

AN INVESTIGATION OF CULTURAL DISLOCATION IN THE WORK
OF SELECTED ARTISTS

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“Do not ask me who I am and do not tell me to remain the same”.

(Michel Foucault 1967)

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination through any other institution.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation sets out to investigate cultural dislocation in the work of Leora Farber (1964), Viviane Sassen (1972), George Alamidis (1954) and my art practice.

The paper begins by highlighting the importance of this study and defines terminology for the purpose of this research. In addition an explanation of the research methodology used is provided. The study is contextualised through a discussion of writings by Stuart Hall (1997), Edward Said (1987), Heidi Armbruster (2010), Chloe Sells (2011), Katheryn Woodward (1997), Michel Foucault (1967), Leora Farber (2012) and Lorin Friesen (2013).

An analysis of the selected artists' work reveals an investigation of cultural dislocation within diverse cultural contexts.

Farber investigates her position as a second generation Jewish woman in post-colonial, post-Apartheid South Africa through the use of three protagonists. She does this in an attempt to create a lasting Jewish / South African hybrid identity. She explores not only her Jewish heritage and its connotations, but also the changing notions of white identity in post 1994 South Africa.

Sassen, in her photographic depiction of obscured African subjects, challenges the viewer's perceptions of Africa and positions herself as being 'in-between' Africa and the Netherlands, where she "will always be the stranger ... and will never be part of the culture" (Sassen in Jaeger 2010).

Alamidis' work explores cultural dislocation in the context of migration, eloquently expressed through the use of the identity cards of 1950s Greek immigrants as visual metaphors for the loss of identity.

I explore cultural dislocation through the history of three female protagonists (my grandmother, mother and myself) and their migration between the Netherlands and Southern Africa. The protagonists' cultural narratives provide an historical context for a discussion of my art practice in the form of an exhibition titled *Discovering Home*.

The conclusion outlines the research findings and identifies possible areas of future research. The main research finding reveals that the formation of a new subject identity, post migration, is dependent on a specific (historical) time and (geographical and psychological) space. An area of possible future research, in the context of cultural dislocation, is the use of Foucault's (1967) theory of heterotopias to explore the idea of the 'third space' functioning as a personal heterotopia.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to the memory of my grandmother and to my mother.

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The photographs of the artworks do not reflect the layout of the exhibition titled Discovering Home.

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INTRODUCTION

This research aims to investigate cultural dislocation in the work of South African artist Leora Farber (1964), Dutch artist Viviane Sassen (1972), Greek artist George Alamidis (1954) and my art practice. These artists were selected because their work demonstrates an investigation of cultural dislocation within diverse cultural contexts.

For the purposes of this study culture is defined as the customs, institutions and achievements of a particular nation, people or group (Kavanagh. 2006:28). Dislocation is the process of dislocating or being dislocated (Kavanagh. 2006:334). Cultural dislocation is understood to mean a feeling of displacement that occurs when people live their lives on someone else's terms rather than their own.

Two major themes, cultural identity and cultural dislocation intersect in this study. These two themes formed an integral part of the experiences of three related female protagonists of different generations, as they negotiated their cultural dislocation and subsequent formation of new identities, through migration between the Netherlands and Southern Africa. This research investigates both the factors that caused the protagonist's cultural dislocation and how the formation of their cultural identity was influenced by time and space.

The need for this research stemmed from my desire to understand the cause of my dislocated identity, which manifested itself after migrating to the Netherlands at the age of thirteen. Based on conversations with my mother and maternal relatives, family photographs and letters, I began to piece together the narrative of my mother's and subsequently my grandmother's cultural identity. Through this interrogation of my family's history of migration I discovered that, like me, both my mother and my grandmother had suffered a form of cultural dislocation. This was the initial catalyst for this study. The cultural journeys of the protagonists were similar yet different, because the formations of their new subjective identities were dependent on a particular time and space. The specific cultural and socio-political norms demanded of each generation were different for each protagonist. The

research highlights how each protagonist negotiated their new cultural context and the formation of a new cultural identity. It is important to mention that the persona of my grandmother is largely imagined. She passed away in 2005 and is thus unable to tell her own story. There is very little documentation related to my grandmother's initial time spent in Southern Africa, except for letters and some photographs. Her story is pieced together both from interviews with family members and my imaginings of what her life must have been like. My imaginings are supported by Heidi Armbruster's (2010) research pertaining to generations of German immigrants in South West Africa and the memoir of Baroness Karen von Blixen written under the pen name Isak Dinesen (1937).

In order to establish the theoretical framework for an analysis of cultural dislocation in the work of Leora Farber (1964), Viviane Sassen (1972), George Alamidis (1954) and my art practice, this research is located in theories of culture, identity, cultural identity, cultural dislocation, difference, and the Other, in the writings of Stuart Hall (1997), Kathryn Woodward (1997), Edward Said (1987), Heidi Armbruster (2010), Chloe Sells (2011), Dinesh Bhugra (2004) and Michel Foucault (1967). Farber, Sassen and Alamidis investigate different aspects of cultural identity and cultural dislocation. Farber's 2007 mixed media exhibition titled *Dis-Location/ Re-Location* embodies feelings of wanting to 'become' African whilst retaining European ideals (Farber 2007). Farber's work additionally addresses Michel Foucault's (1967) notion of heterotopias and spaces of crisis. Sassen's 2012 exhibition of photographs titled *Parasomnia* deals with the notion of being 'in-between'; of never really being part of a whole (Somzé 2007). Alamidis' series of identity books in the exhibition at the Melbourne Immigration Museum (2004) titled *Embark – Disembark*: an exploration of cultural dislocation focusses on issues of loss and belonging and the formation of new subject identities (Sakaris 2001).

This research employs qualitative research methods, using a reflective approach. Qualitative research is understood to mean "an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, framed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting" (Creswell in Leedy 1997:105).

In both theory and practice, action research methods and action / reflection cycles, facilitated by a cognitive reflective journal were used to critically reflect on my findings and development. Action research is a process of systematic reflection, enquiry and action carried out by individuals about their own professional practice (Frost in Costello 2003:4). I employed a living theories approach, described by Jack Whitehead (2006:32) as practice that is a form of 'real-life theorizing'. As we practice, we observe what we do and reflect on it. We make sense of what we are doing through researching it. In this research I initiated a journey of personal development, through the exploration of identity and a reflective practice, leading to an enhanced awareness of my personal and practical knowledge (Settelmaier and Taylor in De Beer 2006:18). I drew on my 'embedded-embodied' knowledge of Dutch and South African culture from an 'insider' and 'implicated' perspective; this enabled me to use this knowledge in my art practice and theory, in an authentic manner (Stoller in De Beer 2006:19). Feelings of dislocation, isolation, not belonging and a loss of self are portrayed in my art practice by situating the protagonists within their relevant time periods and drawing links between cultural expectations and culturally dislocated realities. Dinesh Bhugra (2004) indicates that when migration takes place people carry their knowledge and distress with them; it is knowledge and distress that the three protagonists carried with them in their migration that informs my art practice.

The dissertation consists of four chapters. Chapter One consists of a discussion of theories related to cultural identity and cultural dislocation using the writings of Stuart Hall (1997), Edward Said (1987) Heidi Armbruster (2010), Chloe Sells (2011), Katheryn Woodward (1997), Michel Foucault (1967) Leora Farber (2012) and Lorin Friezen (2013).

Chapter Two investigates cultural dislocation through a discussion of Farber's exhibition titled *Dis-Location/Re-Location* (2007), Sassen's exhibition titled *Parasomnia* (2012) and Alamidis' work on a group exhibition titled *Embark – Disembark: an exploration of cultural dislocation* (2004). The discussion of Farber's work focusses on her use of protagonists in an exploration of cultural dislocation. Using Farber's work as a point of departure, Sassen's work is used to illustrate what it means to be 'in-between' in the context of Bhabha's (in Hall 1997) theories of the subaltern and the third space. Alamidis' work provides a context for the idea of not

belonging, the loss of self and the resulting cultural dislocation that occurs as a result of migration.

Chapter Three traces my family's cultural journey and the chronological history of migration of the protagonists between the Netherlands and Southern Africa. The protagonists' cultural journeys provide an historical context for a discussion of my art practice in Chapter Four in the form of an exhibition titled *Discovering Home*.

The conclusion outlines the research findings and identifies possible areas for future research.

CHAPTER 1

Cultural Identity and Cultural Dislocation

Chapter One consists of a discussion of theories related to discourses of cultural identity and cultural dislocation in order to provide a context for a discussion of the work of Leora Farber, Viviane Sassen, George Alamidis in Chapter Two and my art practice in Chapter Three and Four.

Hawkins (1983:322) defines identity as “the condition of being a specified person or thing” and to identify means both to “recognize being a specified person or thing” and “to regard oneself as sharing the characteristics of another person”. Based on readings of Erik Erikson (1968) and Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1971) Avtar Brah concluded that identity is simultaneously subjective and social and is constituted in, and through, culture. Culture and identity are inextricably linked concepts (Brah 1996:21). Identity is based on the constructs of culture; the norms and customs associated with a particular culture influence an individual’s sense of self and belonging within a group (Kavanagh 2006:28). In this sense identity can be enriched or dislocated through culture. The sharing of characteristics can be linked to culture, because people of the same culture share the same set of norms, values and customs which help define them as a group. Faced with a new and different culture, identity can become dislocated, because the individual does not feel an association with the new culture. As a result they lose their sense of self, creating a new subjective identity (Woodward 1997:29). For the purposes of this study culture is defined as the customs, institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people or group (Kavanagh 2006:28). Dislocation is the process of dislocating or being dislocated (Kavanagh 2006:334). Cultural dislocation for the purposes of this study is understood to mean a feeling of displacement that occurs when people live their lives on someone else’s terms instead of their own.

Discourses of identity, culture, cultural identity cultural dislocation, diaspora, difference and the Other, in the writings of Stuart Hall (1997), Lawrence Grossberg (1997), Kathryn Woodward (1997) Edward Said (1987) Heidi Armbruster (2010)

Chloe Sells (2011) and Dinesh Bhugra (2004) and Michel Foucault (1967) form the theoretical framework of this study. Lady Mary Wortley Montague's *Turkish Embassy Letters* (Kietzman 1998), letters written by Johanna Maria van Riebeeck (Bosman 1952) and the memoir of Baroness Karen von Blixen in *Out of Africa* (Isak Dinesen 1937) are used to illustrate personal encounters with a new culture and how this encounter is negotiated. In addition these accounts identify differences and similarities in the negotiation of culture and the subsequent formation of new subjective identities, in the context of cultural dislocation. The writing of Lorin Friesen (2013) provides a psychological underpinning in understanding the mental processes associated with being culturally dislocated.

In this research, terms such as hybrid, subaltern and dual cultural identity or biculturalism are used to express how cultural identity can be classed according to the level of assimilation of, or adaptation to, a new culture. Although superficially these terms appear to be similar in meaning, there are subtle differences in the understanding and application of these terms in this study. Hall (1990) provides an understanding of the differences between forms of identities (Grossberg in Hall and du Gay 1997:89) in the form of two models. The first model accepts that there is an indispensable content to any identity "which is defined by with a common origin or a common structure of experience or both". The second model denies the possibility of such unique identities and puts forward the idea that identities are always relational and incomplete, in process (Grossberg in Hall and du Gay 1997:89).

The term hybrid is defined as "something made by combining two different elements" (Hawkins 1983:319). Hybrid is used here, in the context of identity, to describe the cultural exchanges, borrowings and intersections in the creation of a hybrid cultural identity that represents a cultural merging (Farber 2007). The term subaltern refers to a person who inhabits a third space between two cultures as Grossberg (in Hall and du Gay 1997:91) explained when he said:

Images of a third space (as in Bhabha) see subaltern identities as unique third terms literally defining an in-between place inhabited by the subaltern. The subaltern is neither one nor the other but is defined by its location in a unique spatial condition which constitutes it as different.

