A

community forgotten. A people unseen and unheard. Denied a recognition of their humanity. A place of nothingness, where nothing ever happens, and nothing is ever felt. Why would a place of nothing, filled with nothing, *feel* anything but nothing? In the words of Simon: "[T]hey say that when Alfred was sentenced, when he was found guilty he didn't even flinch. He was neither here nor there. It didn't matter. Nothing ever really mattered. Because nothing ever matters here. Nothing at all" (*Tshepang* 43).

I too, like Alfred, have stopped flinching; the salt has been rubbed so deeply that I am numbed to the on-going atrocities around me. The post-apartheid state of South Africa has stopped mattering to me in a way that evokes a radical response. Doing violence to what is nothing is what I do when I choose to not see a fellow human as human. When I choose blindness. Blindness to see what I feel and to see what others feel. Be it gender-based violence, child abuse, abject poverty, systemic systems of oppression, *houvrous*, the lasting implications of apartheid; not doing anything is to see those who face these daily struggles as objects of nothingness. Describing Sarah's actions on the night that baby Tshepang was raped, Simon says: "Later Sarah, the one with the hold tooth, came to the house to look for Ruth. She walked in, heard Siesie screaming and lit a match. Alfred stopped for a moment. Sarah looked at him, at the baby, left the room . . . and did nothing" (Foot, *Tshepang* 42). I recall how at first I could not believe it when I heard how Sarah responded to the brutality of baby Siesie's rape.

Why would you choose to do nothing? How could she just do nothing? No! How can you be human and do nothing? You have to be void of feeling to bear witness and still do nothing.

Since a teenager Sarah had given sexual favours to pubescent boys for small gifts, like sweets and comics. Her brother would oversee the payments and let the young boys in one at a time. Now I understand. I too am like Sarah. I see but I do nothing. I gaze on at the world from the voyeuristic safety of my point of vantage where I can watch from but not have to *feel*. Perhaps the hope the play alludes to is the play itself – the hope that a performance steeped in shame, instead of severing us, holding off the othered body, will hold the audience/listener together with the community of Louisvale.

To communicate shame is always difficult. The characteristic struggle that takes place in the person experiencing shame is one between the urge to disclose and the

impulse to conceal. Through the staging of the play the audience member is reattuned to the role of sensations and feelings in their life, reconnecting the body to think and feel the affect of shame, and the desire to be in connection with fellow human beings. For, as Charos comments on shame's elusive affect, "just as it holds bodies apart, or rather, reflects our desire to 'hold off' other-ed bodies, shame also holds us together" (297). By centralising the body in performative style and by creating an intimate performance ensemble with a simple set design, focusing on the performative quality of bodies in space, Foot facilitates a connection and a communion between performer and audience in which shame can hold us together. Perhaps Ruth's rubbing is a preservation of our shame as a collective, and it is its preservation that reminds us of our interest in each other and continuing pursuit of connection.

Both Blood *Diamond/Terminal* and *Tshepang* examine the gaze from a societal position and explore how this gaze is used to other and abject. The following chapter turns the gaze inwards, to examine shame in relation to self and how one's habitus, shaped by the various trajectories of race, ethnicity, demography and history, can be shaken up by feeling despite its pervasive and inescapable presence.
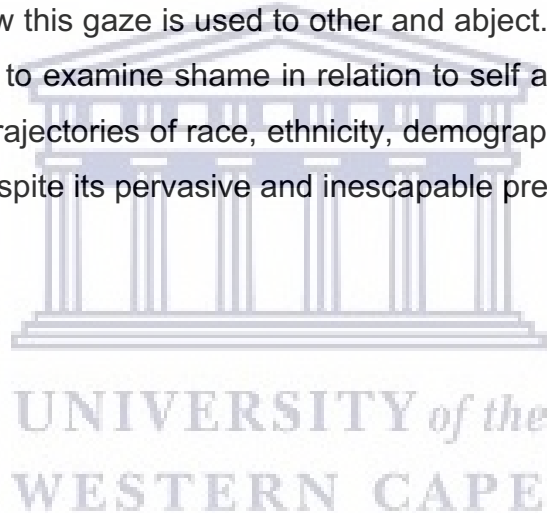
CHAPTER FIVE /

Visibility, shame and habitus: unpacking Whiteness in relation to middle-class English-speaking South Africans through performative aesthetics in *Woolworths*

> The other white shame, so much harder to name, is bred in the bone, whispers in the habitus.
>
> Elspeth Probyn, "Shame in the Habitus" (245)

> It seems safe to say that whiteness is always haunted by its own historicity and part of performing as a white subject in the postcolony means coming to terms with the fact that whiteness may never be untangled from power, imperialism, and hegemony. … It is imperative that scholars, artists, and citizens continue to work through whiteness … so that we disassemble its power as the default category of existence.
>
> Megan Lewis, *Performing Whitely* (191–92)

> It is through chorality that *Woolworths* embodies the textual, moved and spoken patterns of the socio-cultural landscape, and it is *through* embodiment of these patterns that critique can occur, or to say it another way: the embodiment of the pattern *is* the critique.
>
> Juliet Jenkin, "Performing Pattern" (29 italics in original)

The central focus of discussion in this chapter is how the affective habitus of a demographically inflected type of whiteness, namely of white[93] middle-class English-

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[93] In trying to work from a decolonial practice that breaks away from racial classification, binaries and polarities but still voices the subjective lived experience of the shaping of habitus, I am sensitive to how speaking to a specific demographic inflector can become problematic in perpetuating stereotypes and erasures. Whiteness in a post-apartheid context involves a set of complex discursive positionings that is "tied to apartheid's white supremacist ideologies yet refracted through the diffuse ideological, political and cultural forces that characterise the present. Although the distribution of formal political power strongly suggests a shift towards a non-racial national context, the legacy of the country's racialisation is imbricated into all aspects of social and cultural life. Whiteness remains enmeshed in normative practices of power and rooted in material conditions of inequality and ongoing relations of social injustice" (Carolin, Dass and Grogan 1). Attempts to fix whiteness ultimately fail as it "can be at the same time a taken-for-granted entitlement, a desired social status, a perceived source of victimisation and a tenuous situational identity" (Twine and Gallagher 7). I use the terms white or whiteness, middle-class and English-speaking in this study to frame my specific demographic inflection and the lens through which I look. The anacronym in capitals (WMCESA) was dropped in the final editing stages as I believed its use in the text made it seem a fixed, stable and consolidated social category. To designate the lived experience of white English-speaking middle-class South Africans by an anacronym would render it homogenous, create a stereotype and grant me a space to hide in, instead of highlighting how varied and layered this identity is. Had I done so the work would have obscured the positionality of Portuguese or Jewish or Greek, English-speaking, white middle-class South Africans, as well as other

speaking South Africans (*wmcesas*)[94] can be shaken up by a moment of feeling "when the body outruns the cognitive capture of the habitus" (Probyn, "Shame in the Habitus" 232). While the previous chapters have explored shame in relation to more generalised aspects of South African whiteness, this chapter analyses how the performance aesthetics employed in Juliet Jenkin's choral satire, *Woolworths* (2017), generated an uncomfortable affective reaction that shook up my personal habitus of whiteness. In reflecting critically on this habitus, I will demonstrate how various aspects of colonial heritage, ethnic exclusion and hegemonic practices (using Probyn's expression) "come alive in shame" (*Blush* 40). In addition, I draw on Munt's ideas of how the histories of "violent domination and occupation" are "lurking" behind dynamics of shame, and how shame therefore has political potential since it "can provoke a separation between the social convention demarcated within hegemonic ideals" (4).

Just as the study has grown materially in written form (the intellectual inquiry), so too has my body's sensitivity to shame (the somatic inquiry). The two have cyclically strengthened and informed critical and intuitive growth, giving me the courage to probe deeper into the nature of my own meaning making. This cyclical process links to Stanley Fish's reader-response theory and his emphasis on deepening understanding of the structures of feeling in response to experiences and not necessarily on finding solutions (1980). This is not to say that my body is now awash with shame, but rather that my awareness of the numerous layers in which shame has acutely marked my sense of self has become sharper. The subject of this chapter facilitates introspection into my intimate relationship with my self, how this self has been shaped both by shame and – as I communicate myself to myself – the undoing of shame. I critique the habitus that constructs me to catalyse its undoing, for it was from a position of 'Othering' that I self-identified as an English-speaking white middle-class South

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interpretations of white, middle-class, English-speaking identity from specific locales of South Africa (metropolitan/suburban, Durban/Johannesburg). This tension is evident in *The Restless Supermarket* by Ivan Vladsislavic, whose novel highlights a transitional period of South Africa in 1993 framed from the particular lived experience of a white, English-speaking, middle-aged, middle-class male in Johannesburg and his daily trips to Café Europa for his morning coffee. This study's specific demographic inflector speaks to a grouping of South Africans who identify as white, English-speaking, middle-class and South African. These categories may be more or less prominent in the identiies of individuals or groups. In framing 'whiteness' from this demographic inflector I hope to challenge a discursive lacuna and highlight how this identity formation continues to suggest a normativity and self-regulating discourse.

[94] If I use the anacronym (*wmcesa*) it is always in lower case letters and italicised to defamiliarise the term. It is used to some extent ironically. I also play with the term's descriptors in discussions to highlight the demographic's specific orientation towards class, language or whiteness.

African. This idea is articulated in Paul Redding's summation of Friedrich Nietzsche's thoughts on shame when he writes: "[B]ut shame does more than sensibilise us to the vast variety of sensations that inform daily life; it also proposes a sensibility at once practical, ethical and needed: 'the appropriate reaction to one's own shame is a type of self-transformation'" (341). This notion of "self-transformation" resulting from a self-reflective engagement with shame prepares the ground for my examination of the affective effects of Jenkin's *Woolworths*. The practice of performance, deep reflection and writing all shape the performance of my internal undoing of shame in this chapter. It is this concluding case study that shakes up my habitus and in so doing starts to undo the shame I carry in relation to my habitus and its history, as well as offering an articulation of shame that generates a type of self-transformation.

It is perhaps necessary to point out that it is not only the process of engaging with Jenkin's play *Woolworths* in this final case study but also because of and through the self-reflective analysis employed in the first three case studies that an internal 'shaking up' of my habitus has materialised. This felt-feeling of 'shaking up' has thus been directly impacted by the preceding chapters' discussions of systemic and hegemonic practices, and of the mechanisms employed in the maintenance of borders that separate the abject 'Other,' the seen from the not seen of the privileged and Othered positions.

By way of preamble to my analysis of how *Woolworths* offers a critique of the habitus of English-speaking white middle-class South Africans, I will first outline the context informing my approach to the analysis. On 23 March 2020 President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that South Africa would enter a three-week hard lockdown in an attempt to curb the spread of the coronavirus. On hearing the announcement my body filled with a flurry of sensations. I felt a deep heaviness in thinking about what the reality of the lockdown would be for South Africans. The question overwhelmed me as I sat listening to Ramaphosa's voice on the radio. The world had shifted into the realm of the unknown. I did not want to process the implications of the announcement, though I knew that the poor (a circumstance of poverty so distant from mine) would be the most affected. The gulf between the haves and the have-nots stretched wider as I sank deeper into my chair. The national lockdown in South Africa permitted only essential services. Consumers were therefore largely excluded from consumer pleasure. The destitute and poor would suffer most profoundly but members of the middle-class were also 'stricken' at having their consumer freedoms constrained.

Covid-19 thus further alienated the middle-class from their 'liberal' freedoms as consumers.

In a modest attempt to escape the reality of what the virus and lockdown would do to our national health services, economy, domestic spaces and mental wellbeing, I took to reading to distract myself and give myself much needed breathing space once my baby was asleep. I randomly selected Shaun Johnson's *The Native Commissioner* (2006) from the bookshelf. It was only in retrospect that I realised what an uncanny choice I had made, as I became aware of the synergies the book could offer to my inner struggle to undo shame in the shaking up of my familiar habitus and conceptualising this chapter.

Woolworths and *The Native Commissioner* offer a nuanced perspective on the psyche of South African middle-class English speakers and on what shame in the habitus can mean, offering a fruitful meeting place between self and history. In this chapter I analyse the performance *Woolworths* with its use of satirical text spoken by a chorus as a way into visibilising the demarcated identity of my specific demographic inflection. The discussion makes use of Juliet Jenkin's[95] argument, as quoted in the third epigraph to this chapter, that an aesthetic of pattern can produce and indeed become a critique of white middle-class English speakers. I reference studies of whiteness by Ruth Frankenberg, Melissa Steyn and Liese van der Watt, and begin with Frankenberg's framing of whiteness as follows:

> whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a 'standpoint,' a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others and at society. Third, 'whiteness' refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. (6)

I therefore focus on the performative aesthetics of *Woolworths* and its satirising of *wmcesa*-ness to critique the invisibilised habitus of *wmcesa* identity in South Africa, focusing on its privileged status and ubiquity, as well as its shameful dis-ease.

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[95] Juliet Jenkin is a South African playwright, best known for her playtext *The Boy Who Fell from the Roof* (2007). She is currently completing her PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies through the CPTD at UCT. More information about Jenkin can be located at this link: https://www.julietjenkin.com/about

Before I get to this chapter's central discussion of *Woolworths*,[96] I include a reflection on *The Native Commissione*r because both works unsettled my affective state of habitus (which I will describe more fully later). So, even though I started reading the *Native Commissioner* during a period when my daily movements were severely restricted,[97] it was through an internal movement of self-reflective processing, a thinking through affect's meaning-making on and in my body, that I was able to outrun "the cognitive capture of the habitus" (232). Thus, just as my nuclear world and the whole world's physical movement was confined, this chapter focuses in on a stilled movement, an inward movement of exploration.

Shaun Johnson's novel The *Native Commissioner* narrates the life of George Jameson, a Native Affairs Commissioner in South Africa prior to and mainly after the election of the National Party in 1948. The story is told by George's youngest son, Sam, who compiles his father's biography by poring over meticulously archived notes, photographs and letters. Crucially, *The Native Commissioner* reflects on George's struggle with the dissonance he feels towards his work and the ever-tightening and exclusionary policies of the apartheid state that he is obligated to implement and maintain. The novel creatively tracks how this internal state of disconnect between his personal belief system and the state's wider systemic belief system produces a disturbingly powerful and all-encompassing bodily envelopment in shame. George's narrative offered me a way of beginning to understand how certain bodies may have experienced, made sense of (or not), the shifting political landscape during the formation and entrenchment of apartheid. One specific shifting point for George and one that quickened his isolation into shame's stickiness, inhibiting his connection to self, was when he realises that his entire career (which is central both to his self-identity and identity in relation to the state) has been built on an illusion: "[W]hat right had he to judge anything at all about these people, never mind the effort he was so proud of putting into understanding them and learning their languages? It was a right conferred by conquest alone; that is the only historically accurate thing you could say about it" (Johnson 91). I started to see how the character of George embodied the dis-ease created when the subconscious comes into conflict with that which is conscious.

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[96] The debut of *Woolworths* took place on the 3rd December 2017 at the Arena Theatre, Hiddingh Campus, UCT.

[97] Due to Covid-19 Level Five restrictions I was house bound by law for five weeks. I did not leave the house except for shopping for groceries each Saturday.