The terms dual cultural identity or biculturalism are taken to mean a cultural identity which is “composed of two parts” (Hawkins 1983:198). This term however differs from hybridity because a hybrid identity which is an amalgamated whole, something new, whereas a dual cultural identity is made up of two parts, regardless of whether these parts coexist or struggle against each other. The concept of a dual cultural identity differs from that of a subaltern in that the subaltern inhabits the space, on the borders of and in-between two cultures rather than being composed of two parts. The application of these terms in the context of cultural identity is dependent on a number of different circumstances. These range from the act of settling down or choosing not to engage with a new culture, or choosing to be defined as an inactive participant within existing cultural norms and expectations. The latter circumstance results in cultural dislocation and a loss of identity. As Dinesh Bhugra (2004) notes that, “When people migrate from one nation or culture to another they carry their knowledge and distress with them”. This leads to a shift in cultural identity when immersed in a new culture. This immersion “encourages a degree of belonging; they also attempt to settle down by either assimilation or biculturalism (Bhugra 2004:1). From this departure point it is possible to become either a cultural hybrid or a subaltern inhabiting a third space. According to Kathryn Woodward (1997:1) “identities in the contemporary world derive from a multitude of sources, sources which may conflict in the construction of identity positions and lead to contradictory fragmented identities”. Grossberg (in Hall and du Gay 1997:89) supports this view when he argues that:

The figure of *fragmentation* emphasizes the multiplicity of identities and the positions within any apparent identity. It thus sees a particular concrete or lived identity as a kind of ‘disassembled and reassembled unity’ (Haraway 1991:174). Identities are thus always contradictory, made up out of partial fragments.

Contributing to the uncertainty surrounding the debate on the formation of identity are the conflicting views of essentialist and non-essentialist perspectives on identity. Essentialism suggests that there is one “clear, authentic set of characteristics” which all people of a certain culture identify with and which “does not alter across time” (Woodward 1997:11). Non-essentialism preoccupies itself with the “differences, as well as common or shared characteristics” of a group in relation to itself, but also in

relation to other ethnic groups. Non–essentialism interrogates the definition of what it means to belong to a certain group whose culture has evolved throughout history (Woodward 1997: 11). Essentialist and non-essentialist attitudes can have a direct effect on whether assimilation into a culture is successful or not. Individualism stresses the ‘I’ mentality where each individual is expected to look after themselves and in my experience this resonates with Essentialist Dutch culture. Whereas collectivism stresses a ‘we’ mentality where the needs of the group are placed before the needs of the individual which is evident in my experience of the non-essentialist culture of South Africa. According to Bhugra (2004:5) an allocentric person “defines the self in terms of in-group relationships and knows more about others than selves”. Bhugra (2004:6) concludes that the different types of societies affect immigrants in different ways when he says:

It is likely that allocentric individuals from a collectivist society will face different types of stresses if they migrate to an individualistic society and their social links are with idiocentric individuals. Similarly idiocentric individuals from collectivist society who migrate to individualistic societies and come across idiocentric individuals may have different experiences.

My identity is defined by what it is not, by the differences that locate me as the Other; as Woodward (1997:12) suggests “identity is relational, and difference is established by symbolic marking in relation to others”. Other in the context of this study is understood to mean not the same, or inferior (Hawkins 1983:460). An understanding of this term is important to this research as my cultural dislocation is the result of being not the same or the Other in the context of both Dutch and South African cultures. The essentialist cultural practices of the Netherlands placed me in the position of the Other, as a figure of *différance* in a relationship of negativity (Grossberg in Hall and du Gay 1997:90). This position inhibited the formation and representation of an adopted Dutch identity. However, when I returned to South Africa I was seen as the Other because of my adopted Dutch characteristics. This positioning of myself as the Other in both cultural contexts made it difficult to define and represent my new identity. Representations “produce meanings through which we can make sense of our experience and of who we are” (Woodward 1997:14). As a cultural process, representation “establishes individual and collective identities,

and symbolic systems can provide answers to the question: who am I?" Different meanings are produced by different symbolic systems, but the resulting meanings are challenged and are always changing (Woodward 1997:14). Identification is central to an understanding of the concept of representation and the role of culture in creating new meaning in the context of social relations. Identification, according to Woodward (Ibid) describes "the process of identifying with others, either through lack of awareness of difference or separation, or as a result of perceived similarities". As a result, imagined communities are formed within the context of national culture and identities.

In the context of migration the expected adherence to cultural norms and their influence on the formation of the protagonist's identities is important in the sense that migrants have to re-negotiate their cultural beliefs within a new culture. The process of self-identification is important in negotiating culture as it aids in situating the self within a new culture cultural community. Heidi Armbruster (2010:1232) speaks about the "self-identification of immigrants who have become, by association or choice, part of an ex-colonial settler community" and the way in which "discourses become part of the resources which people deploy in relating to one another (Armbruster in Fairclough 2003:124). Self-identification refers to how people not only arrange themselves in relation to others, but also in relation to time and space. It also demonstrates how people feed off their social, cultural and historical knowledge and experiences to correctly situate themselves within existing cultural norms. Armbruster's (2010) study of German immigrants in South West Africa (Namibia) provides an insight into my grandmother's experience in a (German) heterogeneous colonial community and its corresponding (German) identity. The main thematic focus of the interviews in her study was the "biographical experience of migrations" (Armbruster 2010). In the context of this study the biographies link these people to a time and place and, in so doing, glean subtle shifts in identity that occur when migration takes place. This assisted me in both locating my grandmother in 1950's South West Africa, and piecing together her shifting identity in this new space. Such identities are transitory and are forever changing (Hall in Woodward 1997:52), "always relational and incomplete, in process" (Gossberg in Hall and du Gay 1997:89)

When a person is placed in a new cultural setting, past experiences inadvertently have an effect on the creation of a new subjective identity. Chloe Sells (2011) explained this when she argued that identity is rooted in the land, that the place from where a person originates influences their identity. Thus no longer living in the place of origin can cause feelings of cultural dislocation, feelings of not belonging and a loss of identity. In discussing home and belonging Sells uses Dave Hickey's description of home as a moral bottom line; as a secular refuge and source of comforts and reassurances that are unavailable elsewhere (Hickey in Sells 2011:10). Sells continued by arguing "the geographic placement of a home defines language, sustenance, social interaction, traditions and concerns" (Sells 2011). This is supported by Grossberg (in Hall and du Gay 1997:89) when he noted that, "Eric Michaels (1994) argued that people's access to knowledge is determined in part by the place of conception, birth, death and residence from and by which they speak, for one is always for and from a specific geography of such places. That is, subjectivity describes the points of attachment from which one experiences the world". Sells (2011) explores how origins, like a sense of home, ground people. Origins remain constant and from this fixed departure point, something can become anything. This references a form of identity "which is defined by either a common origin or a common structure of experience or both (Grossberg in Hall and du Gay 1997:89). However Sells' argues that her idea of origins as a fixed point no longer exists in the same way as it did, due to cultural hybridity and cultural displacement (Sells 2011:14). The homogenous idea that if I was born in South Africa, I remain a South African, no longer applies. Sells attributes this to modernity and believes that this opens the way to new ways of locating the self within cultural paradigms. However, this idea rejects the notion of an identity that is solely defined by a person's place of origin. Sells (2011) echoes Hall (in Woodward 1997:52) when she notes that past experiences have an effect on shaping identity, this can be seen in the case of the protagonists where the process of migration resulted in a dislocation of their cultural identity.

The fictive narrative in Somerset Maugham's *The Moon and Sixpence* (1974) describes Paul Gauguin's dislocation from French culture, which ultimately caused him to relocate to the small island of Tahiti. This narrative demonstrates how one's home culture can become unfamiliar and can cause a fracture in identity (Sells

2011:21). This narrative illustrates another facet in the paradox of belonging and how time and space have an effect on identity; it demonstrates that the occupied physical space does not necessarily need to be a new one in order for it to cause cultural dislocation. The point of origin can directly affect identity and cause a dislocation from the original culture. An individual's identity can evolve past set doctrines and cultural norms and as a result, no longer subscribe to the rigid cultural contexts which define a particular cultural identity. Identities are "always contradictory and made up out of partial fragments" and "identities are fragmented and that this fragmentation can occur in either individual identities or in social categories or a combination of both" (Grossberg in Hall and du Gay 1997:91). Grossberg (in Hall and du Gay 1992:21) concluded that "identities can, therefore, be contradictory and are always situational". I do not see my new cultural identity as a cohesive whole, I see myself as a person inhabiting a space in-between two opposing cultures, belonging to neither culture. I am not a hybrid as the cultures which make up my identity are not an amalgamated whole. Referencing Bhabha (1994) Grossberg (in Hall and du Gay 1997:91) defined a person in such a situation as a subaltern and the space inhabited by the subaltern as a third space. Being aware that I inhabited this third space was the first step in my attempt to reconcile my fragmented and dislocated cultural identity. Discovering that my grandmother and my mother inhabited a similar third space led me to further investigate how their cultural identities were fragmented and dislocated. This will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

The Greek word for return, *nostos*, and suffering, *algos*, combine to create the term nostalgia. Nostalgia is understood to mean, "the suffering caused by a yearning to return to one's place of origin" (Wildschut 2006:975). The term nostalgia is used in this study as a way of illustrating the distress that is caused when migration occurs. Nostalgia is something that all three protagonists experienced and the longing for home is referenced in order to contextualize the new subjective identities formed by the protagonists in a new cultural environment. A longing for home can influence cultural decisions and adaptation to a new culture, but it can also be used as a coping mechanism to deal with the trauma of migration.

Nostalgia has long been equated with homesickness and though these concepts appear similar, they are inherently different. Homesickness denotes a "longing for

one's home when one is away from it" (Hawkins 1983:311) whereas nostalgia signifies a "sentimental memory of or longing for things of the past" (Hawkins 1983:444). It is possible to experience nostalgia positively, negatively or in a bittersweet way. Davis (in Wildschut 2006:976) argues, "The nostalgic experience is infused with imputations of past, beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness, love". Other theorists such as Collins et al (in Wildschut 2006:976) viewed nostalgia as a subset of emotions, specifically categorizing nostalgia under feelings of distress and loss; the realization that an aspect of one's past is irrevocably lost. Arising from these two classifications is the bittersweet type of nostalgia. This interpretation adheres to the idea that even though nostalgia is an emotion that relates to happiness, it is also tinged with sadness because some facet of the past is completely out of reach (Wildschut 2006:976). Nostalgia can be triggered by people, momentous occasions, settings, and periods in life, animals, tangible objects and notions of past selves. Though people and occasions are the most prevalent triggers for nostalgia, I argue that all the triggers mentioned above had an effect on the feelings of nostalgia experienced by the protagonists and, in addition, that nostalgic reflections can be tentatively linked to time and space as well as issues of cultural dislocation. A study of nostalgia by Wildschut's (2006:983) concluded that a negative mood can directly affect the triggering of nostalgia and that "the effect of negative mood on nostalgia raise[s] the interesting possibility that nostalgia can serve to counteract negative mood" (ibid). This negative affect can open up exposure to positive narratives in the case of people who have the ability to "repress rather than acknowledge negative affect" (ibid). This repression can also cause feelings of loneliness, and not belonging; it is in this sense that the study of nostalgia is related to this research and my art practice. Being culturally dislocated causes feelings of alienation, of not belonging to a homogenous cultural group. These feelings can be strengthened by feelings of nostalgia which in turn aggravate the dislocation and loneliness. Wildschut (2006:990) in discussing the relationship between old age and nostalgia noted that:

...bereavements and declines in health status may render older adults particularly vulnerable to social isolation, thus impairing the formation of intimate friendships and social networks they so highly value. Under these circumstances, nostalgia may play a vital role in reestablishing at least a symbolic connection with significant others.

This symbolic connection is reiterated by Sells in her discussion of nostalgia which relates to certain narratives in my art practice. Sells (2011) uses the term nostalgia to reinterpret the relationship between a physical place that was once real, but which now only exists in an internal landscape. This holds true for all three protagonists. Vladimir Nabokov (1998) in his memoir *Invitation of a Memory*, used his memory to immortalize his family history but also to “locate himself in a time and space as the person he has become (in Sells 2011:18). Nabokov’s concept of an ideal memory is based on the notion of “everything is as it should be, nothing will ever change” and so he “entombs his past in an ideal memory, in an airless place, [where] the moment is safe from ever being lost” (Sells 2011:18). This notion of the ideal memory reinforces the idea of nostalgia. Memories are in and of themselves ephemeral and idealized; once the idealization of a memory becomes fixed, it is inherently nostalgic.

During the early and mid-twentieth century, when the protagonists migrated between Europe and Africa, fixed representation and assumptions about Africa had been established through three hundred years of colonization. Edward Said’s (1978) concept of Orientalism is applied to locate this study as a discourse that relates to Western culture and its assumptions about, and representations of, Africa. Benedict Anderson (in Woodward 1997) suggests that our understanding of national identity includes the idea we have of it and that “the difference between national identities therefore lies in the different ways in which they are imagined” (Anderson in Woodward 1997:18). This is reiterated in Said’s (in Woodward 1997:18) explanation of the concept of Orientalism:

[Orientalism] is based on western culture producing a set of assumptions and representations about ‘the East’ which constructs it as a source of fascination and danger, as both exotic and threatening. Representations of the East produce western knowledge about it – a fact which tells us more about Western fears and anxieties than it does about life in the East and North Africa

Although the origin of Orientalism is rooted in the Orient, the concept is applied to this study as Western culture produced a set of assumptions and representations about Africa, revealing fears and anxieties. When I lived in the Netherlands I was perceived as the Other by my peers who had pre-conceived notions of what constituted an African. From an early age the Dutch are confronted with essentialist

images of Africa, depicting disease and poverty. Africa is still perceived as the “dark continent. As a result, my ability to speak Dutch confused my peers. The Dutch with their essentialist attitude do not expect people from Africa to speak their language, or be familiar with their customs. Foreign cultures contradict the Dutch essentialist idea of a homogenous cultural identity. Kristeva’s (in Farber, 2012:29) concept of the stranger-within-the-self can be applied to my experience of being able to negotiate Dutch culture without belonging to it. Kristeva’s idea of the stranger is based on Sigmund Freud’s (in Farber 2012:29) notion of the *Unheimlich*, the uncanny; “a disjuncture wherein that which is familiar and known *and* unfamiliar and unknown are present”. My position as a South African migrant, despite being able to speak the Dutch language and negotiate Dutch culture, marked me as a foreigner. I did not project an essentialist Dutch cultural identity. The Dutch can be considered to be essentialist because they adhere to a cultural identity in terms of one shared homogenous culture, whereas South Africa has historically been a multicultural, albeit it divided, society. The cultures of South Africa were initially separated by colonial influence and later separated by law under Apartheid rule. Race, not culture, became the marker of difference, although within ethnic groupings such as Xhosa, Zulu and Tswana different cultures existed. However, diverse cultures are now a part of a developing, shared South African culture. Stuart Hall (in Woodward 1997) explains the notion of a shared culture when he says that ‘cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as ‘one people’, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning’ (Hall in Woodward 1997). In terms of Said’s thinking cultural homogeneity gives Orientalism its strength (Said 1987). This is supported by Denys Hays (in Badmington 2008) when he says that “Orientalism is never far away from Europe, a collective notion identifying “us” Europeans against all “those” non-Europeans. This was evident in the existence of discriminatory laws in South Africa under Apartheid. Said (1978) argues that the insistence on European homogeneity is what makes European culture homogenous, inside and outside of Europe. This notion of a homogenous and superior European cultural identity makes the concept of Orientalism easier to understand in the colonial Southern African context.

Homogenous culture poses a problem for migrants. Culturally dislocated identities are not easily assimilated into rigid, essentialist norms and expectations, causing a

disconnection and loss of self. This is exacerbated by a lack of reference and an inability to relate to the new cultural paradigms. A homogenous cultural identity, which adheres to shared cultural codes, provides continuous frames of reference (Hall in Woodward 1997). This is reiterated by Lorin Friesen (2013) when she described the concept of mental symmetry in the context of mental networks. Friesen applies the concept of mental symmetry predominantly to subaltern children, who she refers to as Third Culture Kids (TCK's). Although Friesen focusses on children, the concept of mental networks and mental symmetry can none the less be applied to this study as mental networks can be triggered at any age. According to Friesen when the mind contains numerous emotional memories which are similar they come together to form a whole; Friesen refers to this as a mental network (Friesen 2013:2). To activate a mental network an emotion needs to be triggered, regardless of whether that emotion is positive or negative. As such mental networks generate emotions based upon consistency and inconsistency (Ibid). If a mental network is triggered with consistent information then a positive hyper emotion will be the result. When a mental network is triggered with continuously inconsistent information it results in a negative hyper emotion. If this inconsistency is repeated long enough, the mental network will start to fail resulting in culture shock which can lead to cultural dislocation. Friesen (2013:2) described culture as a "set of common mental networks" and argued that groups of people with similar mental networks behave in ways which are consistent with the mental networks of others in their group, leading to a positive experience. However these same mental networks drive people from other cultures to behave in ways which are inconsistent with the mental networks of others (Friesen 2013:2). This ultimately leads to feelings of disconnect from others, together with a loss of self and cultural dislocation. Mental networks need consistent input when triggered, therefore "a person who looks like a local citizen will be expected to follow the cultural expectations of local society, while a foreigner will trigger the mental network for foreigner and be expected to act like a foreigner" (Friesen 2013:6).

The concept of diaspora can be applied to this study in the context of a personal displacement. Grossberg (in Hall and du Gay 1997:101) notes that in contemporary writing "diaspora is understood as "a whole range of phenomena that encourage multi-locale attachments, dwelling and travelling" (Clifford, in press). According to

Brubaker (2005:5-6) the three core elements that constitute a diaspora are “dispersion of space, orientation to a ‘homeland’ and boundary maintenance; boundary maintenance in this case means to retain a distinctive identity within the new ‘homeland’ or society”. My attempts at orientation to a homeland (assimilating myself into Dutch culture) were to a large extent undermined by my boundary maintenance (retention of my African culture). This personalized diaspora caused a loss of self and a dislocation of cultural identity. This ultimately resulted in confusion as to what constituted home, supported by Friesen’s (2013) argument that, “the average TCK (Third Culture Kid) [who] has no sense of home” (Friesen 2013:6). A TCK’s sense of home is distorted as they migrate before a homogenous idea of the concept of home can be created. This migration, or dispersion of space, before a homogenous cultural identity can be formed, leads to a lack of boundary maintenance, because a TCK has no original boundaries as a point of reference. I mention the concept of diaspora to locate Friesen’s (2013) theories within the context of cultural identity and cultural dislocation discourse. However this study does not rely on the concept of diaspora as a critical theoretical framework.

Selected letters and narratives are used in this study to provide an insight into issues of culture, migration and identity experienced by colonial women. My grandmother’s negotiation of culture in South West Africa is given life through the correspondences of Johanna Maria van Riebeeck, Lady Mary Wortley Montague and the memoir of Baroness Karen von Blixen in the novel *Out of Africa*. These women provide an account of their interactions with a new culture and how this subsequently affected their formation of a new subjective identity. Baroness von Blixen’s account of colonial life in Kenya provides a context for an imagined understanding of what my grandmother’s initial introduction to Southern African culture.

Perceptions of home and culture, relevant to time and space are evident in the letters written by Johanna Maria van Riebeeck from the Cape colony to her parents in Batavia. Despite never having set foot in the Netherlands, Johanna van Riebeeck considered herself to be Dutch, evident in her superior attitude towards the Dutch people of the Cape Colony which she visited in 1710 on her way to the Netherlands.

In a letter to her parents on 13 January 1710 van Riebeeck, (Bosman 1952) wrote:

When you see this place from the sea, it is prettier and more pleasant than when you arrive on land. It is very miserable; you don't see grass or clover, and the streets everywhere by the castle and in the town are full of holes, as though wild pigs had rooted through them—when you decide to ride into the city or to the Company's gardens, you are always worried about falling!

Outside are the Hottentots, who are very ugly and stinking people and the Dutch people, also keep very untidy households. You see many people with strange faces, and the way of life is strange here. The governor is a man, who enjoys company, and it looks like he enjoys having women around all the time—so there is a really courtly bunch here, but even so, everything is hottentottish. I must admit that based on appearances, I have never seen a worse place. But as far as food is concerned, it is better here than in Batavia, and so is the climate.

van Riebeeck Others the people living in the colony when describing the differences between herself and “them” (the Dutch settlers). The use of the derogatory term ‘Hottentotish’ is clear evidence of a superior and discriminatory attitude towards the inhabitants of the colony and their way of life.

The three letters written by Johanna van Riebeeck, give a glimpse into how she negotiates this familiar, yet strange and separate culture, and points to the way in which cultural identity is influenced by time and space. In addition van Riebeeck's letters provide an insight into early Dutch culture in South Africa and a link to my family's shifting identities as a part of a long-standing tradition of Dutch migration to South Africa. The concept of shifting identities can be related to Lady Mary Wortley Montague's 19th century interaction with Turkish culture.

Lady Mary Wortley Montague's *Turkish Embassy Letters* (1717) (in Kietzman 1998) offer a valuable insight into strategies used in an encounter with a foreign culture and provide a context for the construction of my cultural identity within this study. In 1717 Lady Montague relocated from Britain to Turkey with her husband. Through an interaction with Turkish culture and a questioning of how her cultural identity was formed in the context of time and space, she redefined her identity and cultural norms and morals. Montague's journey of identity formation is similar to the journeys undertaken by the protagonists in the formation of a new subjective identity, as a result of cultural dislocation. The identity of each woman was challenged and altered

as a result of relocation to a different country; their cultural norms and values were tested and changed over time, within the context of new cultural spaces.

Kietzman (1998:537) describes Montague's encounter with Turkish culture as

... a radically decentering experience that affected a productive loss and subsequent reconstitution of her subject position through social and discursive interactions with other women.

Rather than enlisting Orientalist models of colonized subjects as an objectified Other, Montague's experience can be described as a "migrant moment of dislocation" (Kietzman 1998:538), whereby Montague resists being determined exclusively by her position as an English woman in Turkey. Montague engages with the Turkish culture and thus avoids Othering and being Othered. She takes an intellectual position from which she can engage her own changing subjectivity within this new space. Kietzman argues that her interrogation of Montague's letters shows that in opposition to Said's model of Orientalism, where self and other are fixed opposites, Montague engages with Turkish culture and thereby redefines the self and the other within a new subjective space by actively engaging in social and discursive interactions (Ibid). Subjective is defined as "existing in a person's mind and not produced by things outside it" and as being "dependent on personal taste or views" (Hawkins 1983:672). In terms of identity, the use of the term subjective is taken to mean a new identity that is formed by an individual. Grossberg (in Hall and du Gay 1997:98) refers us to Althusser's (1971) argument that "modern subjectivity must function, to some extent, to 'authorize' experience itself, even though, again, some positions may be better able to articulate and defend their 'authority' ". Outside influences contribute to the initial need to form a new identity, but the subsequent identity that is formed is purely subjective and unique to the individual. The new subjective identity is not part of a homogenous group identity; it is separate and different and cannot be objective. The new identity is informed by a form of cultural displacement, or dislocation, through migration and relocation.

Montague's (in Kietzman 1998:539)) account of her visit to a Turkish bath exemplifies how she confronted, and engaged with, Turkish culture

I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them. Yet there was not one of them that showed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible. To tell you the truth, I had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr. Gervase could have been there invisible. I fancy it would have very much improved his art to see so many fine women naked, in different postures, some in conversation, some working, others drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their cushions. In short, 'tis the women's coffee house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented etc. The lady that seemed the most considerable among them entreated me to sit by her and would fain have undressed me for the bath. I excused myself with some difficulty, they being however all so earnest in persuading me, I was at last forced to open my stays, which satisfied them very well, for I saw they believed I was so locked up in that machine, that is was not in my power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband (1998:348).