George's shame was rooted in his abjection of self, created by a weighty internal dissonance. He could no longer sit comfortably in the space created for him from a history of divide and rule. So even in his efforts to uplift and empower, he feels he has no right to judge or preside in a capacity that decides on behalf of those who have been conquered what should or should not be done for them.

George, like myself, experiences the internal dilemma and dis-ease of his complicity in the formation of South African racial politics. His dis-ease sits with me affectively as I journey with him through the narrative. There is a significant passage where he reflects on the complexity of the white English-speaking South African's habitus prior to and after the establishment of the National Party as the ruling party: "[W]orst of all for him, he feels he cannot blame anyone else for his predicament: not the Government, not the Department, not the industrialists, not even his lily-livered English-ancestry compatriots, most of whom he thinks have quietly stopped being serious about political opposition, choosing to let the Nationalists do the dirty work while they themselves accumulate wealth speedily and tut-tut about the new laws" (Johnson 174–75). In this extract, George echoes a sentiment that has sat with me for many years as well as an ideology that I grew up believing. Somehow, while growing up in South Africa, I believed I was not part of the machinery of racialised governance in South Africa, despite benefiting from it in childhood and adulthood by simply exhibiting a white skin. This highlights my racial amnesia and displacement of habitus in not acknowledging my demographic's complicity in reinforcing racial segregation and in failing to recognise the position of power and privilege resulting from this. In what follows, I will first provide a context for this demographic descriptor, and then explain how the concept of habitus is central to my analysis of *Woolworths*.

It is important to note that the term habitus does not evoke a deliberately adopted ethics or an evasion of responsibility, but rather refers to states of affairs, attitudes and conditions that seem natural and go 'unspoken' as they are consciously and unconsciously perpetuated. I exist both inside and outside of my habitus in my unconscious and conscious making of it. This habitus is strongly predetermined "by the naturalisation of conquest and war, and by the various modalities of human difference that unfold in the zones of being and not-being human" (Maldonado-Torres 18). Recognition of my habitus flows from an understanding of coloniality as "a logic, metaphysics, ontology, and a matrix of power that can continue existing after formal independence and desegregation" (10), a phenomenon that my being will

automatically continue to gain from and continue to perpetuate, whether unconsciously or consciously. This performance of our habitus can be called out with reference to Sartre's notion of "bad faith." Bad faith is a form of self-deception, a lie to oneself (*Being* 649–50). The point is that once one recognises one's habitus and knows its determinations and effects, one cannot unknow it. The present enquiry allows me to suspend bad faith by standing outside my habitus to critique, interrupt and dislocate it.

In a study that is autoethnographic, I frame the analysis from my habitus as an English-speaking middle-class white South African. This specificity stems from an imperial history that is steeped in racial and cultural labelling and positionings of Othering. Because of this I identify first as English-speaking, as I separate myself linguistically, rather than by class, race and heritage. As stated in the introduction, this specific demographic inflector is marked from a position of Othering. The inclusion of English-speaking separates me from the visually similar but culturally and historically separate group of white Afrikaners,[98] who may speak English (more often than not they do, though the reverse cannot be said for English-speaking South Africans). It is also necessary to clarify why I make this distinction within a generalised discussion of whiteness in South Africa. I do so to separate myself from people who may look just like me but with whom I did not integrate, as determined by the choice of schools I went to (all English-medium), the exclusively English-speaking families I was exposed to and socialised in, and the predominantly English-speaking neighbourhoods I grew up in. The simple fact that I can say that I learnt Afrikaans as a First Additional Language from Grade Three through to Grade 12 (my final year of secondary level education) yet never spoke the language outside Afrikaans lessons testifies to the linguistic-cultural exclusion I have lived in and maintained. Historically there has been a fraught division between Afrikaners and white South Africans of English (British-settler) descent. English-speaking middle-class South Africans do not readily associate or socialise with Afrikaners despite their visual likeness in whiteness.[99] There is a very complex history of British/Dutch settlement in South Africa, as well as

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[98] I make use of and see the identity construct 'Afrikaner' as an ahistorical construct, that is unstable and complex but always associated with a particular political identity that has changed over time. Who is an Afrikaner is a fraught question. Descriptors of Afrikaners in this study are discursively produced by specific tropes shaped by my habitus. When I use the term 'the' Afrikaner I do so to highlight my position of 'Othering' and how this has informed my imagining of Afrikaners. Stereotypical articulations of Afrikaners are included to visibilise my habitus's specific situatedness and characteristic discourses.

[99] This is however shifting in the South African landscape. I am married to a Namibian Afrikaner and our child is raised bi-lingual. My brother is also married to a South African Afrikaner and many of my close friends are also in inter-cultural relationships.

the memory of the South African War for both groups. Both groups established a narrative that displaced their responsibility onto the 'other' white group; both blaming 'the other' as perpetrators of the worse violations of human rights. This is further complicated in that historically there have been some black communities who self-identify with the English more than with Afrikaners, and others who identify more substantially with Afrikaners. In fact, the discourse within Afrikaner history has also designated some Afrikaners as white and some as 'not white enough.' This history of the white poor and the poor white within Afrikaner communities embraces both those who self-identified as white and kept themselves 'apart' and those who were always at risk of miscegenation and integration. The latter are the 'poor whites,' not the 'white poor.'[100] For the middle-class English-speaking South African it was perhaps because 'the' Afrikaner was 'not white enough' that we deliberately eschewed their language, literature, theatre, music and heritage. I have grown up witnessing and practising a habitus that did not acknowledge the Afrikaner's whiteness as white enough for the special type of whiteness that is mine. It was instead 'the' Afrikaner who was required to assimilate into my whiteness, their first point of departure being to speak my language to me (without an accent that exposed their linguistic-cultural roots) and to make their name pronounceable for my English mother-tongue.[101]

I was born on 15 November 1987, at the Far East Rand Hospital during the State of Emergency in South Africa. The Far East Rand in the province of Gauteng is a predominantly Afrikaans-speaking area, comprising areas such as Benoni, Brakpan,

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[100] Marijke du Toit's studies about white poor and poor white offer interesting insights into how whiteness was also marked by Afrikaners. Du Toit flags how "Afrikaans has two words for the English 'white'; *wit* and *blank*. The latter carries historical connotations of racial purity, the sanctity of 'whiteness' and the weight of publicly legislated racism that the English 'White' (and the Afrikaans *wit*) do not convey" (78).

[101] Throughout my primary, secondary and tertiary education my English mother tongue language has dominated power relations in educational and social spaces. There were of course a few Afrikaners who entered our English-medium schools and on entering quickly primarily spoke English. Those who did assimilate spoke to a discourse held by *wmcesas* that these Afrikaners were more forward-thinking. Even though I learnt Afrikaans as a First Additional Language it was frowned upon to actually speak it in public in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN), and Durban specifically. I must also mention that inhabitants of the province I grew up in KZN – just Natal pre-1994, a British colony in the 1800s where many British immigrants settled in the hope of a more prosperous life – believe Afrikaans is a dying language and should be removed from the National Curriculum syllabus. (Admittedly, this attitude is not the same in all provinces). This is evident in the dismal Afrikaans subject results from the Matric (Grade 12) exams. Afrikaans as a language is specifically rejected in *wmcesa* circles as very few attempt to learn Afrikaans fluently or speak the language in or outside of the home; nor, for that matter, any of the other national languages. Many *wmcesas* are mono-linguistic, despite South Africa's linguistic diversity, which is a clear expression of the ideological hegemony of *wmcesas* in South Africa.

Nigel and Geduld. I grew up[102] in the small English-speaking suburb of Selcourt in the town of Springs and went to the local English medium primary school, Selcourt Primary. I was quite athletic when I was younger and made my school's athletic team from Grade One while also representing my school in netball. While I was at Selcourt Primary the athletic team were demi-gods, the sport prized above all other sports. My primary school also happened to have a particularly strong athletic team, which boosted our school's credentials amongst neighbouring schools. I can recall (even though I was a young primary school goer, aged six to nine) that when we competed against Afrikaans medium schools and won, we were particularly praised for this achievement. The distinction was noted. I never saw the Afrikaner as equal but as someone we needed to beat and in doing so maintain our position. The desire to maintain this supposed 'superior position' is particularly interesting when one considers that the Far East Rand is demographically dominated by white working-class Afrikaners and not white English-speaking middle-class South Africans. I recall how as a child at school there was a narrative that floated about regarding how Afrikaner parents did not expect their children to wear shoes in public or to school (this made them dirty by association), that their daughters would pull your hair and claw your skin with their nails on the sports field, and that they made their sons wear shorts with bare feet all year round. Even though I was young I internalised this assessment and ironically did not see the Afrikaner as a person with systemic privilege like me in my whiteness, but rather as the body that existed on the other side of the border to *wmcesa* whiteness. When I moved to Durban in the month I turned ten my sense of my English-speaking South African whiteness in relation to 'the' Afrikaner grew even more prominent when my aunts commented on my *Vaal*[103] English accent as being 'out-of-place.'

Performing Whitely, a book by performance and theatre theorist, Megan Lewis, (born in Johannesburg, the daughter of an English father and mother, who identified as Afrikaans but subsequently spent most of her life in the United States), examines whiteness in South Africa specifically from the lens of white Afrikaners. Lewis argues that performance can be used as a way of exploring and negotiating whiteness. Lewis

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[102] I lived in Selcourt until I was ten years old. The remainder of my childhood and university years were spent in the city of Durban.
[103] *Vaal* refers to the literal Vaal River which was a physical landmark in separating the previous republics of the Afrikaner Republic, Transvaal and the British Colony of Natal.

uses insights from performance studies theorists when she states that it is the liminality of the performative space, a space not of the here or there, of past, present or future, that produces enactments which form a "negotiating arena of social efficaciousness" (7). She writes that "while whiteness is maintained through the actions and behaviours of individuals and groups in everyday life, performance becomes a space in which to mark and negotiate whiteness" (12). If, as Bruce Wiltshire suggests, "theatre is the art of imitation that reveals imitation," then it is through theatre/performance that we can examine whiteness's constructedness and "give pause to its unreflective reiteration" (qtd. in Warren and Heuman ix).

In light of the comments by Lewis and Wiltshire, I identify *Woolworths* as a performance that uses the possibilities of the performative space to probe, question, mirror, critique and mock whiteness, specifically the whiteness of middle-class English-speaking South Africans, in an attempt to interrupt this demographic's unreflective reiteration of its habitus. In doing so *Woolworths* performatively offers a visibilisation of the invisibility of white middle-class English-speaking South African hegemony and its ubiquity in post-apartheid South Africa. The visibilisation of power connects to a felt-feeling of what Sedgwick calls "a fight not against originary ignorance, nor for originary ignorance, but against the killing pretence that a culture does not know what it does" (*Tendencies* 51). This idea can be associated with Sartre's notion of 'bad faith,' in terms of which people deceive themselves into believing that they do not have the freedom to make or know the choices they make. It is this felt-feeling of habitus's conscious and unconscious shaping that is shaken up by my self-awakening to a shame that whispers in my bones, in my identification with a habitus that pretends to itself and to others not to know what it does. I see this refrain of not knowing what *wmcesa*ness is or does as a performative act that conceals possibilities and opportunities for individual self-knowledge. In blurring the specificities of white middle-class English-speaking South African whiteness, this particular bad faith supports the invisibilisation of systemic structures of power and ubiquitous hegemony. My habitus reproduces a narrative that deliberately displaces it from its history in order to deny responsibility and instead perform the role of the white saviour of South Africa for both Afrikaners and Blacks and People of Colour (BPOC).

As indicated in what follows, this performative aspect of habitus is key to the meaning-making aesthetic of Jenkin's play, *Woolworths* (2017), a satiric, dramatic and comedic critique of (primarily white, English-speaking) middle-class South African

identity in the post-apartheid context. The play develops theatrical *mise-en-scene* through the voice and body, and takes the form of an epic, choral poem that is variously spoken, moved and sung by a chorus of seven members. Knowing Jenkin, I knew the play would be humorous but I had not expected myself to respond to the satire of her script in quite the way I did. I had thought I would laugh but instead I sat listening, somewhat stunned and silenced by the play's quick succession of words spoken by a choral body mirroring moments to me that I had witnessed, participated in or experienced, though at the time struggled to understand.

In arriving at a better understanding of the 'pattern' highlighted in the performance of *Woolworths*, I draw on Pierre Bourdieu's and Marcel Mauss's articulation of how habitus is something that is formed in the body. Habitus, although as a concept it becomes a little unwieldy when linked to separate discussions by Bourdieu and Mauss, is extremely helpful in framing how structures of education, social position, class and gender become embodied patterns in which our bodies inhabit the world (Bourdieu 53).

> Borrowed from the Aristotelian–Thomist tradition, the concept of habitus was occasionally used in sociology and philosophy to designate an acquired and stable disposition. While phenomenologists (Husserl namely) were interested in its role in the construction of the self (ego) through past experience, it served sociologists such as Weber and Elias in their reflection on the collective dimension of attitudes and behaviours shared by a social group, be it religious (Weber) or national (Elias). Drawing from these two traditions of thought (phenomenology and sociology), Bourdieu theorised this concept, relating it to his theory of practice, which emphasises the process by which individuals interiorise habits in their body through education. Bourdieu applies the concept of habitus to social classes and their differing lifestyles. (Sapiro, 484)

Bourdieu identifies habitus as a product of history that produces individual and collective practices, and it is habitus that ensures the "active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices … more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms" (54). Bourdieu's argument also highlights the generative capacities of habitus.

Bourdieu creates a way for me to think about how I live out the habitus of my special kind of 'whiteness' when he states that habitus is "things made to be said,

which directly govern words and deeds without ever unfolding as spectacle" (52). While Bourdieu's discussion pays little attention to how the body feels, Probyn in "Shame in the Habitus" offers a critique of Bourdieu's limitations and a realignment of Marcel Mauss's discussion of habitus. Mauss, a French contemporary of Bourdieu, positioned habitus more significantly in relation to emotion and the feeling body. Both thinkers were influenced by the other, but it was Mauss who first coined the term habitus as a sociological concept (Probyn, "Shame" 223). For Mauss, "it is through the triple analysis of the physiological, psychological, and the societal that one might arrive at an understanding of the total man" (qtd. in Probyn, "Shame" 223). Moreover, Mauss does not construe the connection between the corporeal and the psychic as "a causal relationship that keeps one outside the other" (qtd. in Karsenti 76). To elaborate, I quote at length from Probyn, who distinguishes between the thinking of Mauss and Bourdieu regarding habitus, the body, and how the body feels in relation to the social:

> Compared to Bourdieu's equivocation about the body and emotion, Mauss goes straight to the pervasiveness of physiological convergences. And in contrast to the way that the social seems to close down the body in the Bourdieusian habitus, Mauss is careful to highlight the very thin layer that exists between the physiological and the social. Moreover that layer is inhabited and disturbed by the feeling body – its tears, laughter and ejaculations. Unlike Bourdieu, these do not have to be contained as emotion, which as we've seen plays a crucial role in securing the inevitable operations of the habitus. While Mauss also links the body's feelings to 'a precise end,' he retains an emphasis on the very physiology which animates their moral discharge. The consequent social expectations are charged by their own physical and moral discharges. In this we have a very different picture of embodiment wherein the body does not fall away before the social, or become mere support for its static existence. The social here is charged by physicality. Mauss' comments were made in the context of arguing for collaboration between sociology and psychology. In part he was conceding to psychology the realm of the emotions, at the same time that he seems to be claiming the affective body for sociology. ("Shame in the Habitus" 235)

How then did the performative aesthetic of the chorus in *Woolworths* represent, through sound and movement, the physicality of the *wmcesa* habitus?

My discomfort mounts as I grow in awareness of how my 'body is out of place' and how it does not belong.

As adumbrated above, *Woolworths* triggered an internal agitation as I began to see how my habitus was imbricated in the performance and how this imbrication was revealing to me my habitus's exclusionary way of being. The heightened state of self-reflection generated a secondary process of self-reflection that in turn started a process of undoing the shame I felt in relation to my habitus. This undoing of shame occurs in sharing and having a reader witness my articulation of the shamed story I carry wrapped up in my habitus. This articulation has not come without the complexity of sharing that shame brings: the more I articulate about my habitus, the more conscious I am of the double bind in which I find myself of living in the very habitus that I am trying to undo. This has created an abjection to my habitus, as I try to undo the shame triggered in my body, because my habitus has become somewhat abject to me. As Kristeva argues in *Powers of Horror,* "the abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to Self" (1). I struggle to demarcate what is inside and outside of my habitus (my being). An internal state of abjection and shame occurs because one is unable to separate one's self from the habitus of self, in self's way of being. Salman Rushdie, in *Shame*, uses the character of Kureishi to embody the difficulty in combining two cultures. Like Kureishi, I too experience a dilemma in splitting the self. Just as Kureishi experiences being Pakistani and British, so too do I encounter being South African, English and Scottish, where my ancestral roots connect me to an historical habitus of colonial abjection. Mary Douglas's idea of dirt as a "matter out of place" (qtd. in Campkin 49) and Probyn's insights into the habitus of shame reiterate the threatening potential shame has for abjection, in self becoming a foreign body to itself (an idea echoed in *The Native Commissioner*).

My discomfort with my habitus grows outside the performance and continues to grow as I compile this chapter. Shame and abjection refer to "social prohibitions and inhibitions, as well as patterns of behaviour we, consciously or not, embody" (Stepien 214). This idea is grounded in Bourdieu's notion of habitus, described earlier, as an embodied history. In her engagement with Bourdieu regarding habitus, Probyn suggests that "whether at the interpersonal, social or cultural level, shame points to boundaries, the habitual patterns of how we see values and rules and respond to them" (*Blush* 38).

Aneta Stepien argues that shame and dirt refer to social prohibitions and inhibitions, as well as patterns of behaviour that we embody, whether consciously or not (214). Shame enters a consideration of habitus when abstract ideas such as class, gender, ethnicity (which determine and maintain a particular habitus) dictate what the individual self can and cannot do. As Kristeva notes, abjection is "an extremely strong feeling which is at once somatic and symbolic, and which is above all a revolt of the person against an external menace from which one wants to keep oneself at a distance, but of which one has the impression that it is not only an external menace but that it may menace us from the inside" (qtd. in Guberman, 33). In her attempt to delineate this strange looping-back of abjection, Kristeva states: "I expel myself, I spit myself out, I abject myself within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish myself" (3).

How do I sit comfortably with myself, when I feel a growing abjection to self in relation to the space I make my home in?

Somatic psychologist Katherine Young argues that corporeal attitudes are modelled by parents to their children, in that "the body is one of our family traditions" (26). Young suggests this "haunting of our own bodies by the bodies of others is constant, a persistent familiar in our ordinary lives" (Young 45). The body thus serves as a map embodying both individual experience and that of family and history. The body archives these memories because the body "is the flesh of memory" (45). Young's insights echo Probyn's characterisation of the body as a container of history and habitus, a fact that is rendered most evident in the context of the affect of shame, when past experiences are revivified (*Blush* 40). The chorus in *Woolworths* called out the embodiment of shame in my individual and collective making, making my body alive to the shame in the histories of its habitus – and thus beginning the process of undoing shame.

I attended *Woolworths* with an amaXhosa friend. In relation to the content of the play, my body was very differently positioned from hers. Unexpectedly, the play took direct aim at my habitus, revealing and mocking its absurdities, opulence, entitlements, privilege and lack of responsibility. The play made me increasingly more

self-conscious of myself in relation to my amaXhosa friend.[104] A further note on context was that the performance took place in the Arena theatre, a space that had previously housed discussions on working towards a decolonised tertiary landscape at UCT. During these meetings sentiments were extremely polarised and white bodies were silenced. This was the first time I had returned to campus since (as described in Chapter One) a collective of students had taken up occupation of one of the buildings and prevented staff and students from accessing the campus. In addition to this, I had performed my Master's piece in the theatre. The space therefore housed a tense mixture of emotions and experiences.

Woolworths came about through Jenkin's enrolment in the Master's programme in the Drama Department at UCT. The MA programme by coursework follows a Practice as Research (PAR) methodology component led by Mark Fleishman. This approach enables theoretical reflection on the practitioners' practice. *Woolworths* was therefore created through a series of staged phases, with the initial idea materialising in Jenkin's minor project, progressing into her medium project and then culminating in the production itself which formed her final Master's performance in December 2017.

The work was thus developed and performed over two very critical and volatile years at UCT, 2016–2017, a period when debate about issues of white privilege (social, economic, political and historical) and access by class and race to certain institutions gained formidable momentum. I, like Jenkin, found these two years a shifting space in my own thinking and engagement with ideas around whiteness and its invisibility (though hegemonic and ubiquitous) in South Africa, especially the invisibility (though hegemonic and ubiquitous) of English-speaking white middle-class South Africans. As I have suggested above, *wmcesa*s have extended their position of privilege through overt historical abjection of the white Afrikaner. The white Afrikaner has been positioned by white English-speaking South Africans as the scapegoat for the creation of the apartheid state and thus coupled to all racialised legacies thereafter.

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[104] In my discussion of *Terminal/Blood Diamond* I mentioned how in experiencing the work individually, in isolation and separate from an audience heightened my sense of vulnerability as I could not hide in the safety and shelter of the audience. This heightened my feeling of being watched as my shame was played out on and through my body. However, in relation to how I felt while seated amongst the audience in *Woolworths*, the first time I viewed the performance at the Arena theatre at UCT I was not comforted by the crowd. This could have been due to my own sense of isolation and distrust of the crowd, enforced by the politics of polarisation typical of discussions and debates on campus during 2015–2017, and in being seated next to my amaXhosa friend. However, on viewing the play for the second time, when I attended it with my husband, a year later at the TAAC, I felt slightly more relaxed – in part because I knew what was awaiting me.

But it is an indisputable fact that within the racially classified system of apartheid, white English-speaking South Africans willingly stood side-by-side with the white Afrikaner, sharing public amenities, resources and socially constructed sites of systemic economic gain. But ignoring both this and the whole sorry history of the British occupation of South Africa, English-speaking white South Africans believe that they were involved neither in the economic, societal and political shaping nor the benefits of the apartheid state. This belief removes English-speaking white South Africans from responsibility because of the belief that 'someone else did it,' namely the racist Afrikaner. Although I was becoming increasingly aware of my tendency strategically to displace myself from the historical making of apartheid, it was the performance, *Woolworths,* that starkly exposed my blindness to my habitus's invisibility.[105]

Woolworths is fast-paced. The words come hurtling at you. The speed of both the words and movements at first made it hard for me to process any cognitive meaning-making. With many words spoken in unison by a choral group of seven performers the sheer volume and speed felt as if I had been placed in front of a subwoofer driving at full speed on a highway. It was only after a few minutes had passed and the same line repeated several times (a technique Jenkin employs throughout the play) that I was able to hear and begin to process what I felt.

A discomfort grows in my body and I do not sit comfortably in the space created for me.

I use the word 'discomfort' as I link this descriptor to Ahmed's discussion of queer feelings, where she identifies 'discomfort' as generative in not being wholly constraining or negative (*Cultural Politics* 155). The discomfort is brought about by how the body is affectively shaped to live in the world. Ahmed writes:

> [D]iscomfort is hence not about assimilation or resistance, but about inhabiting norms differently. The inhabitance is generative or productive insofar as it does not end with the failure of norms to be secured, but with possibilities of living that do not 'follow' those norms through. Queer is not, then, about

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[105] Maulanga Karenga argues that privilege should not be the main focus of whiteness studies. Instead, the focus should be on the hegemony and ubiquitousness of whiteness, which guarantee white privilege: "focus on White-skin privilege can become a substitute for focus on White people's power, which is both the source and sustainer of White-skin privileges, which even poor and relatively powerless Whites are granted. The notion of privilege, is interrogated to challenge the power of whiteness. Particularly, because many white people live in an atmosphere of alleged 'colour-blindness' and claim ignorance of their power and the subsequent privileges attached to it." (26)

transcendence or freedom from the (hetero)normative. Queer feelings are 'affected' by the repetition of the scripts that they fail to reproduce, and this 'affect' is also a sign of what queer can do, of how it can work by working on the (hetero)normative. (155)

It was therefore the performative repetition of text and physical choreography that produced a discomfort in me, a dis-ease arising from a pattern of thinking that stood in contradiction to my learnt habitus, thus producing a queering of feeling – a queering of feeling in being both an insider and outsider in respect of the performance and its critique, in holding the tension of being both intimately connected to the habitus satirised by *Woolworths* and being a detached outsider capable of critical analysis.

Before I continue with this discussion of how my habitus was shaken up by feeling in relation to *Woolworths* it is necessary to articulate the significance of the play's title and what the term 'Woolworths' means in South Africa. Woolworths is a chain store that sells clothing, homeware and food. Woolworths Food[106] is classed above the other departments of Woolworths and is seen as the most exclusive food store chain in South Africa. Woolworths Food is perfectly polished and styled, beautifully packaged and immaculately presented, showcasing long-lasting shelf-life products of exceptional quality. Woolworths is also a company that cares for the environment and is ethically aware of who their suppliers are and how their food reaches the consumer's table. Woolworths Food competes with and perhaps even out-classes international food stores such as Waitrose, Marks and Spencer and Whole Foods. In a country with a high percentage of people living below the breadline, Woolworths Food exists as a world outside of time. I say this because it has such a strong affective pull on white middle-class English-speaking South African bodies, conducing to a nostalgia (or fantasy) that brings comfort to *wmcesa*ness in terms of quality, convenience, maintenance and order. Woolworth Food removes any feeling of abjection, all associations with filth, poverty, rotting food, contamination and disorder, and even limits the discomfort that may be felt in not having to queue with people that aren't like you. Woolworths Food aesthetically materialises the identity of *wmcesa*ness. This psychological hold runs deep, so much so that a discourse is

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[106] It is important to note that the use of the word Woolworths refers to Woolworths Food and not Woolworths as an entire enterprise. Woolworths clothing and home does not hold the same weighted quality, privilege and 'desire' as Woolworth Food.

maintained in middle class circles that Woolworths Food is above reproach. If looking for quality, look no further than Woolworths Food. This psychology embraces the belief that by just walking into Woolworths Food and gazing at the glossy, perfectly styled, packaged and long shelf-life products you too get to embody *quality*.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the space where *Woolworths* was performed induced a specific affect. What affects are held by certain spaces is suggested in the title of the play and further explored in the performance text. It is the title that ingeniously makes visible the subconscious state of the *wmcesa* psyche, in their yearning for wanting to live in a South Africa that looks like *Woolworths*. The line, "Please just let me live in Woolworths," concludes the opening scene brilliantly captures the psyche of *wmcesa*ness. I quote the first scene of *Woolworths*:

> Please
> Please
> Please
> Please
> Please
> Please can I just
> Can I just
> Can I
> Can I
> Can I please just live?
> Live, live, live!
> Oh, please let me live,
> Just let me live,
> Please just let me live in Woolworths! (Jenkin, *Woolworths* 1)[107]

This opening scene dramatically articulates the invisibilised affective state induced by Woolworths Food and also brings into question the 'yearning' of *wmcesa*ness to 'live' in a Woolworths Food store. Jenkin uses the brand, space and socialised beliefs about Woolworths Food as a framing of *wmcesa*ness. *Woolworths* therefore materialises this immaterial psychic state of desire. The irony in the line "Please just let me live in Woolworths" inheres in the use of the word "let" (1). Of course *wmcesa*s would love to live in the cleanliness, abundance, quality, accessibility, convenience and perfection

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[107] I must make special mention of Jenkin's generosity in granting me permission to read through and cite the unpublished playtext in my thesis.

that a Woolworths Food store affects, but the irony is that it is actually a way of life that most middle-class English-speaking white South Africans already live. I see the use of the word "let" as almost prayerful, expressing the desire not to be made to feel too uncomfortable or challenged in lifestyle choices when placed next to the stark reality of the working class and the millions of South Africans who eke out an existence in informal settlements and rural villages.

From my own reflections on eating food bought from Woolworths Food there is a clearly discernible affective state generated by the superior quality associated with their products. I recall how as a child buying and eating food from Woolworths Food was a treat in itself. I embarrassingly reflect on the affective state that food labelled with the Woolworths emblem generated in me. I remember being acutely conscious of this during primary school and recall how I reused a cooldrink bottle with a Woolworths emblem on it (distinct from an unlabelled plastic bottle) because I knew it would appear to others that my food was bought at Woolworths, endowing me with some sort of aura of privileged power. Sadly, as an adult this affective state of being when entering Woolworths Food has not changed. Somehow, even now, Woolworths Food manages to evoke an ambience of quality that makes you feel as if you are purchasing something that is superior, exclusive, special and privileged. The fascinating thing is that the social connotations of the retailer's name are readily reinforced in social settings, especially social dynamics where white middle-class South Africans are present. I recall how one person told me that if as a salary-earning adult you had to look at how much products cost at Woolworths Food you could not call yourself middle-class. Woolworths Food thus patterns the lifestyle to which most white middle-class English-speaking South Africans aspire. Woolworths Food and the experience it curates afford you a special kind of whiteness by association.[108]

When thinking back to how the play made me feel, somatic waves of embarrassment, humiliation and weightiness accrued as I listened to lines recited by the chorus that I had at points in my life heard and spoken. Jenkin, in her thesis, states:

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[108] It is necessary to clarify that Woolworths Food does have other demographics who shop at its stores. I deliberately echo the choice made by the play to use the food store as a way into working with the psyche of *wmcesa*ness and its special kind of whiteness.

Through the enacted choral pattern-making of *Woolworths*, I look not only to reflect on pattern's relationship to the internal structures of form, but its embodied reflection of, and influence on, various aspects of socio-cultural patterns of ideology, psychology, politics, behaviour and aesthetics. Here I imply that *Woolworths* as a work of pattern, exists as part of, and as an outgrowth of the socially contextual patterns that are embedded in myself and the members of the chorus who perform it. ("Performing Pattern" 27)

This patterning of habitus is shown through continual movements of repetition, in words, speech, tonal quality and choreographic patterning. Jenkin strategically uses patterning through a physical and vocal aesthetic in her performances as a means to show how habitus is articulated through the embodied practices (tonal and physical) that constitute *wmcesa*ness. The creative patterning in choreographic staging and text therefore satirically mirrors and probes the psyche of *wmcesa*s. The directorial and staging choice to unify the performers into a choral voice heightens this psychic reflection. The chorus gives voice to the psyche of *wmcesa*s, while also commenting on it and parodying it through the mirroring process.