In this account, Montague does not Other the Turkish women by stereotyping them in relation to Western ideologies of the exotic. However she does attempt to make a distinction between Eastern and Western cultural norms. This is evident when she speaks about the differences in her dress (traveling habit or riding dress) and how it would seem extraordinary to the naked women in the bath. This references the cultural expectations of being dressed versus being undressed. In this encounter, by allowing herself to become a participant with the Turkish women, Montague has permitted for a construction of subjectivities in relation to the Other, by accepting difference and exploring it. In her writing Montague self-consciously presents "her own shifting location as an object of inquiry" (Kietzman 1998: 539).

Through her interactions with the women in the bath Montague becomes a participant in the creation of a subjective cultural identity. She achieves this not by viewing the women as part of an Orientalist model, but by a willingness to interrogate her position both within the space and in relation to her own culture. Montague comes to the realization that she is constrained by her English culture in relation to Turkish culture and, by criticizing her own cultural position; she transforms the women in the bath from mere objects into participants. By including the Turkish women in her own subjectivity, Montague solidifies her belief that "although she and

other women inhabit very different cultural realities, as women they share similar concerns and struggles” (Kietzman 1998:540).

Although Montague’s interaction with Turkish culture was positive, the resulting new cultural subjectivities caused a feeling of dislocation. Montague’s construction of a cultural encounter is as much “autobiography as it is ethnography” and for Montague, “writing about the Other enabled her to rewrite herself as a dislocated subject” (Ibid). This personal narrative is important in understanding Montague’s new position within her changing cultural identity. This is explained by Kamala Visweswaran (in Kietzman 1998:541) when she argued that:

Montague grounds her knowledge of the Other in an epistolary narrative that constructs her own dislocation as a positive experience that enabled her to criticize her own culture, to view an Other culture as a collection of alternative practices and to construct herself through exchanges with others.

Through this critical reflection of her own culture, and through interaction with Turkish women, Montague embraces her new position as a dislocated subject; she recognizes how interactions with the women cause her subjective position to change. Montague understands that she now views her position as an interested participant, rather than an authoritative spectator in the Orientalist model of encountering the Other. Kietzman (1998:541) states that “since our perceptions are conditioned by what we know and believe a change in how we see the world may indicate the complication of a particular set of cultural codes”. This shift in observation highlights Montague’s growing dislocation from her culture. According to Hall cultural identity can be viewed as a “matter of becoming as well as being” (Hall in Woodward 1997:52). Hall (in Woodward 1997: 52) suggests that all cultural identities begin somewhere and have an historical root, but they are constantly undergoing changes. When observing cultural identity in this way, it is important to view it not as a stagnant model of identity rooted in the past, but as an ever changing concept that draws on events in the past to redefine itself in the future; this is apparent in Montague’s engagement with Turkish culture. Hall (in Woodward 1997:52) explains this process of constant change:

Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they [cultural identities] are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.

Montague uses the term hybrid to locate herself within a cultural construct; she refers to herself as an English-Turk which allows her to identify her location and participation within two cultures. In a letter to Lady Bristol, Montague (Kietzman 1998:537) refers to herself as turning into a "half-Turk". This reference does not illustrate a desire to become fully assimilated in Turkish culture; rather it indicates Montague's ability to view Turkish culture without the stereotypes generally associated with a foreign culture. The term 'turning' suggests to Montague a "process of fashioning hybrid subjectivity through acts that transform by means of displacement or destabilization" (Kietzman 1998:537). Travel is the most common form of displacement because of a change in physical and social location. As Montague learned to accept her cultural dislocation, and embrace the dissolution of an identity constructed and defined by Western/European social paradigms, she came to reconstruct herself within this new social and cultural reality. This experience of being dislocated from her English culture was the catalyst for Montague's perception of the relationship between herself and others as reciprocal and dialogic. She became aware of how a subjective identity is sustained and continually reinvented through social interaction. It was through Montague's interaction with Turkish women that she realized the importance of subjective transformations as a result of cultural dislocation. It became apparent that instead of her being just a protagonist within a given social construct, she could in fact create a subjective identity through cultural collaboration with the Turkish women (Kietzman 537-8).

On her return to England Montague divided her newly acquired hybrid cultural identity into two parts; the masculine and feminine. While living in Turkey this was not an issue because of the existence of a separate feminine culture, in which men play no part. Montague's desire to travel, her thirst for knowledge and her resistance to external classifications of identity are deemed masculine. Her desire to fit in, and

be content with conforming to English customs, is considered feminine. On her return Montague put aside her disruptive desire to experience other cultures in an attempt to conform to the feminine role prescribed by English society. Montague's cultural identity had evolved to encompass Turkish culture, but after returning to England her new cultural identity was rejected as an existing norm.

Montague did not view Turkish culture as the Other, rather "Montague represents Turkey (and specifically, its built-in female space) as a space of invention emerging in the cultural interstices where self and society are not pre-given but created in performance" (Kietzman 1998:549). Montague insists that even though Turkey is a space 'beyond' her own culture, the concept of culture is not static. Montague argues that her identity was determined by her experiences, to the point where her original cultural identity was transformed into a new hybrid identity (Ibid).

There is a clear difference in the way van Riebeeck and Montague negotiated a new culture. While Montague interacts and adapts to (Turkish) culture, van Riebeeck refuses to interact with the culture of the colony. Van Riebeeck's use of the term 'fatherland' is a clear indication that she sees herself as being more Dutch than the people of the colony. Even though she has never been to the Netherlands, she considers it her home. Conversely, Montague allowed herself to identify with Turkish culture, leading to the formation of a hybrid identity.

Out of Africa written by Baroness Karen von Blixen under the pen name Isak Dinesen (1937) contains the memoirs of a Danish woman who migrates to Kenya in 1913. The book begins with the sentence "I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills." (Dinesen 1937:10) this problematic statement reveals a colonial mindset regarding the acquisition and ownership of land in Africa. von Blixen describes the landscape and its beauty, likening colonial Kenya to paradise. This concept has parallels with responses to the South West African landscape by German immigrants who, in the beauty of the landscape and nature "found their true home as immigrants or where the attraction of 'Africa' became true for them" (Armbruster 2010:1235) This notion of the ideal Africa was to become part of my grandmother's nostalgia when she returned to the Netherlands from South West Africa. von Blixen's narrative places the idealized images of Africa into a colonial context and so helps facilitate imaginings of what might constitute the early twentieth

century colonial era in Southern Africa. Throughout the book there is a clear and patronizing divide between the European colonials and the natives¹. The divide between the races and Baroness von Blixen's incipient racism is evident in the following excerpt:

I had as neighbor a settler who had been a doctor at home. Once, when the wife of one of my houseboys was about to die in childbirth, and I could not get into Nairobi, because the long rains had ruined the roads, I wrote to my neighbor and asked him to do me the great service of coming over and helping her. He very kindly came, in the midst of a terrible thunderstorm and torrents of tropical rain, and, at the last moment, by his skill, he saved the life of the woman and the child.

Afterwards he wrote me a letter to say that although he had for once, on my appeal, treated a Native; I must understand that he could not let that sort of thing occur again. I myself would fully realize the fact, he felt convinced, when he informed me that he had before now, practiced to the elite of Bournemouth (Dinesen 1937:223).

The doctor's attitude exemplifies the colonial mentality that Europeans are superior to Africans. von Blixen Others the Africans, making reference to the differences and similarities between the races throughout the book. Von Blixen at times demonstrates an attempt to understand aspects of African culture. This is apparent in her description of the pitfalls in communication between whites and Africans"

It was not easy to get to know the natives. They are quick of hearing, and evanescent, if you frightened them they could withdraw into a world of their own...

Until you knew a native well, it was almost impossible to get a straight answer from him. To a direct question as to how many cows he had, he had an eluding reply – "as many as I told you yesterday". It goes against the feelings of Europeans to be answered in such a manner; it very likely goes against the feelings of the natives to be questioned in this way (Dinesen 1937:14).

Although clearly patronizing in her relationship with Africans, von Blixen makes an effort to understand the new culture in which she finds herself whilst adhering to her

¹ The term native is used by von Blixen to describe Africans.

Danish upbringing. However, von Blixen, unlike Montague is loath to immerse herself in a new culture. Unlike Montague, von Blixen understands that she does not have the ability “to view an Other culture as a collection of alternative practices and to construct herself through exchanges with others (Visewaran in Kietzman 1998:541), but that she will always be separate from the natives. This is apparent in her statement that:

On our safaris and on the farm, my acquaintance with the natives developed into a settled and personal relationship. We were good friends. I reconciled myself to the fact that while I should never quite know or understand them, they knew me through and through (Dinesen 1937:15-16):

It is in this sense that I include the discussion of Baroness von Blixen into this study; she provides an account of an acceptance of, but separation from, her new cultural environment. von Blixen’s identity is re-defined by her experience in Africa; however she retains her European culture and thus does not experience feelings of cultural dislocation. The homestead in Kenya is a colonial representation of von Blixen’s Danish origins, representing a forbidden space, as only the house servants are allowed to set foot inside the house (Dinesen 1937). This type of space is evident in Michel Foucault’s (1967) concept of heterotopias.

A discussion of the concept of heterotopias is relevant to this study as Farber (2012) uses it to contextualize her art practice within the realm of *other spaces*. I employ the notion of other spaces in this study in the context of migration; however I make specific reference to Farber’s use of Foucault’s (1967) theory of heterotopic spaces. Migration from one place to another causes trauma and a loss of self, both of which play a role in the negotiation of culture and the formation of a new subjective identity. Often a heterotopic space is created by migrants as they attempt to re-create or cling to the cultural aesthetics of their home land, as this creates a sense of home and a place of belonging. By doing this in a new cultural environment, a heterotopic space is created.

Heterotopia, which literally means ‘other places’, describes a world “misaligned with respect to normal everyday space” (Foucault in Nelson 2010:12). Foucault (in Nelson 2010:12) conceptualizes heterotopias as:

Places where the technologies and disciplines of social orders are out of sequence or momentarily suspended, then re-sequences or reconstructed to generate new spaces where microcosms of society are transformed and cosseted.

Foucault's concept of heterotopias first arose in 1966, after he had read certain classifications of animals from a Chinese Encyclopedia titled *Celestial Empire of Benevolent Knowledge* (1942). The classifications were so absurd that Foucault questioned the ways in which the world is divided in order to understand it. The juxtapositions named in the encyclopedia were improbable, except in "a space of language, a contradictory unthinkable space" (Foucault in Johnson 2014:1). Foucault compared the idea of such a place with the idea of *utopias*; a place (*topos*) which is simultaneously nowhere (*outopia*) as well as being a good place (*eutopia*), in contrast to the idea of a heterotopia, a different (*heteros*) place (Johnson 2014). The term heterotopia was however first used in a medical context, referring to "a particular tissue that develops at another place than is usual. The tissue is not diseased or particularly dangerous but merely placed elsewhere, a dislocation" (Lax in Johnson 2014:1). It is in this context that I use the concept of heterotopias, as something that is found in a place that is not usual. I use the idea of heterotopias in a personal context to examine the cause and effect that is created when moving between spaces.