Historically one of the roles of the chorus in Greek theatre was to represent the audience/witnesses on stage and therefore to testify and give voice to what was not seen on stage. The chorus therefore acts as a portal through which off-stage action, not directly witnessed by the audience or included in the main dramatic action on stage, can still be presented. Jenkin uses the chorus to parody the structural on- and off-stage actions of middle-class white English-speaking South Africans, astutely voicing and speaking to what often goes silenced and unseen in cultural construction. The chorus thus strategically makes visible the invisible in reflections on *wmcesa*s' privilege, and it is through their spoken text and choreographed staging that Jenkin creates a living pattern of *wmcesa* power on the stage.

At this point it is important to include a discussion of Erving Goffman's front stage, back stage and off stage analysis of society in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956). The chorus presents *wmcesa*s in Goffman's 'stages'. In doing so it prevents *wmcesa*s who may be seated in the audience from hiding in one of the 'stages.' Instead the chorus contrasts (backstage) private high-flying dinner conversations with the (off-stage) interior narratives that run through our minds while we stand in a queue at Woolworths Food, with the discourses (front stage) we choose

to make ourselves believe and tell others, that we perform face-to-face for those who look at us.

An extract from *Woolworths*, scene 10, titled "The Real Housewives of Constantia,"[109] reads as follows:

No, please, it's *fine*, they don't bite.
They're just my oodgy, goodgy, boodgies,
Love them.
Hey my babies?
And this is the new bathroom we did in stone, steige, slat, slate, latté, beige and greige.
Mmm.
Something a little *different*.
And this is *Someone Poor*.
Hey, my baby?
She's my oodgy, goodgy, boodgy,
Love her.
She's a member of the family.
A member of the family I pay to clean the house and look after Tysie Jack-Mack, Ella-Bella-Lulu-Rose and Sebastian.
Sebastian!
I mean I pay my husband to do the same, but you know how men are.
Waap waap.
They can't multi-task like us
WOMEN.

Who cleans her house who cleans your house?
Who raises her babies who raises your babies?
Who cleans her house who cleans your house?
Who raises her babies who raises your babies?
Who cleans her house who cleans your house?
Who raises her babies who raises your babies?

I mean it's a serious juggling act.
I need to pursue my lifelong passions and goals
And live my best motherfucking life, bitches!

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[109] Constantia is a suburb in Cape Town which is located at the foot of Table Mountain. The real estate in this area is among the most expensive in the country and thus some of the wealthiest people in South Africa live there. It is also an area where people with old money live because the price of property cannot be bought without significant levels of prior capital investment, suggesting an apartheid white legacy. Unlike Stellenbosch, another extremely wealthy area in proximity to Cape Town, Constantia is mainly home to White English speakers.

Your babies are plastic.
Your babies are plastic babies.

I mean, seriously. Look around you.
This Is Reality.
Scatter cushions don't pay for themselves. (Jenkin, *Woolworths* 13–14)

This scene shows how Jenkin uses exaggeration to heighten the absurdity of middle-class English-speaking white South African lifestyles. This generates humour and an evolving awareness of what this habitus entails. The repetitive descriptors regarding the colour choice of tile in the refurbishment of a bathroom, be it "stone, steige, slat, slate, latté, beige and greige" highlight the crazy absurdity of the middle-class aspirational lifestyle, satirising its compulsion to upgrade, refurbish and restyle (13).

Another important element in this scene is the relationship that middle-class English-speaking white South African employers have with their domestic worker and/or nanny. Jenkin delivers this duality in an interesting double play of humour and actuality. The position of the nanny/domestic worker in South Africa is fraught with complexities in a post-apartheid context.[110] Due to the racially regulated system of oppression that was apartheid, politically privileged race groups had little difficulty with using the disenfranchised poor to clean their home and help in the responsibility of raising their children. In the post-apartheid context, it is popular among *wmcesa*s to refer to domestic workers or child minders as "a member of the family," as if this statement (and the sentimental pretence that informs it) undoes the labour/lifestyle binary between the employer and employee. The irony in this statement is specifically loaded in South Africa as this supposed member of the family most probably sleeps in a shack, has no running water in her home, gets paid a minimum wage, cleans the toilets for the rest of the family and does not get to make use of the 'family' benefits.[111] This scene in the play thus highlights a significant source of dissonance in *wmcesa*s.

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[110] This thesis' discussion does not give me time and space to discuss this in more detail, but Neelika Jayawardane provides a detailed critique of the cartographies of relationship between maids (domestic workers) and their madams (employer).

[111] This discussion is powerfully articulated in the photographic work of Ernest Kole (later known as Cole) in his book *House of Bondage* (1967). One of Kole's photographs which encapsulates this most profoundly is the image of a domestic worker lying on her single bed reading a newspaper in her room at her employer's house. Plastic crates make up the base of her bed and sheets of newspaper carpet her floor. The photograph is captioned as follows: "She lives on the edge of opulence, while her own world is bare. Newspapers are her carpet, fruit crates her chair and table."

What is said is not necessarily done, but because it is said *wmcesa*s feel better about themselves. *Woolworths* holds up a mirror to these *wmcesa* smokescreens.

This dissonance in habitus is visually represented through Jenkin's choreographic work with the prop – plastic bags. Jenkin makes use of white plastic bags throughout the performance, in a simple but highly effective way associated with the spatial placement of a grocery store. In scene 10, plastic bags being cradled as babies become coverings placed over the performers' heads. The use of white plastic bags is also visually reinforced by the lines in scene 10: "Your babies are plastic. Your babies are plastic babies." The inanimate object of the plastic bag also plays on the idea of the objectification of domestic workers/nannies, who are spoken of as human and equal but in historical patterning and belief systems continue to be positioned as units of labour, reminding us of Fanon's reference to "crushing objecthood" (*Black Skin* 77). The relationship between the domestic worker/nanny and employer's children is fraught with hypocrisy. Although the domestic worker/nanny is objectified in labour production, this inferior position is challenged by the role of intimate carer for the middle-class English-speaking white South African's child. When the performers place the plastic bags over their heads, they become objects. The visual staging affectively dramatises the dehumanisation suggested in the extract. Intriguingly, shame comes from the Indo-European verb "to cover" (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 104). It communicates an impulse to "take cover" and also "to cover oneself" (104). The act of covering the head by the choral group visually marks an internal dilemma of exposure, shame and concealment.

Plastic bags in motion always make me think about the iconic scene in the film, *American Beauty* (1999), where the effortless movement of a plastic bag in a swirl of wind is captured on a camcorder by the character Ricky, an aspiring filmmaker. This inanimate object is now filled with a life-like quality, an affective quality that transforms a mundane and banal object into something beautiful. But in seeing white plastic bags perform and take on their own motion in *Woolworths* I think only of my whiteness. It feels suffocating. I see the white hoods of the Ku Klux Klan as the plastic bags cover the performers' faces. I see the objectification of others by whiteness. I see the obsession that *wmcesa*s have with litter, especially perhaps the litter left behind by

bodies after mass gatherings, on city streets and on public beaches.[112] The body that litters is marked as abject. In watching white plastic bags inserted into the performance as objects playing various roles, I began to see only my whiteness and my doomed attempts to claim a sense of belonging within an African identity. My identity is constructed, it is anything but organic, and the roots of the habitus of my English-speaking middle-class white South African indoctrination are as deep and permanent as the non-degradable particles of that white plastic bag that swirls and whirls.

I sit feeling suffocated by my habitus as I watch the performers' place white plastic bags over their heads.

Despite the dis-ease, discomfort and feelings of suffocation, there are several moments in *Woolworths* where I laughed at the nonsensical lines delivered in characters' attempts to divert and escape the 'heat' of conversations that are controversial, political or threatening to whiteness. Charos draws on Elaine Scarry in suggesting that shame's effects on language are different from the linguistic effects of pain. Charos discusses how shame, rather than destroying language actually allows for speech, "but speech that is mediated by the desire to keep 'bad feelings' concealed" ("States of Shame" 275). The use of nonsensical language in *Woolworths* suggests an act of concealment by *wmcesa*s, because of the shame they feel in speaking to and about bad feelings. This is seen in scene 13, "Can't Even." The title itself reflects the inability of language to communicate emotional responses. The phrase 'can't even' is often associated with privileged adolescents who use the phrase 'can't even' when their extremely high and 'cushy' standard of living is 'put out' or 'stretched.' Jenkin uses this language to mirror *wmcesa* concealment and the mask worn by English-speaking white middle class bodies in post-apartheid South Africa:

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[112] Narratives around race, dirt and the presence of litter left on beaches by bodies seen as 'abject' has brought about numerous racialised incidents/content in white middle-class South African circles. One which gained national attention and a high court hearing was the Facebook post made by Penny Sparrow in 2016, when she likened BPOC who had gone to the beach to monkeys due to the filth and dirt they left behind. She was found guilty of hate speech and ordered to pay a R150 000 fine. The post that went viral reads: "These monkeys that are allowed to be released on New Year's Eve and New Year's day on to public beaches towns etc obviously have no education what so ever [sic]," she wrote in the post, which went viral. "So to allow them loose is inviting huge dirt and troubles and discomfort to others" http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35226147. What was most concerning about the statement was that it did not come as a shock. These sentiments had been shared and heard by many. Sparrow merely became the scapegoat for the many shared her opinions.

Oh my God, did you see that?
Can you believe what just hap – (pened?)
– Can you believe that the walla walla walla
And if they think they can hush sha sha sha sha sha
And the way this place is going to the aroo, aroo, arooooooooooaah!
Ruff wuff wah roo ah ah ooh wah![113]

Even though these lines make only partial sense, they nevertheless capture the idiom
of conversations shared by middle-class English-speaking white South Africans when
at dinner tables or social gatherings, especially when discussing national politics,
schooling, health care, public transport, infrastructure, and and and. A rhetorical trope
popular in *wmcesa* circles is that everything has gone to the dogs since the African
National Congress (ANC) acquired political power. The view is that ANC governance
is to blame for our failed school system, health care, public amenities and
infrastructure (especially ESKOM which controls the supply of electricity). It is
therefore the ANC which has failed South Africans. The reality is that the situation is
highly complex and one in which it is not logical to assume a polarised stance. There
are so many factors at play: South Africa currently has one of the lowest 'reading for
meaning' percentiles in the world, a touch-and-go relationship with its national
electricity provider, Eskom, a collapsing mining industry (which numerous migrant
labourers depend on to support themselves and their families), a failing police system,
extremely high levels of corruption among government officials, and an under-
resourced and overtaxed health care system. The context is crucial: so many of these
resources prior to 1994 existed as a type of fake reality. Eskom provided electricity to
industry and the suburbs and did not have to worry about supply to ever-increasing
informal settlements, the social by-product of rural poverty, an oppressive mining
system and a demand for cheap labour. There was no basket of social benefits for
Black people. Five decades of apartheid rule and a previous trajectory of colonial rule
constructed a reality for white South Africans where services and resources only had
to cater for a narrowed percentage of the national demographic. Prior to 1994, when
Blacks and people of colour were not recognised as equal (or even in some cases,

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[113] '*Walla walla . . . hush sha sha sha*' are pronounced as written. The '*aroo, aroo*' line descends into
dogs barking and howling.

fully human), white South Africans lived in a world where labour was dispensable, inexhaustible and served only the needs and interests of whites. It is of little wonder that South Africa was indeed prior to 1994 a utopia for its white citizens. *Woolworths* strategically speaks to and about the on-going disengagement of most *wmcesa*s, who have not shifted their worldview since 1994. The world of *wmcesa*s needs to be and is dependent on being hyper-efficient, ordered, clean and white; and if not wholly white, then those bodies that are not white need to be able to maintain efficiency, order and cleanliness, and appear in word and action as close to 'white' as humanly possible.

What *Woolworths* begins to highlight through its hyper-satirical text is the question of how shame is triggered for the white body when whiteness fails to live up to its ideals (Lewis, *Performing Whitely* xiii). Woolworths Food institutionalises *wmcesa*ness's self-deceiving ideals, and *Woolworths* as a performance mocks the fragility of their whiteness and exposes their shame in terms of their habitus. *Woolworths* masterfully uses the double play of satirical humour to cover over and uncover shame. At first, I am lured into the play by a reactive laughter, joining in with the crowd, not yet processing what is being said. Only after a number of lines have been spoken by the performers do I start to engage cognitively with what I think the performance is trying to say.

I stop laughing. A silence of discomfort grows in my body.

It is this comedic technique, constructed through conflict between what the lines say, the tone used in their delivery and the addition of a third dimension in the choreographic movement (often unconnected to the verbal and tonal dimensions), that creates an affective incongruity in me. The three tiers of the performance (text, tone and movement) enable the chorus to express a critique "that not only reflects on, but embodies systemic and shared social issues" (Jenkin, "Performing Pattern" 14). The chorus communicates a contradiction witnessed in the *wmcesa* habitus, where often what is said is said in a tone that contradicts the words, and can be further disjointed by juxtaposing certain actions. In scene 10, "The Real Housewives of Constantia," the text discloses this contradiction in how *wmcesa*s project the appearance of 'giving back to the community':

I just give so, so much at work, at play. And every other month I go into the
community and present the community with vacuum-sealed babies, and teach
them valuable life-skills about tolerance and forgiveness.
I admire you.
Me Too.
Oh my God I Admire You For Going Into THE COMMUNITIES!
To be honest, I just really, truly admire communities.
Mm Mm.
Me too.
But I mean, at the end of the day, when all is said and done, and done and
dusted,
and thank God it's Friday, I'm putting others first.
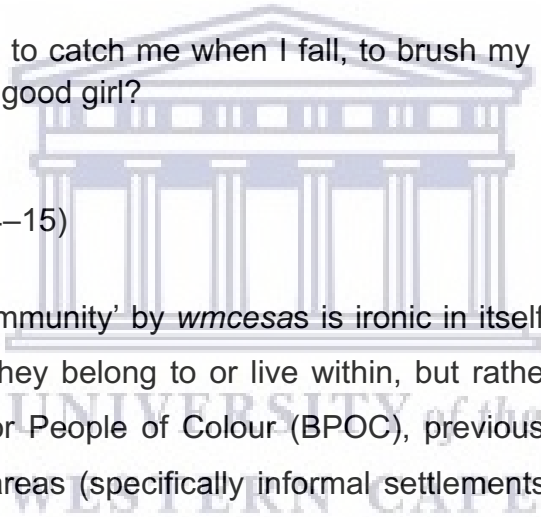Mm mm.
But what about me? Who puts me first?
Nashua.
Who will be there to catch me when I fall, to brush my hair, and clip my nails
and tell me I'm a good girl?

Ooh wah
Ooh wah ooh. (14–15)

The use of the term 'community' by *wmcesa*s is ironic in itself as the term does not
denote the community they belong to or live within, but rather refers specifically to
people who are Black or People of Colour (BPOC), previously disadvantaged and
living in working class areas (specifically informal settlements and townships). The
above scene also exposes the contradiction inherent in acts of service in the
community because of how the white body positions its role in these spaces. The white
body in the community positions itself as the primary teacher, instructor and parent,
recreating a patriarchal and colonial positioning. The white body comes to instruct,
adopting a top-down mode of instruction with little co-learning or sharing. The white
body is positioned as the source of knowledge and wisdom. When the audience no
longer laughs but watches in silence, the silence places the audience member's sense
of self at a distance from what is viewed. The voice of the chorus appears to hang over
the group of bodies, a mask, a persona, and the collective body of performers
becomes haunted by a voice that speaks apart from them. It is this powerful system
of a ghostly control in the formation of the habitus of *wmcesa*ness and its special kind
of whiteness that *Woolworths* performs.

Walter Benjamin's characterisation of shame as always playing on a doubleness between the public and the private, the extraordinary and the mundane, is particularly helpful in the analysis of a performance that represents in public what is often concealed in private. Shame theorists argue that shame is the most intimate of feelings, brought into being by proximity to others; that shame makes us intimate to ourselves while at the same time being relational, and therefore social. In my witnessing the performance of the chorus in *Woolworths,* it became clear to me that the chorus reflected precisely this doubleness of the feeling of shame. I saw the chorus presenting a reflection on the thoughts typical of the *wmcesa* habitus while also articulating the internal psyche of the individual, mine specifically. Interestingly, it is the very group identity of the chorus that enables a way of expressing satire and critique that not only reflects on but also embodies systemic and shared social issues. The chorus comments on both personal and collective social shame in the ways it visibilises the scaffolding of English-speaking middle-class South African privilege in post-apartheid South Africa. This scaffolding (the bones of its habitus) is made visible through the chorus mirroring back to the audience a reflection of itself, making visible and public that which is intimate. The audience in turn in witnessing the performance of the chorus become virtual members of the choral group. The rapid and engulfing movements envelop the bodies of the audience into the choral body. The chorus, Lehmann asserts, "is able to function scenically as a mirror and partner of the audience" (131). As an audience member I am made an "inextricable" member of the "choral group" and the chorus in turn looks at a seated chorus (Jenkin, "Performing Pattern" 14).[114] The audience at subsequent performances (especially when the piece was performed at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda and the Courtyard Theatre in Cape Town) was mainly white South African, though the students who attended the initial performances under the auspices of the UCT Drama Department reflected a more diverse demographic.

Vik Loveday investigates how accent can shame employees by either hindering or enabling work opportunities, especially in class-conscious Britain, where shame is identified "as the *practice* that feeds back into unequal relations, *shaping* perceptions

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[114]The friend with whom I first viewed the performance found it funny. She said it was its honesty that made her laugh.

and actions and, ultimately, helping to reinforce such equity" (1145). Her insights offer a very helpful perspective on how shame is used in maintaining and reinforcing a collective habitus (1145). Using insights from Bourdieu, Loveday highlights how the collective is maintained through a "linguistic habitus" (1146). The chorus in *Woolworths* adheres to a naturalised habitus in its vocal performance by having recourse to a precise synchronicity and identical pitch, tone and pronunciation. Shame's affective practice is thus performed when the chorus does not execute its synchronicity in speech and action. The performer who fails to hide in the collective experiences the affect of shame when isolated from the collective (the individual is cut off). In turn the choral group experiences a deficiency when an individual speaks "out of place" or, conversely, a moment of brilliance when the timing is executed with "symbolic mastery" (1146). The voice that speaks "out of place" is marked as abject by the collective body.[115] The choral body therefore performs how to avoid and escape shame by absorbing and reproducing the voice of the collective habitus. It is the chorus that visually and audibly performs the practice of shame through showing how a habitus silences the individual's sound. It is the embodiment of class through habitus, acquired through "affective practice" and reinforced by shame's legitimation of a schema of valuation in which that deficiency can be embodied, privilege naturalised and a "moral economy" obscured (Loveday 1151). Through the device of the chorus, *Woolworths* embodies this critique by performing it. It is worth noting in this context that the English accent of *wmcesas* ness is extremely hard to perform by non *wmcesa* speakers. This is particularly evident in how it has been travestied by performers in Hollywood films. While the Afrikaner accent has been mimicked with some success by international performers, the *wmcesa* accent has proven more challenging. Only in writing this chapter did I realise how even in the *wmcesa* accent there is an exclusivity and specificity of accent, in how even the sound of the *wmcesa* voice needs to mimic its habitus.

Of further interest regarding what the performative aesthetic of the chorus in *Woolworths* offers in thinking about shame is the idea that the chorus generates a 'metaphorical' third person in the audience. This felt-experience during the performance leans directly on Sartre's basic assumptions about shame, where he

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[115] This also recalls Mary Douglas's idea of "matter out of place" in the context of displacement and placement.

sees shame as an Other-mediated form of self-experience, involving the alienation (othering) of the subject's self. The chorus therefore generates shame by forming the Other-mediated self-experience and alienates the subject's self in how the audience is positioned and interacts with the choral body and self.

Jenkin remarks of the role of the chorus in *Woolworths* that as:

an embodiment of unity, belonging and vulnerability, the chorus presents a deep sense of shared humanity, and yet as an embodiment of symmetry and exacting geometric pattern, it expresses something profoundly inhumane or non-human, something mechanistic, faceless and invulnerable, something that is seemingly blind to human faces and vulnerability. The machine is not only terrifying because it can crush you, but because it can crush you without seeing you. The machine does not tolerate difference: you are part of the machine, or you do not exist:

I have no bones,
I have no face,
I can't stop,
I try and try and I can't stop
. . .
I am blinding!
I can't see!" ("Performing Pattern" 29)

In assessing how the affect of shame was transferred in *Woolworths,* I see the centralisation of the choral body as the key aesthetic element in the affective exchange. The chorus performs the invisible power of the white middle-class English-speaking South African habitus as it is exerted by hegemonic ideology. In its working together as a collective, the chorus represents a constructed example of unity, belonging, cohesion and bodily sensitivity to other bodies. It is the physicalisation of the choral body that make the ideological sub/super strata both audible and visible through its patterned iterations. The lines spoken by the chorus "I can't stop, I try and try and I can't stop … I am blinding! I can't see!" (29) are echoed in the lighting when Jenkin increases the stage lights to full capacity and then quickly switches to a blackout. The intensity of the lights and the contrast with blackness physically mirrors the lines. The moment aesthetically performs the hegemonic power of whiteness,

making it blinding, so that it can no longer be seen, nor see itself.[116] According to Timothy Bewes, the study of shame in our era involves a postcolonial perspective, since the occurrence of shame discloses the unique positioning and power inequalities of a colonial legacy (3). Thus, as *Woolworths* works to expose shame, the roots of power that determine who claims what is and what is not shameful are exposed.

Having performed in and directed choral groups, I am reminded of how the choral group creates a heightened state of unity through bodies and voices speaking and moving as one. Synchronised movements and voices create a magical effect, an illusion, entrancing in its apparently unifying individual bodies into one collective body. The chorus affects a dynamic internal-felt-sense of unification between the performer and the audience. I have also experienced the affective feeling of a collective unity when watching a chorus perform. I would go further to suggest that this affective state of unity is perhaps also a delusional belief of *wmcesa*s, who like to see themselves as unifiers, progressive thinkers and mediators. I am reminded of performances by the Ndlovu Youth Choir, a collective of young children and adolescents from the province of Limpopo who gained international success through the televised talent show *America's Got Talent* (AGT). I remember being amazed at what I felt in my body when I first watched them perform on AGT. Through their unified choreography, costumes and impeccably harmonised parts, the choir affectively performed a belonging, a unity, a cohesion and oneness that I longed to experience in South Africa. The performance summoned up a utopian vision that revitalised me to hope for a unified humanity. There is a similarity between this affective state and how *wmcesa*s feel in relation to Johnny Clegg, a South African musician who perfected a fusion of Western pop and traditional African sounds. Clegg made an international career despite coming up against apartheid-state opposition during the 1980s due to his band being multi-racial and attracting multi-racial audiences. White English-speaking middle-class South Africans in some ways like to believe that, like Johnny Clegg and despite their whiteness, they are at some level deeply connected to South Africa and its African peoples.

Furthermore, the chorus as a performative device aesthetically performs thoughts on the 'both/and,' for as much as we may wish both to belong and be inclusive, in belonging there is exclusion of that which does not fit into the collective

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[116] This performative aesthetic is also seen in *Antigone not quite/quiet* (2019), where there is a scene at the end of the choral group's performance which collectively represents the character of Antigone. The chorus stands speaking while spotlights move forward towards the audience, blinding them.

body. Inasmuch as the chorus encapsulates a unified connection it also exhibits how its maintenance depends on disconnection from, and the exclusion of, certain other bodies – a unity dependent on regulation, order and structure. Moreover, as mentioned above, stylistically the chorus partakes of the non-human, resembling itself, mechanistic, faceless and immune from vulnerability. The chorus therefore visually performs a both/and, human and inhuman, vulnerable and invulnerable, embodying belonging but exercising the controlled tolerance of others in order to maintain uniformity. Shame, as Tomkins argues, occurs in a state of desire/interest; in this instance, a desire to connect and belong, which opens up a feeling of shame when it is not experienced but instead countered with disconnection, isolation or exclusion. The chorus may generate a notion of connection and vulnerability in its cohesion and proximity to other bodies, but it simultaneously also hides vulnerability and alienation, as the individual body is covered over by the collective body, hidden inside the whole. With hindsight I began to understand how the discomfort and tension I experienced emanated not just from the words I heard but also from the ever-increasing levels of dissonance the chorus performed in being the both/and, human and inhuman, machine and body, collective and individualistic. *Woolworths'* relentless repetitions produced a mounting claustrophobia in me as I began to feel closed in by the compounding structures of cultural power which I existed in and which I exerted on others.

In looking at the performativity of the chorus in communicating these affective waves of power, class, separation and 'normativity,' I draw a parallel with the production of *Antigone (not quite/quiet)* (2019) by the Centre for the Performing Arts, Theatre and Dance.[117] The performance was divided into three parts, the first a one-person performance of the character Ismene by Jenni Reznek,[118] the second an exploration of the character of Antigone using a chorus of 13 performers, and the third a digitally edited video collage of a collection of thoughts spoken by Tiresias. My reflection on *Woolworths* and the role of the chorus made me intrigued to see how the production would use the device of the chorus to depict Antigone in a local adaptation of the Greek tragedy *Antigone*.

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[117]Previously known as the Drama and Dance Departments at UCT. At the beginning of 2018 the departments merged and created the CPTD, under the directorship of Mark Fleishman.
[118] Actor and co-founder of Magnet Theatre, founded in 1987, a theatre institution nationally recognised, especially because of its investment in cultural development and training.

Antigone (*not quite/quiet*) constitutes the performative component of a research project titled "Re-imagining Tragedy from Africa and the Global South," headed by Fleishman as director and principal investigator. Fleishman's choice to stage the character Antigone as a chorus marks an interesting intersection with my discussion on what performative aesthetic the chorus offers in reflections on feeling-states in post-apartheid South Africa. Watching *Antigone* (*not quite/quiet*) I witnessed once again the efficacy of the chorus in affectively communicating feeling-states in South Africa.[119] Fleishman describes his exploration of the feeling-state in South Africa of "a deeply divided people, struggling to achieve democracy, settle conflict over major issues and deal with a harrowing past as well as their interpersonal antipathy" ("Director's Note," n.pag.).

Through the chorus the character of Antigone is able to reflect differing genders, races, languages and cultures, which in turn suggest a visual representation of South Africa's contemporary social landscape. The chorus is made up of 12 BPOC bodies and one white body. Even though the image of Antigone visually reflects diversity it is the individual bodies within the collective chorus that are not yet unified, visually individuated in their racial and cultural differences. Watching that one white body perform among predominantly black bodies, I thought the white body served to unbelong, disrupt. The choice to represent Antigone through a visually diverse choral group mirrors the state of South Africa today, a country with lofty ambitions of reconciliation nevertheless struggling to achieve social cohesion; a "people inevitably inconvenient to each other" ("Director's Note," n.pag.). Speaking about the role of a chorus, Lehman states:

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[119] Gabrielle Goliath has conceptualised a new work titled *Chorus* (2020), which is currently only in digital format and will debut at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale *In our Veins Flow Ink and Fire* festival. In *Chorus*, members of the University of Cape Town choir sound a lament for Uyinene Mrwetyana, who was raped, tortured and killed in August 2019, and whose murder sparked public outcry across South Africa. They lament not as song, but as the internally generated resonance of a hum, collectively sustained as a mutual offering of breath. In the utter loss marked by this labour, a certain recuperative gesture is nevertheless achieved, in the communal recognition of black feminine life. The performance sits, however, in uneasy relation to the stark absence of an empty rostra – "an absence marked by the names of those whose lost lives similarly call for the long, collective, and as we must hope, transformative work of mourning" (Goliath, *Artist's Statement,* n.pag*.*).

The sound estranged from the individual body hovers above the whole chorus like an independent entity: a ghostly voice belonging to a kind of liminal body. This brings about an interesting parallel between the chorus and the mask. Looking at an individual speaker one experiences intensely that the sound belongs to the individual face. By contrast, listening to someone wearing a mask (or to oneself speaking from under a mask), the voice appears strangely detached, separated from the self, belonging only to the persona (the mask) and no longer to the person speaking. (130)

The chorus's depiction of Antigone in *Antigone* (*not quite/quiet*) presented to its audience (of Capetonians) the complexities of what a New South Africa post-1994 and still awaiting the delivery of justice might possibly mean. Antigone, a champion of justice, has a collective body that is still individuated into bodies which hold and carry differing habitus of social power. Despite national endeavours to liberate marginalised and stigmatised bodies, many still remain entrapped because of invisible structures of power that continue to benefit mostly white bodies. Sally Munt has shown how contemporary practices of stigmatisation and marginalisation are rooted in a colonial past. Munt highlights how the aftermath of colonisation is an embodied politics of class, gender and race. She argues that shame is "peculiarly organised around issues of attachment and disattachment" (*Queer Attachments* 22). The collective body of *wmcesa*s rejects other cultural groups through shaming practices of prejudice, stigmatisation and stereotyping.

Commenting on her own struggle with identity, Jenkin identifies a tension:

… [t]he struggle to resolve the notion of belonging to a group, whilst feeling oneself to be at odds with (many of) its ethics, politics and aesthetics. This conflict with group identity connects to a belief of oneself as singular, as outside of the group, and able to look inside it, and see its members as untangled from one's own identity. I suggest here that there is no way out of entanglement. ("How People" 14)

However much we may want to separate ourselves from our roots we continue to repeat the patterns of our habitus. It is this internal tension and incongruity which Jenkin performs in the choral clash of text and tone with bodily movement. This felt incongruity, this shaking up of something so habitual and ingrained, is thus visually

represented in such a way that the individual continues to rehearse the disruption long after the performance is over.