The games that children play is an example of how different spaces challenge the space we live in. Foucault refers to the games that children imagine which incorporate things such as Indian tents, dens in gardens and the games played on, or under, bed covers. These games create a "different space that at the same time mirrors what is around them", so called "counter-spaces" (Johnson 2014:2). Other examples of these counter spaces include cemeteries, brothels, prisons and asylums. However it can be argued that the games children imagine are created by their mental networks, as these are also triggered by their surroundings and cultural influences. If, as Friesen (2013) argues, mental networks are triggered by inconsistent information, the wrong response will follow which can lead to non-acceptance from the cultural group, a feeling of not belonging and cultural dislocation. I therefore argue that although these counter-spaces may be classified

as heterotopias, in the context of this study, other factors contribute to the formation and negotiation of these spaces and the actions which occur within them. Time and space affects actions and reactions to certain events. I maintain that the formation of a new subjective identity by each of the protagonists was influenced by the time and space in which they found themselves. In this context Foucault prefers to use the term *emplacement* as it has a sense of space as well as place (Johnson 2014). Foucault focuses more on space than he does on time in the context of a structuralist analysis. He is more concerned with the relationships within and between spaces. This is evident when he said that “unlike time, space may not yet be fully *desacralized*; it may contain persistent if unacknowledged sacralized oppositions as privet/public, family/social, work/leisure and cultural/useful” (Foucault in Johnson 2014:6). This relationship within and between spaces, although somewhat different in the context of heterotopias can be directly linked to Grossberg’s (in Hall 1997) concept of a third space, a space in-between two cultures. It could be tentatively argued that in terms of cultural dislocation, this third space is a type of personal heterotopia.

Foucault based his concept of heterotopias on six principles; the first being that there is most likely not a single culture that does not constitute a heterotopia in one form or another. This first principle hinges on the notion of a heterotopian crisis, meaning places which are reserved for “individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis” including adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women and the elderly (Foucault 1984:4). However these heterotopias of crisis are disappearing and are being replaced with what Foucault terms heterotopias of deviation, “those in which the individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed” (1984:5). Examples include rest homes, asylums and prisons. The second principle is based on the idea that certain heterotopias within a society construct and reconstruct specific functions within the context of events and history, for example, cemeteries. The heterotopia of the third principle is “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible” (Foucault 1984:6) such as cinemas and theatres. Heterotopias which are concerned with the accumulation of time such as libraries and museums belong to the fourth principle. These heterotopias are linked to slices of time and so they can be classed as

heterochronies. However, contrary to the type of heterotopia, which accumulates time, are those which encapsulate time as flowing and transient, like that of the heterotopia of the festival. The fifth principle presupposes a system of rituals which have to be adhered to before, entry or exit. This space is not freely accessible like a public space would be. Examples include prisons and Muslim baths (Foucault 1984:7). Thus the Turkish bath in which Montague interacts with other women could be classed as a heterotopia.

The last principle of heterotopias concerns itself with the function that:

...unfolds between two extreme poles. Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusionary. Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed and jumbled (Foucault 1984:8).

Colonies adhered to this form of heterotopia as these new sites were modelled after the sites of the colonizers; as a result there was a level of general organization of the colonized space. Foucault (1984:9) argues that a colony is an extreme example of a heterotopia, as is a boat or ship; a boat is “a floating piece of space, a place without a place that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea”. In the discussion of a ship as a heterotopia par excellence the passenger is positioned on “the inside of the outside, or vice versa” (Johnson 2014:11). Using this reference of the ship as a heterotopia I suggest that an aircraft could also function as a temporary heterotopia. In so doing it is possible to relate the idea of personal heterotopias to my discussion of migration and the resulting cultural dislocation. In the case of my protagonists, they were transported to Southern Africa by boat and aircraft, this vessel, or heterotopia, was the driving force that resulted in their loss of identity and cultural dislocation upon arrival at their destination. I use Foucault’s concept of a heterotopia not as a linear description of the spaces in which the protagonists found themselves, but rather as a way of contextualizing the concept of a heterotopia within a personal discourse. The idea of a personal heterotopia will be further discussed and applied to my art practice in Chapter Four.

This Chapter has established connections between identity, culture and cultural dislocation. The narratives of Gauguin, van Riebeeck, Montague and von Blixen provide a personal account of the various ways in which cultural dislocation can occur and how new subjective identities are negotiated. Understanding dynamics which contribute to cultural dislocation is central to understanding the subjective positions of the protagonists, in the context of time and space and their construction of new subjective identities. Friesen's (2013) writing foregrounds the psychological effects of cultural dislocation and, even though her study focusses mainly on (third culture) children, her investigation is pertinent to my protagonists and their negotiation of foreign culture and subsequent formation of new subjective identities. Foucault's concept of heterotopias provides a theoretical context for the introduction of the concept of a personal heterotopia in this study. Chapter Two investigates cultural dislocation in the work of Leora Farber, Viviane Sassen and George Alamidis.

CHAPTER 2

Cultural Dislocation in the work of selected artists

This chapter will investigate cultural dislocation through an analysis of the work of Leora Farber (*Dis-Location/Re-Location*), Viviane Sassen (*Parasomnia*) and George Alamidis (*Embark – Disembark: an exploration of cultural dislocation*).

Leora Farber (1964 -) *Dis-Location/Re-Location* 2006-2008

Leora Farber is a second generation South African. Her grandparents, who were from Latvia and Lithuania, fled to South Africa in the 1930's to escape the religious and economic persecution to which Jewish communities of Eastern Europe were being subjected (Klopper 2008:11-12).

In an exhibition titled *Dis-Location/Re-Location* Farber (2006-2008) explored her dislocated dual Jewish European and South African cultural identity within the context of colonialism. Farber investigated her sense of simultaneous dislocation from, and attachment to, South Africa (Buys, 2008) by 'grafting' Africa into her skin (Figure 1). Farber (2008) explained this metaphor when she said:

The stitching together of white flesh and indigenous African plant rose and aloe, pearl and white African bead suggests the creation of new subjectivities that are the product of grafting European and African (Farber 2008).

In her work Farber forms a new subjective identity through her use of materials and cultural symbols. This can be compared to Montague's interaction with Turkish culture discussed in Chapter One. Montague's engagement with Turkish women, through rituals and customs of Turkish culture, created a hybrid identity. Farber merges African and European symbols to create a hybrid identity. Where

Montague's cultural hybridity was short lived, Farber attempts to create a lasting cultural hybrid.



(Figure 1) Leora Farber. **Aloerosa: Transplant**. 2006-7. 135.8cm x 102cm

Archival pigment print on Soft Textured Fine Art Paper, 315 gsm

Dis-Location/Re-Location originated as a public performance in 2006 at The Premises Gallery in Johannesburg. From there it travelled to seven galleries and museums from June 2007 to September 2008 (Law-Viljoen 2008:5). It was exhibited in 2007 at the Durban Art Gallery, where I first encountered Farber's work. My sense of connection to her work was immediate. As a second year Fine Art student I had no idea who Leora Farber was, or what her work was about. The exhibition struck a chord in me as it was apparent that Farber understood what it meant to feel culturally dislocated. This was confirmed when Farber spoke about her work at the exhibition walk about. I realized that there was a term, hybridity, for my feeling of not belonging to a single culture.

Farber's work explores "constructions of South African immigrants, first- and second-generation Jewish identities, with reference to three female personae" (Farber 2008). The first protagonist is based on the factual and fictionalized persona of Bertha Marks (1862 – 1934). Bertha was the wife of entrepreneur Sammy Marks. She was brought to South Africa as a bride from Sheffield, England in 1886 at the age of twenty-six, where she lived an isolated life in *Zwartkoppies*, twelve kilometres outside of Pretoria (Klopper 2008). Bertha clung to colonial English attitudes and

“the hierarchical Victorian conventions of class, language, race and gender differences” (Farber 2008). This mirrors my grandmother’s relocation from the Netherlands to South West Africa as a young bride and her negotiation of adopted colonial conventions. The Dutch are wary of anyone who is different to them. As explained in Chapter One, the essentialist, homogenous culture of the Netherlands does not allow for outsiders to be easily accepted. Anything, or anyone, other than Dutch is considered to be inferior. My grandmother had clung to this homogenous culture when she moved to South West Africa. However, on returning to the Netherlands, she realized that she had subconsciously absorbed colonial cultural norms in South West Africa and upon her return, these influences made her feel uncomfortable in the Netherlands.

In Farber’s exhibition the identity of Jewish immigrants from Latvia and Lithuania, who came to South Africa in the 1930’s, is represented by the second protagonist, her mother Freda Farber (1932 -). The final persona of second-generation Jewish immigrants is portrayed by Farber posing as Bertha Marks. In the guise of this protagonist Farber explores “post-colonial experiences of cultural transformation and renegotiation of identity in terms of hybridity” (Farber 2008).

Farber’s lived experience of hybridity runs parallel to the persona of Bertha Marks. Farber links the two personae visually and theoretically. Although the experience of each persona differs; Bertha’s experience is colonial, while Farber’s experience is located within contemporary South Africa, “both experiences are underpinned by alienation related to displacement” (Farber 2008). While Bertha clung to her colonial customs, Farber embraced her hybridity. Farber (in Klopper 2008:16) explains this when she says:

Like Bertha, I too sometimes feel like a newly arrived immigrant in Johannesburg, the city in which I have lived most of my life. But in contrast to Bertha, my need to re-locate myself within my environment has encouraged me to confront and accept the “stranger/other/foreigner” within myself.

Farber’s confrontation and acceptance of the stranger/other/foreigner within herself is similar to Montague’s interrogation of her cultural identity within the context of Turkish culture.

There are three narratives that run through the exhibition; '**Aloerosa**' (2006-7), '**Ties that Bind Her**' (2006-7) and '**A Room of Her Own**' (2006-7). Each of the core narratives starts with a self-initiated incision into the skin and the grafting of organic and inorganic materials into the protagonist's body. These surgical acts evoke Victorian notions of femininity; specifically the domestic construct of a proficiency in needlework. Farber subverts the traditional confines and claustrophobic, passive nature of needlework, redefining it as a form of agency. Needlework becomes the means by which "Bertha struggles (unsuccessfully) to reaffirm, and Farber manages (ambivalently) to renegotiate, her sense of identity as a white woman living in (post) colonial Africa" (Farber in Klopper 2008:17). The joining of different materials, organic and inorganic, rose and aloe, pearls and beads ultimately lead to new "subjectivities and hybrid identities" (ibid). Farber (2008:17) refers to this when she said:

Hybridity was originally used to describe the outcomes of crossing two plants or animals of different species, possibly as the result of grafting.

...Commonly used in post-colonial discourse to describe a range of social and cultural borrowings, exchanges and intersections across ethnic boundaries and the emergence of new cultural forms that might ensue from such mixes, hybridity thus refers to both biological and cultural merging.

The act of grafting organic and inorganic materials into the protagonist's body can be seen as a desire to become integrated or to belong, but when investigated further these "bodily violations imply not only a physical but also psychic or psychological experience of trauma" (Farber in Klopper 2008:17). Farber explores her hybridity physically and psychologically, as did Montague, however Montague also explored it textually; her letters to Lady Bristol catalogue her changing identity and how it affects her ideas of culture and social expectations.

A critical tool in approaching Farber's work is Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of time-space organization, or chronotope. Bakhtin believes that *chronos* (time) and *topos* (space) are inseparable in any work of art. The term was coined to illuminate changing perceptions of history and geography as a direct result of Einstein's theory of

relativity. Bakhtin's chronotope is a means of understanding how firstly real historical time and space and real personae are expressed and secondly how fictional time, space and characters are created in relation to one another. The theory of a chronotopic artwork rests on the relationship between time, space and human figures and how this relationship shifts according to the contexts they are placed in. Performance, Bakhtin argues is inherently chronotopic as it "fuses temporal and spatial indicators. Performance also unfolds in "literal time as opposed to fictive time or memory (van Rensburg in Law-Viljoen 2008: 42-44)". Bakhtin's theory helps examine the different ways in which Farber visualized identity formation in her work. As Wilhelm van Rensburg (in Law-Viljoen 2008:41) states, a chronotope is useful because "it considers relationships in her [Farber] artistic work between people and events on the one hand, and time and space on the other". This approach in turn helps both to place my protagonist's identities within a time and space and demonstrates how the time and space of a specific period influences the formation of identities.

Farber's work is not limited to one space; it has three distinct core narratives. Throughout the narratives Farber appears as a Victorian lady dressed in the conventions of the period (corset and wide skirts), but made from African materials (tanned cowhide) and contemporary fabrics (synthetic parachute cloth) designed by Carlo Gibson and Ziemel Pater of Strangelove. The photographs that make up the body of Farber's work were captured by Michael Meyersfield (Law-Viljoen 2008: 42-44).

In the first print of the '**Alerosa**' series titled '**Aloerosa: Induction**' (2004-7) (Figure 2). Farber is seen dressed as a Victorian lady in a rose garden as she takes up her embroidery. However, instead of stitches on a sampler Farber is grafting a tiny aloe plant into her forearm. In the work titled '**Alerosa: Maturation II**' (2007) (Figure 3) the Aloe grafts and grows; Farber lies in a disheveled state on the ground after having severed the full-grown aloe from her arm. The last work in the series titled '**Alerosa: Supplantation**' (2006-7) (Figure 4) shows the corset once worn by Farber discarded in the *veld*. In the reading of this image it is not quite clear whether Farber's persona has been assimilated into the African earth or whether she was able to break away from the constraints associated with Victorian conventions. Bertha's quest for hybridity is dependent on the level of grafting she is willing to

perform, and in so doing, letting go of her colonial Victorian constraints in her endeavors to become more at home as a hybrid. By grafting the African plant into herself, Bertha is challenging the Other/ Self dynamic and in so doing recognizes the Other within the self and ultimately accepting her new status as a cultural hybrid (Farber 2012:33).

In the series '**Ties that Bind Her**' Farber is photographed in front of a Victorian dressing table replicated from Bertha Marks' bedroom in the Sammy Marks Museum in Pretoria. The first print titled '**Ties that bind her: Preservation**' (2006-7) (Figure 5) depicts Farber transplanting a cameo, depicting an English rose, under the skin on her breast. '**Ties that bind her: Reparation**' (2006-7) (Figure 6) shows that the pearl necklace and choker Farber wore in the first scenes has become imbedded and inserted under her skin, to give the appearance of West African cicatrisation (Law-Viljoen 2008: 42-44). Farber is in the process of stitching African beads into the cicatrized marks. The cameo that she stitched into her breast transforms into a beaded flower in the final print titled '**Ties that bind her: Regeneration**' (2006-7) (Figure 7). This series is based on Bertha's desire to graft newness into her skin to create a hybrid identity, as well as clinging to certain Anglo-Saxon cultural signifiers in an attempt to retain aspects of her English origin (Farber 2012:56). The objects that Farber inserts into the personae of Bertha's skin are culturally significant in Bertha's case as signifiers of her English origins and her desire to ground herself and keep the integrity of her identity intact whilst going through this hybrid transformation. Additionally this is where Farber's identity intersects with Bertha's, even though Farber sees these objects as a symbol for her whiteness and the negotiation of her white South African identity in a post-Apartheid environment (Farber 2012:61).

'**A Room of Her Own**' was the title of a performance by Farber in which she sat on a chair in a room whilst embroidering (Figure 8). On closer inspection the cloth gives way to her naked thigh into which Farber is painstakingly grafting aloe leaves. As she works on the graft, the roses on the wallpaper slowly start to melt, giving way to indigenous images of aloes. In the series of photographic prints the aloe leaves have taken root and have flourished and sprouted a new plant. In the print titled '**A room of her own: Redemption**' (2006-7) (Figures 9 and 10) the thriving plant encompasses her whole calf with red vines while the roses on the wall slowly yield to

aloes. Throughout the performance, in a voice over, Farber narrates Bertha's thoughts and feelings through excerpts from her letters. At the halfway mark of the performance the voice over changes to the life story and experiences of Freda Farber as she re-negotiated her identity as a first generation Lithuanian in South Africa. Farber uses the persona of Bertha to engage and "reveal aspects of her own identity, in addition, by inserting herself into a Victorian context, she [Farber] can elicit questions about the impact space has on the body and the way a place defines identity (Law-Viljoen 2008: 42-44).

Aloerosa



(Figure 2) Leora Farber. **Aloerosa: Induction**. 2004-7. 65 x 65 cm
Archival pigment print on Soft Textured Fine Art Paper, 315 gsm. Ed. 1/9/



(Figure 3) Leora Farber. **Aloerosa: Maturation II**. 2006-7. 90 x 120 cm
Archival pigment print on Soft Textured Fine Art paper, 315gm. Ed. 1/9.



(Figure 4) Leora Farber. **Aloerosa: Supplantation** 2006-7. 90 x 120 cm
Archival pigment print on Soft Textured Fine Art paper, 315 gsm. Ed. 1/9.

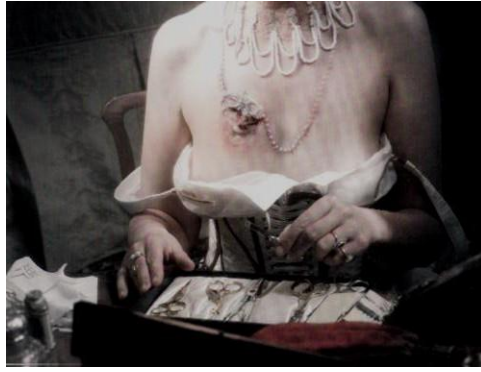
Ties that Bind Her



(Figure 5) Leora Farber. **Ties that Bind Her: Preservation**. 2006-7. 100 x 133.2 cm
Archival pigment print on Soft Textured Fine Art paper, 315 gsm. Ed. 1/9.



(Figure 6) Leora Farber. **Ties that Bind Her: Reparation** (detail). 2006-7. 42 x 56 cm
Archival pigment print on Soft Textured Fine Art paper, 315 gsm. Ed. 1/9.



(Figure 7) Leora Farber. **Ties that Bind Her: Regeneration** (detail). 2006-7. 42 x 56 cm

Archival pigment print on Soft Textured Fine Art paper, 315 gsm. Ed. 1/9.

A Room of Her Own



(Figure 8) Leora Farber. **A Room of Her Own: Generation**. 2006-7. 100 x 133.2 cm

Archival pigment print on Soft Textured Fine Art paper, 315 gsm. Ed. 1/9.



(Figure 9) Leora Farber. **A Room of Her Own: Redemption**. (detail) 2006-7. 102 x 135.8 cm

Archival pigment print on Soft Textured Fine Art paper, 315 gsm. Ed. 1/9.



(Figure 10) Leora Farber. **A Room of Her Own: Generation.** (detail) 2006-7. 56 x 75 cm cm

Archival pigment print on Soft Textured Fine Art paper, 315 gsm. Ed. 1/9.

Farber's work centers on the idea that her protagonists' dislocated identities were caused by their geographical, social, cultural and/or psychological displacements. She explores the way that this displacement has an effect on their identities (Farber 2012:3). Farber further investigates the effects of Foucault's (1967) theory of a heterotopic space or a heterotopia in crisis, and how this space affects the formation of new subjectivities and identities (Farber 2012:3). The Victorian garden depicted in the "**Aloerosa**" series serves as a heterotopia as it is a Victorian space within an African environment, sheltering the personae of Bertha Marks in its familiarity while she conducts acts which reflect on the crisis of her identity. Similarly in the series "**The Ties That Bind Her**" and "**A Room of Her Own**", the space in which Bertha finds herself is a reflection of her English origins, but it is spatially removed from the rest of the house not only by a door, but also by being a feminine space. This denotes this space as a heterotopia of crisis because she is shut away from the rest of the house (Foucault 1967) and is left to pursue feminine activities at her leisure. However Farber as Bertha interprets this room as a space of grafting, of becoming and of remembrance. Farber uses Foucault's concept of a heterotopia as a means to illustrate a "site of Otherness or displacement" (Hetherington in Farber 2012:15).

Farber's work reflects on the dichotomy of displacement and relocation and how this in turn has had an effect on the creation of South African immigrant identities. In this context curator and critic Olu Oguibe (in Law-Viljoen 2008:44) maintains that:

Movement, transition, transformation, relocation, transfiguration and subjection to the enormous fluidities of location and identity are the imperatives of existence in our age.

...to survive today is to be constantly on the move and to engage in an endless, fluid shifting in identity.

In her work Farber deals with concepts of hybridity within the context of heterotopias of crisis and through three female protagonists. Through the lives of these women Farber interrogates her own identity but also transforms Bertha's identity. She does this by firstly by replacing the persona of Bertha and secondly by the complete negation of Bertha as Farber becomes herself, transformed by becoming a host for indigenous plants and ultimately being absorbed by her new location within a heterotopic space. By transplanting indigenous South African plants into her skin Farber attempts to become African by being the host for these plants. Farber's work touches on issues of globalization and Diaspora, affirming new relationships between "home and elsewhere, the global and the local, tradition and modernity" (Farber in Law-Viljoen 2008:44), which in turn changes the way in which questions of subjectivity, identity and creative agency can be approached.

Farber's dislocation arises from her position as a second generation Jewish woman in post-colonial, post-Apartheid South Africa. She struggles not only with her Jewish heritage and its connotations, but also with the ever changing white identity in South Africa's political climate since 1994. Farber's displacement is based on what it means to be a Jewish South African in the context of a post-colonial, post-Apartheid South Africa. Farber uses her exhibition titled *Di-Location/Re-Location* (2007) and historical narratives of Jews in South Africa to illustrate her cultural dislocation. Farber speaks about displacement of identity felt by white South Africans due to the abolishment of Apartheid. 'Whiteness' is spoken about in terms of its subjectivity and how the notion of 'whiteness', and what it means, was affected by Apartheid. This leads to Farber questioning her own whiteness and how her identity has subsequently changed in the evolving political climate in South Africa. Farber further addresses history of Jews in South Africa and how she identifies with this history as a Jew in South Africa. Farber investigates notions of the Other in relation to her identity and post-Apartheid South African identities, presenting the concept of the Other as estranged within the self (Farber 2012:22). By investigating this stranger within, Farber is able to negotiate the protagonists' changing identities and

contextualize them within the post-Apartheid socio-political climate of South Africa today (Farber 2012:22).

Viviane Sassen (1972 -) Parasomnia 2012

Viviane Sassen was born in Amsterdam in 1972. She spent her early childhood in Kenya with her father, a physician. After Sassen returned to the Netherlands at the age of six she felt like “her real life was somewhere else; that it was in Kenya” (Jaeger 2010). Although her first childhood memories are located in Kenya and whenever she visits Africa Sassen feels like she is coming home, she also acknowledges that she “will always be a stranger and that she will never be part of the culture” (Sassen in Jaeger 2010). This reflects cultural dislocation, caused by location and relocation in time and space, results in her existing in a space in-between.

Since completing her Masters in Fine Art Sassen has built up a body of work consisting of both fashion assignments and personal work. There is a strong narrative in Sassen’s work and she admits that the lines between editorial assignments and personal work often blur into one. Sassen’s work “invites the viewer to reflect on the medium of photography and on the obsolescence of traditional boundaries of genres and contexts of display (Somzé 2007).

Sassen’s exhibition titled *Parasomnia* (2012) held at the Stevenson gallery in Cape Town investigated the spaces in-between, the dislocation between home and away, night and day, life and dreams (Botha 2012:8-9). *Parasomnia* is defined as “a category of sleep disorders in which abnormal events occur during sleep, such as sleepwalking or talking; due to inappropriately timed activation of physiological systems” (Saunders 2007).

In the context of the relationship between herself and her depicted subjects, Sassen (in Somzé 2007) says that:

For as long as I can remember, I have felt very close to Africans. This is most probably due to the fact that I lived with my family in Kenya when I was a child. Yet, this very experience of closeness has also engendered contradictory feelings. While feeling part of

this world, I have also kept on being aware of the fact that I would never really be a part of it.

Parasomnia encapsulates feelings of dislocation through Sassen's blurring of perceptions of reality (Stevenson, 2012). Sassen's interrogation of being 'in-between' cultures relates to my attempt to reconcile my identity within two cultures, as a hybrid. I consider myself to be a subaltern (Grossberg in Hall and du Gay 1997) inhabiting the space in-between Dutch and South African culture.