Because of the both/and nature of the chorus, *Woolworths* works at reminding us of our need to repudiate the dualistic pairings that continue in the post-apartheid era – black/white, settler/native, coloniser/colonised, shamed/shamer. Perhaps this reparation can only come about in relation to each other? In watching *Woolworths* I was reminded of the bitter divisions and lack of connection between people and groups in South Africa. Tomkins seems to suggest a model of social relations, as shame informs both our welcome of and withdrawal from certain 'other-ed' bodies. We are most vulnerable to shame when we seek identification with another person, but shame also creates in-groups and out-groups – it reminds us that we prefer not to 'take in' the unrecognisable or the different. Shame is particularly pertinent to the cultural analysis of class in that it often masquerades as a naturalised property of the self, obscuring the crucial role of evaluation – attributing value to some at the expense of others (Loveday 1145).

In "Everyday Shame," Probyn reflects on her experience of white settler shame in growing up white in Australia:

> [E]vidence of a strange little strain of shame: the body's feeling of being out-of-place in the everyday. It is a shame born of the body's desire to fit in, just as it knows that it cannot. 'You're not from here': the slip of tongue, the flash of ignorance faced with an entirely different arrangement of the everyday. It is no big deal, compared to the experiences of others violently uprooted. It is just a little shaming from within fed by the desire to be unnoticed, to be at home in the everyday of someone else's culture. (328)

Shame produces "an (im)possibility of identification," a tension between identification and withdrawal (Charos 277). It is exactly this tension that I as an English-speaking white middle-class South African find myself in, in post-apartheid South Africa. I struggle to put words to what it means to be a white, middle-class, English-speaking, South African, or to describe how I both embrace and reject this identity. The chorus in *Woolworths* offers a visual representation of how bodies form a collective body to safeguard the individual and not necessarily strengthen the whole, a situation in which the individual can go "unnoticed" and "be at home in the everyday of someone else's culture" (Probyn, "Everyday Shame" 328). According to Ahmed, feelings of shame are

not only indicative of human relationality and the desire for community, but can be crucial to forms of nation-building. Ahmed argues that "[i]f we reconsider the role of shame in securing the (hetero)normative, then we can see that national shame works as a narrative of reproduction"; the nation hence (re)produces itself by displacing shame onto "illegitimate others (who fail to reproduce its form, or even its offspring)," or by shamefully mistreating its citizens in "perpetuating forms of racism" (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 108). *Wmcesa*s displace their shame so that they do not have to face what they do. Shame is used to build and strengthen the 'normative body' by othering that which is not. As much as the chorus represents human relationality and desire for community, it heightens the exclusion of those that fail to 'reproduce' or repeat the 'normative' standards of a society/community. It also reflects the extent to which *wmcesa*s assume their 'culture' to be a model for 'South African culture' as a whole.

I remember as a child going door-to-door collecting money for the South African Cancer Association. My grandfather had died from cancer and it was my family's way of remembering him. I think at the time I was seven or eight years old and I went to all the houses in my street and the streets that linked us to the communal park. I still remember thinking at the time that the people living in the houses would give me donations because I was a white girl: I did not have the official form on which people pledged how much they were donating, but only a little cardboard coin container with the official branding of the Cancer Association. I knew then as a young girl that because of my skin colour and class I would not be accused of stealing their money. I remember using my child-like charm when the door was answered. I also remember receiving numerous donations. I have at other times in my life thought similarly about how my skin colour facilitated certain actions and opportunities. When I look back I cannot recall how I came to think so because I do not remember anyone telling me as much. It must have been the patterning in my habitus that positioned me to this think this, or become subconsciously aware of it. I have thus from a young age known that how I look and sound gives me a particular mobility in the world. My habitus facilitates a movement in and out of places and positions me so I can be seen and heard.

I recall only now, during this process of self-reflection, my first solo performance when my family moved to Durban in November 1997. Close to the house we moved into was a Saturday flea-market. I remember seeing a young boy, slightly older than me, with his violin busking. I was so taken by his performance and entrepreneurship that I decided I would go to the shopping mall that was directly across from the house

we had just moved into and play Christmas carols on my recorder. I wore a tie-dye dress, purple hat and placed my music stand at the entrance to Stuttafords[120] because I thought it had the best Christmas display in the mall. Within two hours I had made R450.[121] My brother soon become my runner, switching out hats and taking my earnings back across the road to our home. I remember that the shopping mall manager came to me to ask if my parents knew I was playing in the mall and if they could pop into her office when they came back. I had never considered how at the time my parents were unemployed and that the reason they had encouraged me to go and play was because it was a possible source of revenue for the family. Had I not been who I was, permission from management to stay would have been unlikely. I fitted the demographic profile acceptable to the image of the mall, and because of this was granted the opportunity to earn a considerable amount of money in a very short space of time.

It was only when I started researching *Woolworths* that I stumbled across a quotation that appeared on the wall of the waiting room in *Blood Diamond/Terminal*. (It was recorded by Megan Lewis in her personal notes on watching the performance.) Lewis's brief reflections identified affective crossovers similar to what I experienced in watching these two performances. This synergy made me once again critically aware of the benefit that a cyclical research methodology offers a study in which both research and practice are given room to feel. The quote also echoes sentiments shared at the beginning of the chapter in the discussion of the character of George in *The Native Commissioner*. The words reproduced below were typed out and pasted to the wall of the waiting room, the first locale in the performance *Blood Diamond/Terminal*:

> Somehow, in the popular consciousness of white South Africa, the 1820 Settlers – imported from Britain to provide a colonising buffer between the amaXhosa and the Cape Colony – have managed to retain a butter-wouldn't-melt-in-the-mouth innocence. As if they were any less rapacious, opportunistic, violent and bigoted than the other 'civilisers' that have used blades, bibles and brute arrogance to shatter the despised societies and cultures of indigenes, to annex their land, and to enrich themselves off the fragments. As if they had little

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[120] Stuttafords was an exclusive clothing and homeware department store, similar to international department stories like John Lewis and Debenhams. It closed its doors nationally in 2013.

[121] This was 24 years ago. Currently (2021) as a Teaching Assistant at UWC (on PhD level) we are paid R80 an hour.

to do with the history that has fouled up our country.[122] (Bailey, *Terminal Text* n.pag.)

I think it was the line "have managed to retain a butter-wouldn't-melt-in-the-mouth innocence" that gripped me the most. This notion of 'felt' innocence articulated by Bailey is a state with which I have definitely identified. I agree with Bailey's assessment that *wmcesa*s have a state of mind that exhibits an internalised narrative of being the 'lesser culprit in a long line of offenders.' Moreover, the political extremism among Afrikaners in twentieth-century South African history has helped to mask the privileges of white English speakers, granting them a position of separateness from the expressions of Afrikanerdom spoken into the law and policies of the apartheid state.

What of the psyche of a child who grows up with no definitive markers of his or her habitus? I seem to have existed in a place of liminal cultural ambiguity by virtue of its lack of social articulation. The constructed amorphousness or lack of definition of *wmcesa* identity evades the creation of identifiable borders: in not being defined one cannot be spat out into the wasteland of the abject. I recall as a child not being able to define what my culture was. I did not have any known cultural associations in food, clothes or objects that I identified as specifically reflective of my 'culture.' Yet I was acutely aware of the cultural identifiers of other people. Interestingly, I grew up feeling as though South African middle-class English speakers were an accumulation of bits of other fellow South Africans' cultures, merged and assimilated into *wmcesa*ness, as opposed to their owning a separate and exclusive situatedness in respect of other South Africans. This cultural language of assimilation (perhaps further propelled by a forced political discourse of assimilation in 1994 when I entered main-stream schooling, with evocations of the South African rainbow nation and *simunye* – 'we are one' – in the air) with which I grew up served not to demarcate my habitus but instead to assimilate it into the broader idea of 'South African.'

David Attwell (in "Writing in") refers to a discussion between Coetzee and Kurtz about the problem of moral "doublethink" that prevails in settler-colonial societies, producing a split view of the past: "we exempt ourselves from the values of our ancestors, who we regard as children, in order to preserve our continuity with them. The position is incoherent and surely must manifest itself in psychic terms" (Coetzee

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[122] Brett, Bailey. 2009. *Terminal* Text, unpublished text for waiting room placard. National Arts Festival Grahamstown, South Africa, cited in Lewis, "Until You See" 119.

and Kurtz 89–90). This acutely captures my own relationship with my ancestors. I feel that by detaching myself from my ancestral history and in dissociating from a demarcated habitus I exempt myself from responsibility. Kurtz's reply to Coetzee is, "[I]t may be a logical impossibility to imagine being born out of nothing, being without origins or history, but it is not a psychic impossibility" (89). Most people will hold a benign view of their ancestors, while a minority will hold a "morbid preoccupation with another, more disturbing view," a perception that only a minority can sustain: "A split in understanding something of real importance to a social body is, I think, what produces subversion or an underground movement" (89–90). I have no ties ancestrally. I have little connection to my grandparents on my father's side and know very little about my family's forebears. There is instead a focus on the nuclear family and its immediate history. Attwell invokes what Bewes calls an "ethical incommensurability" as something that prevails as a normal condition of social life for those who cannot but inherit the legacy of colonialism (47). It is this which produces the downward spiral of morbidity that has settled into my habitus. The morbidity is produced by my habitus' preoccupation with distinguishing itself from other cultures deemed worse than 'us' rather than working through the smoke and mirrors obscuring my own habitus.

This unconscious silencing of a 'specific' kind of habitus is especially revealing when integrated with Tomkins's ideas regarding shame. Tomkins "places shame at one end of the affect polarity of shame-interest, suggesting that the pulsations of cathexis around shame, of all things, are what either enable or disenable so basic a function as the ability to be interested in the world" (qtd. in Probyn, *Blush* 18). Shame is therefore inextricably linked to interest. Shame makes a difficult "double movement … toward painful individuation, toward uncontrollable relationality" (*Blush* 20). Probyn, following Tomkins, argues that shame separates us from others, causing us to experience a state of painful disidentification and self-consciousness "that at times would threaten to implode the self[;] yet it also indicates our desire to connect to the people with whom we share a space" (*Blush* 20). In her article "Shame in the habitus," Probyn discusses how "although shame makes us sensitive to the mad sensations rushing through our bodies, shame is our bodies' way of telling us that we are interested: that we were interested, and that we will continue to be despite shame's painful interruption" (239). What is particularly motivating is Probyn's suggestion that "shame produces a somatic temporality, where the future of being again interested is

felt in the present pain of rejection" ("Shame" 239). The affect of shame is therefore intimately involved in the passion of interest: "without positive affect, there can be no shame: only a scene that offers you enjoyment or engages your interest can make you blush" (Sedgwick and Frank, *Shame* 22). As Sedgwick and Frank also point out, from its physiological to its social and psychological manifestations, shame returns us to the primacy of interest (*Shame* 22). "Shame makes interest matter again – interest in our collective and individual histories marked by trauma, interest in the academic matter of how to respond, interest in writing and listening, interest in living ethically" (Probyn, "Shame" 240). Probyn's analysis of shame in the habitus articulates something similar to the shame I experience in my *wmcesa* habitus. The displacement of habitus is in part a way of subduing the consciousness of shame. Through English-speaking white middle-class South Africans claiming not to know what they do, they perpetuate a painful state of disidentification and self-consciousness apparently endemic to their habitus (founded on hegemonic and exclusionary practices) without recognising how they might possibly disengage from it. At the same time, an unsettling of shame also marks a desire for connection, an interest in collective and individual histories and an interest in living ethically. It is this shaking up of habitus which has offered me the chance of transformation and the potential to fall upwards into new possibilities outside of my limiting habitus.

What the relationship among shame, habitus and the choral body in *Woolworths* tells us is that the body is not merely a passive container of the past. The chorus in the play visually performs how our bodies are haunted by the bodies of others, enacting patterns learnt by and from the collective body. It is the body that registers through embodiment not only individual experiences but also experiences of family and history. My shame-making in the post-apartheid era is thus fraught with a somatic consciousness of the tension of "being out of place," despite being in a body covered by a skin whose cultural habitus creates and affirms its position in society (Probyn, *Blush* xvi). This positioning of self in the post-apartheid state has magnified my "being out of place," not because of a sense that other bodies position me as not belonging, but rather for the reason Probyn raises about how the body "can also tell us when we have stumbled into other people's history, culture, and beliefs of which we are ignorant" (xvi).

Whiteness haunts our present world institutionally, systemically and through ingrained mindsets. It is the ghostly voice of English-speaking white middle-class

South African power (covert and 'invisible') that surrounds the choral body, speaking for and through it. As I have argued, *Woolworths* performs the everyday affective scaffolding of *wmcesa* privilege in South Africa and exposes the invisibility of its power by visibilising it through the aesthetic of performance. Jenkin's use of the patterned chorus in choreography and text facilitated a way for me to see anew, in greater complexity, the positions of a deeply rooted and powerful patterning of *wmcesa*ness. While the preceding case studies worked at aesthetically highlighting the ubiquitous structures of hegemony, addressing a wider contextual framing of whiteness, this case study moved away from the edge of the camp of whiteness and placed itself within the habitus of a special kind of whiteness. In doing so, *Woolworths* reflected back to me an internal moment of a "little shaming from within, fed by the desire to be unnoticed, to be at home in the everyday of someone else's culture" (Probyn, "Everyday" 328). Because of how this chapter has worked at undoing shame, the concluding chapter of this thesis addresses the widespread use of the expressions *ag shame*, *seistog* and *sorry* (in its colloquial sense in South Africa), and discusses contemporary performance-makers whose work reflects a process of undoing shame through the shaking up of their habitus.
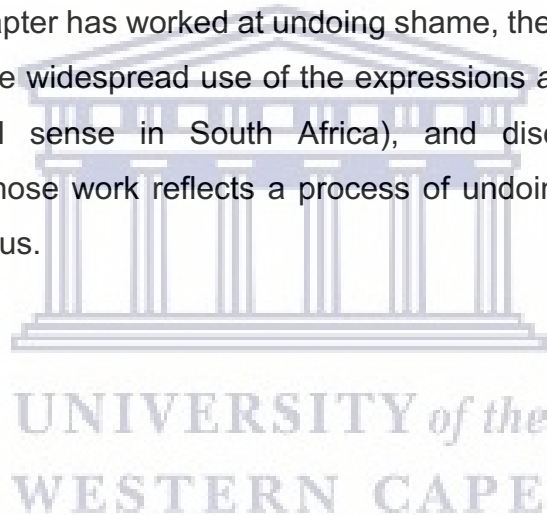
CONCLUSION

> For last year's words belong to last year's language.
> And next year's words await another voice.
> …
> And to make an end is to make a beginning.
>
> T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding."