The portrait is a recurring genre which is central to Sassen's work. However, Sassen stated that she is not interested in the particular, but is attempting to "capture or produce an archetypal image, an image that goes beyond the description of the physiognomic and physical specificities of an individual" (Somzé 2007). Sassen's work relies on the viewer's interpretation, and her own perception, of the subject rather than trying to conjure up some truth about the photographed subject (Ibid). In many ways Sassen appears to engage the viewer into changing their preconceived notion about Africa and the (ethnic) Other. By masking the individuality of the photographed subject from the viewer through her play on light and shadow, Sassen invites the viewer to create their own narrative and interpretation about the subject. This forces the viewer to fabricate a subjective identity for the photographed figure, based on personal experiences and information of Africa and its history and people. The symbolism of light (West) and shadow (Africa) has implications within the context of cultural dislocation.

The idea that Africa is a dark continent feeds into the stereotyped images that the West has traditionally had of Africa, however the images of a privileged Europe that Africans are exposed to results in a similar stereotype (Somzé 2007). This in turn generates false cultural assumptions exacerbating cultural dislocation when moving from one continent to another. This provides a space for Orientalist models in the creation of an identity for the Other; Sassen plays on this Western gaze in her work. However, because Sassen spent her early childhood in Kenya, she is aware of and simultaneously a part of, yet separate from, the Western gaze. She feels connected to her African subjects, but she is also a European who can never be free from the identity constraints implicit in that cultural context. Sassen stated that this ambiguity is absent from most Westernized depictions of Africa and that she tries evoke this in

her work by depicting the spaces in-between, the space that Sassen herself inhabits (Sassen in Somzé 2007). Sassen's work evokes a post-colonial, politically sensitive dialogue, which when seen through internationalist (Western) eyes appears to ignore the features and individuality of her subjects. This intentional negation of her subjects' individuality can be seen to exemplify the negative histories and problematic legacies and relationships between Africa and the West. However, for Sassen, her work is not about depicting the individual, or the histories of Africa as a whole. Sassen believes her work is about symbols and universal ideas, about "what we don't see" or perhaps what "we don't want to see" when faced with representations of Africa (Sassen in Schuman 2012)

The interplay between darkness (the skin of her subject or background) and shadows in her work is used as both a graphic and formal element. The strong sunlight in Africa, and how people shelter from it, led her to investigate the use of shadows in her work. Sassen was also drawn to the ambiguity that these shadows create when the subject's face is hidden by them (Jaeger 2010). The graphic poses of the subject's bodies are drawn from memories of her childhood in Kenya. Sassen (in Jaeger 2010) clarifies this when she says:

I'm inspired by poses and the shapes of bodies. When I lived in Kenya as a child, we lived across the street from a home for children with polio. They were my friends and we played together. I was very aware of the fact that I was so different. They were really, really black and I was fascinated by their graphic body shapes, which had been altered by polio. I thought it was strange but beautiful.

The strong play on light and shadow in Sassen's work often renders the dark skin of her African subjects as black, devoid of detail. Sassen explained that "the shadow turns a person into a kind of symbol. It's not about the particular person anymore; he/she represents an idea. So it's much more about the universal than the personal, it's about what we don't see" (Sassen in Schuman 2012). However, this representation could also be seen as a depiction of the African subjects as an anonymous Other.

In Sassen's exhibition titled *Parasomnia* the faces of small boys in '**Juice**' (2010) (Figure 11), young men in '**La Lutte #2**' (2011) (Figure 12) and **Ayuel** (2010) (Figure

17) and teenage girls in **'Kine'** (2011) (Figure 13) are hidden by shadow and objects, or simply turned away from the camera. Parasomnia also incorporates arresting still lifes or (anti)portraits. Examples of this genre include the image of a dead tree lying on pale sand in **'Phoenix'** (2008) (figure 14), fluorescent orange liquid being poured into a hole in the sidewalk in **'Phantome'** (2010) (Figure 15) and a red plastic bag hovering in the wind over a sun bleached cement tomb in an overcrowded cemetery in **'Mauritanie'** (2011) (Figure 16). These images seem less susceptible to the weight they carry as a mode of representing Africa; they are freed to a degree from the preconceived subject identity that the portraits carry with them. This highlights Sassen's inventiveness as far as aesthetic and approach are concerned (Schuman 2012).

The title Parasomnia suggests that the imagery evokes "mysterious and mesmerizing visions that seem to have been conjured from a dream state" (Schuman 2012). Sassen, whose images offer glimpses into a dislocated space between sleep and wakefulness, states that "working in Africa opens doors of my subconscious more widely; my dreams are very vivid when I'm there" (Sassen in Schuman 2012). The youthfulness of her subjects in Parasomnia may be explained by Sassen's childhood experiences in Kenya and that it is "her own subconscious, rather than Africa itself, that is her source material and her primary subject" (Schuman 2012). In terms of cultural dislocation, Sassen's memory of Africa has become idealized. Nobokov (in Sells 2011) believes that an ideal memory is fixed and forever unchanging, this can lead to nostalgia, as well as feelings of disconnect, when the ideal memory does not correspond with reality. It may be argued that Sassen uses young subjects in her work as a way of remembering her childhood in Africa and, as Friesen (2013) states, triggering positive hyper emotions felt as a child when Sassen's mental networks associated more strongly with her experiences in Africa. Sassen's work is about "what we don't see" (Schuman 2012) and about the Western gaze's preconceived notions of Africa, deeply rooted in colonialism. In reading her work Sassen asks the viewer to rely on their preconceived notions of Africa, whether these are positive or negative.

The most striking image in the Parasomnia exhibition is a portrait titled **Ayuel** (2010) (Figure 17). In this portrait the subject's face is not obscured by shadow, rather the subject emerges from a black void. A young man with ear phones leans against a

yellow pole with one hand on his hip, wearing dark blue jeans, a white top and a bright yellow belt. He stares calmly into the camera with an assertive attitude of 'what are you looking at?' A blue string, clasped in his mouth, connects one side of the frame to the other. In the context of the Western gaze, this image invokes ideas of the 'noble savage' and other negative associations with the representations of the (ethnic) Other, race, culture and Africa as a continent. Sassen purposefully challenges these ideas in her work, but rather than dictate to the viewer how such an image should be interpreted, she aims to "open the doors of the subconscious" (Schuman 2012). Sassen (Shuman 2012) recently said in an interview "I try to make work that confuses me, and I hope that they confuse others too". It is clear that Sassen compels the viewer to create identities for her obscured photographed subjects in the context of personal subjective knowledge and experience. This open ended reading of her work points to her cultural dislocation, of being in between, where she "will always be the stranger ... and will never be part of the culture" (Sassen in Jaeger 2010).



(Figure 11) Viviane Sassen. **Juice**. 2010. C-Print. 125 x 100cm.

Edition of 8 + 2AP



(Figure 12) Viviane Sassen. **La Lutte #2**. 2011. C-Print. 100 x 100cm

Edition of 8 + 2AP



(Figure 13) Viviane Sassen. **Kine**. 2011. C-Print. 100 x 80cm.

Edition of 3 + 2AP



(Figure 14) Viviane Sassen. **Phoenix**. 2008. C-Print. 100 x 125cm.

Edition of 8 + 2AP



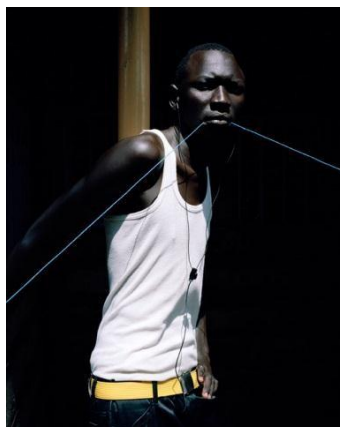
(Figure 15) Viviane Sassen. **Fantome**. 2010. C-Print. 125 x 100cm.

Edition of 8 + 2AP



(Figure 16) Viviane Sassen. **Mauritanie**. 2011. Archival ink on cotton rag paper. 116 x 96cm.

Edition of 8 + 2AP



(Figure 17) Viviane Sassen. **Ayuel**. 2010. C-Print. 150 x 120cm.

Edition of 4 + 2AP

Sassen's cultural status as a subaltern resonates with Montague's encounter with Turkish culture and the development of an altered identity. Sassen's work does not adhere to stereotyped Western representations of Africa, dry savannas with wildlife and malnourished children with distended bellies. She portrays the everyday life of her subjects (Serani 2012). Sassen's own fantasies and memories play a large role in the composition of her photographs as she tries to recreate her childhood through this process (ibid). She negotiates African culture from her early African childhood experience relying on the mental networks she formed in her childhood in Africa. When she returned to the Netherlands her mental networks were consistently triggered incorrectly, leading to cultural shock and dislocation. It can be argued that this is a rationale for Sassen's fascination with Africa and its people; it is a method for her to recapture the memories and emotions she experienced in Kenya in her childhood, in an attempt to reconcile her dislocated identity.

George Alamidis (1954) *Embark – Disembark: an exploration of cultural dislocation* 2004

George Alamidis, together with Tony Scott, Catherine Woo and Wilma Tabacco, participated in an exhibition titled *Embark – Disembark: An exploration of Cultural Dislocation* at the Melbourne Immigration Museum in 2004. The exhibition was inspired by each artist's experience of cultural dislocation and how they negotiated their new cultural identity. In the preface to the exhibition catalogue Karen Meehan (2004:1) described this process in saying:

Children from immigrant families very often feel the tensions of identifying with two cultures, resulting in feelings of both belonging and disconnection. Such tension can be confusing, unsettling, destabilizing and a journey in its own right. Travel also may raise issues of heritage, family and identity, which, in this exhibition, provides material for artists to make sense of their displacement.

Alamidis was born in Greece at a time when post-war government propaganda was endemic. This propaganda and the lies which accompanied it impacted on Alamidis' early life. At the age of fourteen Alamidis immigrated to Australia to escape the political unease in Greece. Alamidis uses this childhood trauma to negotiate his

sense of cultural dislocation. When migrants relocate to another country they carry their knowledge and grief with them (Bhugra 2013). This melancholy is explored by Alamidis through his use of Greek identity cards as his medium of expression (Dover 2004).

The ephemeral nature of the identity card forms the basis for the artworks and Alamidis' exploration of his own fractured identity. The identity cards all originate from the same period, the late 1940's and early 1950's, a period in which post-war Greece was in political turmoil as the threat of civil war loomed. The government introduced identity cards as a means to control its people. In this context the identity cards can be viewed as a metaphor for captivity, as the bearers of these cards were not allowed to travel between villages without a legitimate means of identifying themselves. The use of a photographic portrait exacerbated the sense of captivity; the photographic portrait was used in penitentiaries to identify criminals. The act of identifying citizens by means of a photograph in an identity card inadvertently criminalized those carrying the cards (Sakaris 2001).

The identity cards invoke the multi-layered aspects of identity as well as the construction of identity in a group deemed to be homogenous. The post-war Greek government readily accepted the false premise that all Greeks were homogenous in culture, language and religion. As a consequence they constructed a personal and societal identity for the Greek people and implemented it through the use of identity cards (Sakaris 2001).

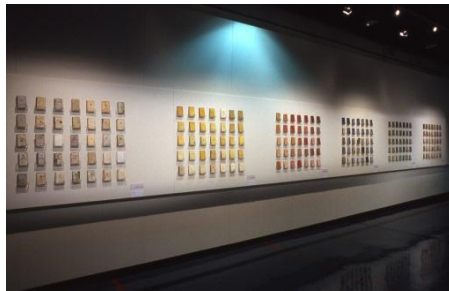
The identity cards collected by Alamidis from the 1940's and 1950's are assumed to be from Greeks who fled Greece and immigrated to countries such as Australia and the United States. This assumption is valid as cards were renewed after a number of years; the old ones were destroyed as there was a limit of one card per person. Thus it is plausible that these cards were collected outside of Greece as they lose their function in a new location, causing the immigrants who first stepped onto Australian soil to undergo a crisis of identity (Sakaris 2001).