This concluding chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part I explore the pervasive though nuanced phatic application of descriptors of shame in the context of South Africa, as a way of framing how shame possibly 'talks back' or 'performs against' traces of our communal 'agony of the social,' as a disruption or displacement. In the second part I examine a sample of young contemporary performance-makers (many born post-1994) whose work suggests an undoing of shame, as the artist moves inwards to look at shame from the inside. This speculation offers a forward-looking turn and a future-inflected politics in its movement beyond the focus on making shame visible (as explored in the four previous case studies, which focussed on the work of an older and established generation of artists) to reading the contemporary moment and its trends. The late inclusion of this discussion aims to remind the reader of the affective entanglements of our current moment in South Africa. An entanglement, which Sarah Nuttall describes as an intimacy gained even if "resisted … ignored or uninvited … 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" (*Entanglement* 1). The identification of recent and current developments offers a generative perspective by anticipating potential shifts. This is therefore not a 'new' discussion but one that highlights the entangled complexity of tracing shame's formation in performance in contemporary South Africa.

Ag sjeim, siestog, sorry and sheimpies[123] are expressions ubiquitous in South African colloquial dialogue. My analysis probes the often taken-for-granted folk or everyday use of shame and is supported by J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), Butler's *Excitable Speech Acts* (2013), Munt's *Queer Attachments: The*

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[123] *Sheimpie*s is a *Kaaps* derivative of *sjeim*. The word can be used tenderly as when a child is hurt, or sarcastically. It all depends on the context and the tone used. *Kaaps* is defined as a Cape Afrikaans developed from a multilingual context. It is the oldest variety of Afrikaans and is not a separate language. It is organically linked to, and in interaction with, standard Afrikaans.

Cultural Politics of Shame (2007) and Ahmed's *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (2004). In this discussion I consider how my application and repetitive use of the word *sjeim* as it pops up in my everyday speech highlights normativity that affirms Tomkins's thoughts on how shame effaces itself (qtd. in Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling* 38). I first came across the explanation of "talk back" in Fleishman's doctoral thesis, where he used a discussion by Peter Pels (1998) to support his analysis of how inanimate objects in performance could "talk back," taking on a 'voice' of their own ("Remembering" 90). This phatic use of 'shame'/*sjeim*, I argue, is an act that 'talks back' and 'performs against,' a reparative gesture towards self-healing by its facilitation of transgressing borders (Munt x). Because the affect of shame makes us so acutely aware of our borders of self, this attention performs an acknowledgment of shame, which in turn offers the potential to undo shame's shaping of self.

My thinking about shame's cultural linguistic use as performative in how it 'talks back' or 'performs against' is grounded in Austin's analysis of performative speech acts, when language is used to construct or affect a reality rather than merely describe it. Austin labels as performative speech acts that constitute something: because it is said, hence it is so. This impacts the way in which we constitute ourselves internally. In this discussion I include Butler's claim that "all language is performative" and "most performative when its performativity is least explicit – indeed, arguably, most of all when it isn't even embodied in actual words" (qtd. in Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling* 6). Phatic articulations of the word "shame" indicate sympathy, even empathy, but without the speaker having to 'take on' the burden of action or transformation that profound empathy would require. It arguably indicates a reluctance towards actual repair, allowing talk ("talk is cheap") to buffer the cost of reparation. The use of the expression gestures towards empathy while marking an evasion of identification and responsibility. There is thus a queering of shame in its colloquial use, as 'shame' in South African colloquial expression diverges from its linguistic definition (Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling* 6).

Judith Butler's study of the performativity of gender offers a context for describing the colloquial adaptation of shame as performative. Butler regards gender as an "act" that is both intentional and performative ("Performative Acts" 519). I ask how this specific colloquial adaptation might offer a queering of shame in 'talking back' or 'performing against' for South Africans, an application that counters its linguistic definition.

I had never really considered how and why I used the word *sjeim* in my interactions with others. It was something I just did, largely intuitively. When I started to think about how I and fellow South Africans make use of the phrase, it seemed as if *sjeim* could be used for nearly any and every occasion. I noticed how I used it as a phrase to fill in, to bridge a gap, a silence and a felt awkwardness. Or I used it when I couldn't find words to articulate how I felt but still wanted the listener to know I cared and was listening. Once alerted, I quickly became aware of how frequently I used it, feeling increasingly more automated, as it left my mouth with little thought or effort and often accompanied with a slight shake of the head (for both its uses of empathy and sarcasm). When used sarcastically it was often spoken in humour, expressing a sense of disbelief or 'what were you thinking'?

As noted in my introductory chapter, the title of this study echoes specific colloquial framings of shame. *Ag sjeim, siestog, sheimpies* and 'sorry' most commonly express emotional responses to the hurtful or uneasy experiences of others. Often it is used to communicate the respondent's identification with the speaker's public pain in its gestural communication of empathy and sympathy. My use of *sjeim* to fill gaps suggests a performative patterning of the desire to establish, maintain and communicate a fellow feeling – "that out of the wounded attachments of shame can emerge an energising and life-affirming, even redemptive, queer politics of hope" (O'Rourke xii). *Sjeim* falls into the genre of speech act known as phatic, commonly manifesting as gestural meaning-makers such as groans, sighs, tutting, clicks of the tongue, and smacking of the lips. Phatic speech acts have no actual semantic content but are vocalisations of affect and are communicative gestures tied to a specific social practice.

Ag sjeim and *sheimpie* are colloquial terms of Afrikaans origin that are pronounced like the English word 'shame'. *Sjeim* most probably stems from the Dutch word *sjêm* meaning trouble or disfavour, similar to the English word 'disgrace' in its connotation of falling out of favour. *Ag sjeim*, although popularly used in a sympathetic way can also be used to dismiss someone or an idea. *Sjeim* in this context would reflect an expression like 'I told you so,' or 'you are on your own.' When *sjeim* is used sarcastically conveys dismissal and laughter. This again points to it being a phatic speech act, as the tone and gestural language of the speaker communicates the affect and not the word. This is also noted in the use of *sies* (disgust) *tog* (pity) – *siestog* is also Afrikaans in origin and is often used when referring to the cuteness of a child,

evincing a maternal instinct or emotion. It is used to identify a felt-feeling of shared sympathy. *Siestog* communicates a gestural affect as opposed to semantic content. 'Sorry' is used interchangeably with *siestog* and *ag, sjeim* reflects a shared sense of sympathy. It does not imply that the speaker perceives him or herself to be at fault but expresses an immediate response of empathy or sympathy. For example, if someone was to break something, a popular reaction from bystanders would be the expression 'sorry' or *sjeim*, communicating a gestural affect of care and concern. Perhaps this act of empathy comes from our embodied interest in repairing what has been detached or displaced, and thus in reaching out with empathy in this performative speech act, shame is queered in how it 'talks back' or 'performs against' to form a point of connection.

The performative speech act of shame in South Africa reflects the duality of shame, as it can seek to foster both attachment (in its empathetic tone) and impede attachment (in its dismissive, sarcastic tone), while nevertheless still reflecting a gestural interest in the other. This split in the phatic gesture, having the potential to express both empathy and dismissal, is a symptom of a primary split in its speaker's simultaneous identifying with and distancing from.

In a country with linguistic and ethnic diversity it is worth noting how the phatic application of 'shame' crosses over ethnic and linguistic barriers in its everyday colloquial usage – it carries with it a mutual 'knowing' and understanding. In the face of a history fraught with and entrapped in shame, these colloquial invocations of shame speak suggestively about some common ground among South Africans and our attempts to repair what has been broken.

In this analysis of 'shame' as a cultural term used to express sympathy and identification with someone else's public pain, I cannot separate it from the possible role the TRC may have played in shaping public notions of shame, and in the collective sharing and stifling of it. Shame in South Africa's past has been dramatised and performed as a state of hurt and complicity in the hurt of others. The TRC staged this pain and complicity in public shows of shame. Toni Massaro's discussion of the cultural meanings of shame – especially with regard to collective and individualistic cultures and their treatment/implementation of shame – points to the relevance of this analysis of performative speech acts to the TRC. Massaro suggests that "vague nouns are like horoscopes; one can read into them whatever one wishes, when the vague noun refers to a primary human emotion – such as anger, joy or sadness" (646). Meanings

proliferate easily because the definition of the word remains imprecise, opaque and mysterious. Moreover, because these 'experiences' are encountered individually, individualistic interpretations can claim authority (Massaro 646). In a South African context, the colloquial use of 'shame' renders the shame rhetoric problematic in diagnosing or treating specific social ills produced by the toxicity of the shame interred.

Certain words can confuse and obscure shame's power, as Andrea Pető explains. Pető's work on rape survivors during World War II and afterwards, especially in the context of Hungary (with its double occupation by Germany and Russia) examines the Visual History Archive (VHA) in identifying testimonies of rape. What Pető notes is that the VHA does not index the term shame (110). Her study shows how shame has been replaced by the term embarrassment; even when testimonies explicitly used the term shame it is still indexed under embarrassment. The VHA therefore invisibilises shame in the history of the Shoah through its archival system of indexing. The main point Pető therefore raises is how a possible "[r]e-indexing revises concepts and definitions of stories linked to shame" (111). I use this discussion of indexing and archival labels as a practical example of how obscuring memories through narrow emotional labels can continue to perpetuate political or systemic modes of concealment, altering our historical connection to and understanding of what psychic energies or affects were experienced at particular times in our histories.

Shame, although inimical to its articulation, allows for language, but language that is mediated by the desire to keep 'bad feelings' concealed, thereby exhibiting 'bad faith' in simultaneously knowing and not knowing the misery of another (Charos 275). The use of the words *ag sjeim, siestog*, and 'sorry' are informative in reflecting on our cultural and collective sharing around what shame is and what it is to be a culture that still keeps 'bad feelings' concealed in public dialogues. Shame and our understanding of it in the context of South Africa needs to be re-indexed out of our colloquial definition, as this definition continues to obscure a critical and considered engagement with shame's toxicity for the self as well as its strategic use in oppressive systems of control and rule.

There is of course a difficulty in this argument that Bewes uncovers in *The Event of Postcolonial Shame,* when he acknowledges the "impossibility of a literary-critical study of shame," since no study of shame can "deal easily with the paradox that to make shame comprehensible would be to dissolve the feeling" (3). Perhaps, as reiterated throughout this thesis, shame's greatest manifestation is in how it continues

to stifle its own articulation and thus any engagement with it. Do we then continue to fall short in grasping shame, in fear of dissolving shame's felt-state through a desire to make its experience comprehensible? I feel that my flippant, repetitive and gap-filling use of shame in my day-to-day interactions with fellow humans is doing little to work towards a comprehensible discussion of shame, performing rather an "eclipsing of shame, buried by language" (Arel 4). Austin and Butler show how performance is embedded in language and that certain words 'do' or realise their meaning in their very utterance. In continuing to use shame to imply empathy what might I be obscuring?

Perhaps the desire to start a conversation about how shame traffics in embodied ways comes about because of shame's manifestation in its effacing and stifling of itself. In a podcast, Elizabeth Alexander asserts that words matter and how we use words shapes how we understand ourselves, how we interpret the world and how we treat others. How we use the word 'shame' therefore links directly to our interpretation of the world and our treatment of our fellow humans. An "ethics of shame" is rooted in our immediate, lived experience, "in our bodily reactions, in our interpersonal relationships, in the complex and ever-changing fabric of social life" (McTaggart 124). But contrary to shame's affects, which efface and stifle, I have identified a marked undoing of shame in the work of contemporary performance-makers (many born post-1994). In the face of the current moment of "tragedy," (how Fleishman refers to our postcolonial present), "in the way that it cannot escape the shameful past that is supposed to have passed but continues to haunt our every current moment," these performance-makers are undoing shame by making it the prompt for self-transformation ("Director's Note," n.pag.).[124]

As this thesis has looked back to look forward, the remainder of this concluding chapter will look at a sample of works from 2015–2019 that seek not only to make shame visible, but also to undo it in the ways they negotiate and manage the concept. In the process they offer a re-indexing of shame in our national history. These performance-makers advance out of the shame in this tragic moment and present a new voice and language of public reflexivity, that "takes the form of performance … [one of the] "languages through which a group communicates itself to itself" (Turner 465). The works that I introduce here exemplify this emerging trend. They include

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[124] The performance piece *Antigone (not quite/quiet)* highlighted the tragedy of the current moment in South Africa.

Kanya Viljoen's, *Wat die hart van vol is, loop die mond van oor* (2015), *Van die hand na die mond, val die pap op die grond* (2016) and *Die skrif is aan die muur* (2019),[125] Lwanda Sindaphi's *Kudu* (2017) and Nwabisa Plaatjie's *23 Years, a Month and 7 Days* (2017). I will also refer briefly to a number of other artists to give a sense of the range of this current shift in performing shame.

The works mentioned above, as well as Qondiswa James, *A Howl in Makhanda* (2018) and Tiisetso Mashifane wa Noni's *Sainthood* (2019), reflect Probyn's argument on the potential of shame to prompt "self-transformation." Probyn writes that "[s]ometimes [shame] leads to reactionary acts, sometimes it compels close inspection of how we live, and becomes the necessary force to catalyse an ethics of the everyday: a visceral … commitment to more generous identities, responsibilities and connections" (*Blush* xiv). The themes running through these works point towards an undoing of the shame carried by non-conforming bodies in contexts of systemic violence. They speak intimately of the disease of dis-ease induced by toxic structures of shaming to control and enforce oppressive systems. The works perform narratives that reflect a commitment to more "generous identities, responsibilities and connections" (xiv), producing an undoing of shame that has historically worked at securing the (hetero)normative (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 24). In their processing of undoing shame, all these works centralise the body and work with a physical aesthetic that uses the viscerality of performance to create new affective modes of meaning-making that build connection. The works situate the body as the site of exploration in challenging (hetero)normative and ubiquitous narratives of shame (as discussed in the Introduction to this study), because the body was the site on which apartheid made its mark. These artists thus offset this violence by making something new in their centralisation of the body. At the same time, they work with shame's relational affect (in its undoing): the communion of performance through its embodied and affective relationship is honoured in how the relationship between performer/audience and bodies as meaning-makers is accentuated. In undoing shame these works are "both

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[125] Kanya Viljoen is an Afrikaans speaker who uses her mother tongue in acts of undoing identity/cultural formations. All three titles reflect Afrikaans idiomatic expressions. I thus translate the titles idiomatically and not literally. First, *Wat die hart van vol is, loop die mond van oor'* means "what the heart is full of, the mouth overflows with," meaning you will speak what is in your heart. *Van die hand na die mond, val die pap op die grond* means "from the hand to the mouth, pap falls on the ground," an idiom used to convey that you can never be too certain of your plans. And lastly, *Die skrif is aan die muur,* means "the writing is on the wall,", an idiom which communicates that it is decided, the matter is concluded.

responsive to its social causes and aesthetically inventive," thus echoing Attwell's forward-looking argument that practice can work against the immediacy of shame's psychopathology ("Writing in" 43). The new works also reflect a trend identified in my four case studies, in that they attempt to make visible the invisibility of shame through a "speaking that reflects on itself" (Minh-ha, qtd. in Chen 87). These works look back in deeply personal self-reflection in order to offer a forward-looking perspective. In the process, as I will argue, they perform a bridge to a possible border violation and transgression within the self, enacting an undoing of shame's tragic cycle.

Viljoen centralises her body and personal situatedness in all three works. She uses the body as a literal medium to work against structures identified in her culture that have made her feel 'out of place' in her sense of (un)belonging in post-apartheid South Africa. *Wat die hart van vol is, loop die mond van oor* is a durational performance art piece that Viljoen performed as a third-year student at the UCT Drama Department. The performance occurs on a constructed podium (painted with the colours of the old South African flag in orange, blue and white) with a hollowed-out television set in which Viljoen places her head with a magnifying glass positioned over her mouth. In front of the television are iconic Afrikaner desserts such as *mosbolletjies, koeksisters* and *Hertzoggies*.[126] Viljoen attempts to disrupt the Afrikaans language (intimately tied to the making of her sense of self) by physically removing it from her body by brushing clean her mouth and tongue over a duration of three hours with various cleaning products. These products include toothpaste, a bar of soap, Sunlight Liquid and Handy Andy. Viljoen brushes her mouth while an audio-soundtrack consisting of a number of Afrikaans texts – including poetry, discussions surrounding the role of Afrikaans in South African universities, church sermons, racist slurs, popular songs and comedy pieces – plays in the background. *Die skrif is aan die muur* is also a durational performance art piece where Viljoen occupies a bathroom, eating copious amounts of white *mieliepap*[127] while her audience enter into the liminal space and participate in the performance with her by writing a letter, word, thought on the walls of the bathroom (onto which Viljoen has already scribed numerous Afrikaans extracts). Viljoen uses performance to challenge and critique notions of Afrikaner identity, gender, binaries of

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[126] *Mosbolletjies, koeksisters* and *Hertzoggies* are Afrikaans words which describe pastries synonymous with Afrikaans culture.
[127] *Mieliepap* is an Afrikaans word for ground corn. It is a traditional porridge – eaten across ethnicities in South African.

culture, race, privilege – and whatever else we choose to disclose or censor in the making of our cultural identity or feeling of belonging in South Africa.

Lwanda Sindaphi's *Kudu* and Nwabisa Plaatjie's *23 years, a Month and 7 Days* were both part of the Magnet Theatre internship programme of 2016. Sindaphi describes *Kudu* as a play about "people fighting to be acknowledged not as extinct but as existing" (Van Eeden and Sindaphi n. pag.). Sindaphi uses the narrative of a Khoi-Coloured family in 2030 who return to their ancestral home with their last cow after the devastation of their lands by a relentless drought. The performance attempts to make visible the past of Khoi-Coloured people in the official discourse of South African history, a discourse from which it has been displaced by other more dominant ethnic narratives (in this case, that of the amaXhosa). *Kudu* speaks to the idea of cultural genocides in the making of self and in how certain cultures are displaced by others by performing a tracing of the historical placement of the Khoi-Coloured. Sindaphi's reflections on the intention behind the play is worth quoting in this discussion:

> I woke up with my face drenched with tears. I was dreaming of my grandmother, who was crying for the old home and her husband, and her pain manifested itself through my body. In the same year, my daughter, Azania Swartz, was born to a "coloured" woman. Her arrival was maliciously racialised by purists, who constantly questioned us about her identity. From then, I knew that her future would always be racially hostile in every space she occupied. Questions of race in post-colonial South Africa are based on multiplicity, but there will always be those who claim singularity. When I conceptualised *Kudu*, I was trying to respond to the question of longing for land, and how our multiple identities are the manifestations of where we come from. (Van Eeden and Sindaphi, n.pag.)

What is integral to the undoing of shame's affects as attempted in these two works is the deeply personal introspection which enacts a kind of transgression or violation of notions of self (in this case, of Afrikaner and Xhosa/Khoi-Coloured identities). Similarly, *23 years, a Month and 7 Days* is based on Plaatjie's personal reflections as an Honours student at UCT during the #RMF and #FMF movements and protests in 2015, together with her more detached thoughts about these protests while interning with the Magnet Theatre Company in 2016. The performance centralises the experience of a young woman, Nontyatyambo, who comes from the poverty-stricken fictional place of Potter's Field. From this place of oppression, Nontyatyambo enters into another geography of systemic privileging and colonial constructs. Nontyatyambo is

given a block of ice by her family before she leaves to pursue tertiary education, an avenue of upward mobility many people in poverty believe will redeem them from systemic oppression. The family places the block of ice in Nontyatyambo's hands as a symbol of the last remnants of their wealth and mobility. Through the visually powerful aesthetics of water in its various modalities (ice, rain, splash, dripping, spillage), the performance offers an aesthetic engagement with the complexities of social and political environments that are systematically violent, addressing how these power structures leak, spill and transgress in diminishing the lives of those they oppress.

As a consequence of being a witness to these new works at a time when this thesis was still in incubation, their undoing of shame has in turn compelled some close introspection in me. This reaction is in line with Probyn's thinking that shame acts as an ethically disruptive force that "dramatically questions taken-for-granted distinctions between affect, emotion, biography, and the places in which we live our daily lives" ("Everyday Shame" 328). Furthermore, these pieces exemplify the remarkable enthusiasm that is elicited in performance, especially viewed through the lens of shame and affect theory. In shame's affect there is, as Nuttall points out, "an intimacy gained," even if "resisted ... ignored or uninvited," a twisting together of bodies in sameness and difference (*Entanglement* 1). This entanglement according to Nuttall, reflects complicated relationships of "human foldedness," as shame continues to remind us of our interest in each other and our desire for human connection (1).

By way of conclusion, on the one hand the pervasive use of colloquial phatic expressions like 'shame'/*sjeim* does not engage in a reparative way with the apparently endemic persistence of shame in the South African cultural habitus. Yet, on the other, the emergence of the current generation of artists does suggest a move towards a transformation of sorts. This forward-looking movement, in undoing shame while not negating the ongoing persistence of shame's more familiar and entrenched affects, does point to the potential that performing against shame can have in moving the body away from shame into a freer sociability.

POSTSCRIPT

The spectator is active, just like the student or the scientist: He observes, he selects, he compares, he interprets. He connects what he observes with many other things he has observed on other stages, in other kinds of spaces. He makes his poem with the poem that is performed in front of him. She participates in the performance if she is able to tell her own story about the story that is in front of her.

Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (277)

The point of research is not to rehearse what we know, but to explore and extend the boundaries of our ignorance and, by thus disturbing our idea of ourselves, to prise open those human possibilities that were previously undreamt of.

Thomas Docherty, *Research by Numbers* (50)

All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.

Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho* (7)

I started brainstorming the framing of this project in April 2018 and completed the manuscript in February 2021. As I wrote I became increasingly aware of affective seepages in the public space and in the study itself. Through the process of writing I understood the stark reality of what 'subjectivity' means in a space considered 'objective.' And it is because of this that I see the fragility in this 'finalised' manuscript. The process of enquiry is always in movement, always ongoing, as ideas develop, grow and change. In writing this thesis I attempted to give myself time to think about affects and those psychic energies which are often forgotten in our framing of history yet are integral in shaping our sense of knowing and interaction with others. Because of this thinking-space I became acutely more aware of the affects that I encountered in all their varying states and how shame nestled itself within many moments of the research journey.

My first child was conceived in the first year (2018) of my studies. In the ensuing months I watched my body change as the ever-present and visual signs of my baby made themselves visible to the outside world. In January 2019 he was born after a traumatic delivery. When I got to see him, he was still severely distressed, one

side of his face was in paralysis and he was unable to latch. He was taken away and moved to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. I went to my ward and my husband went home. We both slept. A few hours later I held my baby. He was stable and looking to feed. I sat in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit with an amaXhosa male nurse showing me how to get my baby to latch onto my nipple. The moment held with it a complexity of feelings and a beautiful image of the 'entanglements' in our current moment in South Africa. I recall how vulnerable I felt as a new mom, frightened by the effects that the birthing process could have had on my baby while being overjoyed at being able to hold this new life. And there within this time of emotional extremity, stood a black man gently grasping at my breast as he caringly tried to angle my nipple so my baby could begin to suck. The moment transcended my dualistic thinking and gave me hope to look beyond the past's tragic cycle.

The second year of my doctorate saw me juggle breastfeeding, childcare, work and my studies. I just managed. I had planned and put aside funds for full-time childcare in my final year, to give me the space and time that I knew the work desperately needed. The pandemic of 2020 slashed this vision. My final year thus occurred amidst perhaps the biggest global crisis of my generation, the COVID-19 pandemic. To say the year was difficult would be a word too simple to explain the complexities and implications the pandemic brought to me (physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually) and to the global community. The virus induced a state of extraordinary anxiety regarding physical contact with other people. Proximity to human bodies had to be monitored as well as an awareness and monitoring of other objects that could also be carrying viral droplets. Research that came out at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic showed that people with comorbidities had a higher risk of dying if they contracted the virus. I did not know how to process the probable impact this would have on the society I lived in. South Africa has one of the highest HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis rates in the world, extremely high levels of unemployment, coupled with densely populated living conditions and poor sanitary standards with limited access to running water. Only a fortunate few have the means and resources truly to practice social distancing and hand hygiene. The stark reality of social inequality was made visible in this privilege. There soon loomed an overwhelming sense of fear, a fear induced by not knowing how our national economy and State health services would be impacted, two areas that were already overburdened, under-resourced and

arguably failing in a pre-COVID world. Fear of the unknown became the ghost of COVID-19.

This was the first time in my life that I became spatially aware of my proximity to other bodies and objects. I stopped extending hands to hug and greet. Having to look after my baby in isolation reinforced how much being human lies in sharing this world with fellow humans in interaction, connection and touch. I knew that the final stages of this thesis would be challenging and induce a fear of failure, but having it occur within a pandemic where all states of 'normal' are challenged rendered the process that much more mentally and emotionally taxing. I worked through the complexities and negotiations of the anxiety I had for my husband, who left the house every day to confront the reality of the coronavirus, my child carer being mugged while pushing my child on the street one morning, dealing with a total of seven weeks in self-isolation with a toddler due to our national hard lockdown and my husband testing positive for COVID-19,[128] having my laptop and external hard drive stolen in the final months of editing my thesis, and the traumatic news of my child carer's daughter being reported missing after she did not return home from school one Thursday afternoon.

The pandemic brought with it an eerie silence. Aeroplanes fell silent. The sky and roads emptied. Movement was restricted to your place of residence. It became a time when neighbours' footsteps could be heard, a time when walls felt higher and contact with other humans threatening. This invader could not be seen. You could be a carrier and not have symptoms. The line between the infected and the infector blurred. It was a virus of ambiguities and irregularities, making it a minefield to control and monitor.

Images I had seen prior to lockdown did something different to me when seen in the intensity of hard lockdown. One image that will always mark this time occurred when I was driving to do my weekly grocery shop. It happened in the third week of our national level-five lockdown. Whilst driving through a round-about on my way to the shops I saw an old black man sitting on the pavement edge wearing a surgical mask, a large pair of yellow rubber dishwashing gloves and holding onto a long paint roller. He was the first person I saw on the street since lockdown had begun and the only person I saw on the street that day (a site normally dotted with informal traders and

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[128] My husband was at high risk of exposure as he is an Emergency Physician and heads an Emergency Department at a hospital in Cape Town, South Africa.

beggars). His desperation was palpable. The colour of his yellow gloves and his effort to appear fit to work during a national lockdown (where only essential workers were legalised to work) imprinted itself into my memory. He embodied the starkness of our Nation's state of inequality. He became the face of the many other faces I saw thereafter as desperation to find work in an already failing economy escalated.

"Sufiya Zinobia Hyder blushed uncontrollably whenever her presence in the world was noticed by others. But she also, I believe, blushed for the world" (Rushdie 122). I had never really thought about how my sense of self felt shame for the world around me. On seeing that old man with his yellow gloves, I drove home and wondered: how have we gotten to a position where we tolerate a society that tolerates this?

In continuation of this thought, I was struck by an interesting connection between COVID-19 and the conceptual project of Christoph Burcel, *Barca Nostra* (2019),[129] exhibited at the 2019 Venice Biennale. The *Barca Nostra* is a "collective monument and memorial to contemporary migration, it is not only dedicated to the victims and the people involved in its recovery, but also represents the collective policies and politics that create these kinds of disasters" (*La Biennale* n.pag.). The exhibited ship is the original wreckage of the Mediterranean's deadliest shipwreck in living memory. It is estimated that between 700 and 1100 people died in the shipwreck and only 28 people survived. The boat had been bought by Libyan traffickers who stowed most of the refugees in the hold of the ship. Burcel brought the wreckage to the Biennale to act as a visual embodiment of the invisibilised oppression of refugees as well as to offer bypassers at the Biennale an opportunity to *bear/bare* witness to this global atrocity. The piece visually represented the removal of free human mobility.

COVID-19 has not only been a virus that has restricted human mobility but it too has acted as an effective immaterial object in forcing us to *bear/bare* witness to global inequalities, economic, racial and gendered. Equally so, the coronavirus knows no borders, privileges, races or histories, placing the global community on an equal footing in its ability to be infected by it. The extremities of the ever-engulfing gap of global inequality have been stretched wider apart due to the impact of a global pandemic. This has been a time of 'bearing witness' to generational systemic racial

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[129] https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2019/partecipants/christoph-b%C3%BCchel

oppression (catapulted by the growing #BlackLivesMatter Movement), and to constructed binaries and polarisations, as well as patriarchal gender-based violence and the realisation, yet again, that the black female body in South Africa carries the heaviest burden economically.[130]

COVID-19 in this contemporary moment asks us to *bear/bare witness* to the world we have built. I have included the word 'bare' because it means to reveal and uncover. Perhaps it is when we accept our shame and shame's gesture of uncovering that we are in turn able to bear witness to the world around us, and in this act of uncovering and acknowledging shame we may be granted the ability to be empathetic, to 'see feel' and share what the other feels.

I thus return to my Introduction, where I said that I would offer a reluctant conclusion, for this postscript highlights how in speaking to shame and uncovering it, there is growth. It is in the process of writing shame, in making shame visible through the black and white of words, that the invisible arc of shame that we as South Africans, see and don't see, is made known.

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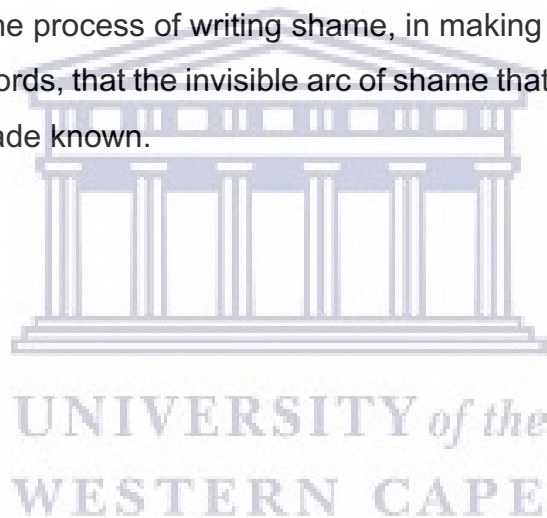
[130] Dr. Nic Spaull from the Economic Department at the University of Stellenbosch is Principal Investigator in a study called *The National Income Dynamics Study - Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey* (NIDS-CRAM). The study looks at the impact of COVID-19 on the South African economy. There are 5 waves of the study staged throughout 2020/21. The first wave study showed how women had borne the brunt of job losses, with 2 of the 3 million of jobs lost being women's. Thus women faced a 'double disadvantage.' https://cramsurevy.org/

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