Alamidis represents personal histories interwoven with truths and untruths which he presents using two hundred and ten Greek identity cards; the size of the installation varies according to available space. He encourages the viewer to investigate dualities and uncover the respective truths and deceptions. Notions of identity are

explored through text inside the identity cards where eye colour, hair and parental lineage are documented, together with a photograph of the holder accompanied by the appropriate stamps and signatures to verify the authenticity of the card. The fragile state of the cards hints at the passage of time as well as the experiences of the holders and their origins (Sakaris 2001). Alamidis (2013:2) elaborates on this when he says:

Made of paper, these cards were cheap and fragile, sensitive to handling, and able to retain evidence of the passing of time. Sixty years later in a place half way across the globe (Australia) these cards are found amidst possessions of people who have lived through “interesting times”. They are a connection with their place of birth, reminders of social, political and religious links and divisions, as well as records of identity and cultural status determined by birth.

The identity cards are arranged according to colour (Figure 18) and are grouped together in acrylic holders. There are enlarged photographs (Figures 19) of the portraits found inside the cards to offer the viewer an indication of what the interior of the cards looks like. According to Alamidis this offers an “interactive approach” (2013:2) as the cards are meant to be handled and paged through.



George Alamidis. **Identity Cards**. 2004. Mixed Media. (size varies).



George Alamidis. **Identity Cards**. 2004. Mixed Media. (size varies).

The work of Alamidis was selected for discussion as he deals with a facet of cultural dislocation that relates directly to my research and the protagonists. The notion of a passport or (as in South Africa) an identity book, and the connotations these objects hold in the context of identity, is an important point of departure. A passport or identity book holds a record of a person's origin, migration and identity. As Sells (2011) states, origins ground people. A person's place of origin influences their (cultural) identity, however, when they are removed from their original culture dislocation occurs. This process is captured in passports in the form of immigration stamps. This is one method used in my art practice to capture personal histories of migration and cultural dislocation. Geographical placement is an important aspect in understanding migration and the resulting cultural dislocation and identity crisis that was experienced when the protagonists moved from place to place. As mentioned in Chapter One, the reasons for cultural dislocation and the formation of a new subjective identity are relative to the time when the dislocation transpired and the space in which it occurred.

Farber's cultural identity hinges on the construct of a hybrid identity, where in the context of culture, two divergent cultures are amalgamated to create a new subjective identity. Sassen acknowledges that "while feeling part of this world, [she] ...also kept on being aware of the fact that [she] would never really be a part of it" (Sassen in Somzé 2007). Sassen feels caught in-between two opposing cultures as a subaltern inhabiting a third space. The value of Alamidis' work to this study lies in his exploration of the conditions that trigger cultural dislocation. As a teenager, Alamidis experienced loss of self and identity through migration and relocation in a new cultural environment. Alamidis' exploration of cultural dislocation, of not belonging is eloquently expressed using Greek immigrants' identity cards as visual metaphors for the loss of self and identity.

The selected artists' diverse investigation of their cultural identity and cultural dislocation correlates with the journeys and experiences of each of my protagonists discussed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER 3

A (family) history of dislocation

This chapter charts the cultural journeys of the protagonists, the resulting fragmentation and dislocation of their identities and the formation of new subjective identities. The protagonists are my maternal grandmother, Hendrika Aartje Johanna van Kranen - Koopmans (1934 – 2005), my mother, Geertruida Hendrika Koopmans - de Vries (1957 -) and myself, Jetteke de Vries (1987 -). The investigation focuses on personal historical events in the migration between the Netherlands and Southern Africa that shaped and re-shaped the protagonists' identities. The history of each protagonist is investigated within the context of the specific historical and socio-political time frame in which the dislocation occurred.

Since I was a child I have seen myself as being different from my peers and as an adult I have attempted to better understand this difference through my art practice. Based on information gleaned from my mother and family photographs, I came to the realization that my mother and grandmother suffered similar feelings of difference, not belonging and cultural dislocation. The circumstances of my grandmother's migration between the Netherlands and Africa shaped her identity, as did the circumstances of my mother's relocation to and from Southern Africa. My grandmother's life between 1950 and 1955 is the focus of this study as this is the time period within which her initial cultural dislocation occurred. My mother's cultural dislocation occurred between 1975 and 1977 and my first experience of cultural dislocation occurred in the period between 2000 and 2006. Each journey, though similar in many respects, was inherently different because the experiences of each protagonist were dependent on a particular time and place. In the case of each protagonist's journey the dislocation occurred in relation to specific socio-political and historical events at the time of migration.

The different ways in which fractures in each protagonist's identity occur is central to an understanding of the cause and type of dislocation, how this dislocation occurs, and the factors that contribute to the resulting formation of a new identity. My

grandmother's cultural dislocation occurred in her early twenties, when she migrated to South West Africa with a stable, essentialist Dutch cultural identity. My position as a subaltern inhabiting a third space consists of both positive and negative traits from South African and Dutch cultures. This is the result of my dislocation occurring when I was a teenager, before I could develop a stable, homogenous identity. My mother only became aware of her dislocation when she returned to the Netherlands after living in South Africa (Pretoria) for a year. My mother's cultural dislocation appears to be more complex than either my grandmother's or mine. Using Friesen's (2013) construct of mental networks, discussed in Chapter One it is apparent that in new cultural settings the mental networks for each protagonist were misfiring, as they were being triggered by inconsistent information. This resulted in a negative experience and subsequent cultural dislocation. The socio-political climate of South Africa and South West Africa in the historical periods during which the protagonists moved between countries influenced the formation of their new subjective identity. These included factors such as colonialism, Apartheid and the demise of Apartheid. It is hypothesized that specific periods in Southern African history influenced the formation of a new subjective identity for each protagonist, based on the norms of the period.

Hendrika Aartje Johanna van Kranen - Koopmans (1934 – 2005)

The following discussion of my maternal grandmother's shifting cultural identity, and cultural dislocation, is based on information derived from interviews with my mother from 2012 to 2014. In addition, historical research in the form of journals and letters relating to South West Africa (in Armbruster 2010) in the 1950's, provides a context for the construction of her identity. The discussion will focus mainly on the years between 1950 and 1955, as this is when her initial cultural dislocation occurred.

My grandmother was born in The Hague in the Netherlands. In 1953 she migrated to the unfamiliarity of Africa when in her early twenties, to be with my grandfather, Johannes Koopmans, in Southern Africa. According to the custom at the time she married my grandfather's brother, by proxy, so that she could make the journey by boat to Southern Africa, unaccompanied as a respectable woman. Immigrants in the 1950's shared the common experience of World War II, regardless of their country of

origin. The post war devastation was felt by the whole of Europe. Many Germans immigrated to South West Africa after World War II because of its heterogeneous German community (Armbruster 2010). Though their personal reasons for immigration differed “they all sought to realize some professional or personal ambition they felt Germany did not enable them to fulfil, irrespective of whether South West Africa had been a ‘dream destination’ or a more accidental choice” (Armbruster 2010:1231). My grandfather was fortunate enough to speak German and as a result he found work in South West Africa and established a life with his new wife. My grandmother arrived in Africa from war torn Europe to a land of better prospects, first in Pretoria and later South West Africa where my grandfather had shares in a copper mine.

My grandmother was the epitome of the colonial female. She lived on a large estate with house staff and gardeners. My imaginings of my grandmother’s initial time in Africa are strongly reflected in the personae of Baroness Karen von Blixen, who patronized, and cared for, the servants in her employ. However where von Blixen endeavored to engage with the Africans in her care, my grandmother saw herself as separate and superior under Apartheid law (South West Africa was de facto considered another province if South Africa), but also due to the differences in colonial setting. von Blixen lived a very isolated life on a coffee farm; as a result she did not have the opportunity to interact regularly with Europeans. My grandmother lived in Windhoek, a town that offered the possibility of frequent socialization with other settlers. However, my grandmother refrained from this due to the presence of predominantly German settlers and the associated language barrier. Thus my grandmother spent time at the homestead; in a colonial context this would afford the lady of the house time to engage in domestic and feminine pursuits, such as embroidery and gardening. Her position was similar to Bertha Marks, as presented by Farber. Bertha Marks wrote many letters while she stayed in Zwartkoppies. These letters voiced her frustrations regarding a patriarchy and colonial prejudices. According to Farber (2012:73):

Bertha Marks’ life experienced in Southern Africa were characterized by the fundamental ambivalence of having occupied the gendered position of being subject to patriarchal restrictions yet, paradoxically, having been complicit in maintaining the inequalities of colonialism by virtue of her privileged whiteness.

In the Victorian era in the colonies, women were expected to create a socially and racially exclusive environment centered on the home and the constructs surrounding female domesticity. During this time “imperialism suffused the Victorian cult of domesticity and the historic separation of the private and the public, which took shape around colonialism and the idea of race” (McClintock in Farber 2012:80). Colonial women were charged with upholding class distinctions and maintaining a separation of race within their homes (Callan in Farber 2012:80). This is what Callan (in Farber 2012:80) describes as a “suppression of perception” a notion which involves a type dehumanization or “not seeing” the servant’s presence, despite being aware of them. These Victorian, colonial class and racial distinctions are equally applicable to Apartheid era class and racial distinctions, especially when linked to socio-political cultural constructs to which migrant women were expected to adhere to. Bertha Marks’ struggle to adjust to late nineteenth century South African life can be directly related to my grandmother’s experience. Coming from war torn Europe in the 1950’s she would have been taken aback by the standard of living in Africa. Coming from a lower middle class Dutch family, she would have had difficulty in accepting the notion of having staff and of being responsible for, yet separate from, these people in her care, similar to von Blixen’s confession that she would never understand the natives. However von Blixen accepted her separateness while engaging with Africans in her employ.

Although my grandmother was accomplished in feminine handicrafts such as crochet, embroidery, knitting and baking, she did not spend her days pursuing these crafts. My grandmother led a lonely life in Africa, which made her nostalgic for her life in the Netherlands. She was lonely as her husband was often working at the mine for long periods of time. As stated in Chapter One nostalgia can occur in response to a negative mood and, because it is an inherently happy emotion, it can be used as a tool in combating negative moods associated with loss, bereavement and loneliness (Wildschut 2006:976). I suggest that my grandmother’s negative mood was due to relocating to a homogenous, predominantly German settler community in South West Africa after the Second World War. Negative feelings towards Germans due to the trauma of World War II must have made my grandmother’s life difficult. These feelings of resentment and dislike must have inhibited my grandmother’s ability to socialize with the predominantly German

population. This in turn would have inhibited her willingness to explore and interrogate a new culture. Her loneliness and alienation would have been further aggravated by the language barrier (German, English and Afrikaans), her husband's absence from home and upbringing and beliefs. Even though my grandmother lived for her children, they were taken care of by three nannies. My grandmother could not have afforded to have nannies for her children in the Netherlands, but in Africa most white families had servants. My grandmother had two children in South West Africa, my mother Geertruida and her brother Johannes, before moving back to the Netherlands in the 1960's, due to the closure of the mine. She had one more daughter in the Netherlands, Marieke. In 1975 my grandparents immigrated back to South Africa and settled in Pretoria and later Cape Town. My grandmother's interaction with South African culture in 1975 was not as alienating as her post war relocation to a German community.

When my grandmother came to Africa in 1954 she was in her early twenties, and had just emerged from the experiences of the Second World War. My grandmother's narrative is similar to that of many young women who struggled to conform to the rigid social and cultural structures of the 1950's in South West Africa, under South African jurisdiction post World War II. This sudden shift in cultural norms and social expectations caused feelings of disconnect from her Dutch culture, much like Montague's initial shock of being faced with Turkish culture in 1717. But whereas Montague engaged with Turkish culture and embraced new cultural constructs, my grandmother was hesitant to relinquish her Dutch cultural norms. My grandmother's norms and values remained inherently Dutch, but the longer she stayed in South West Africa and Southern Africa, the more she identified with Southern African cultural norms. My grandmother became a cultural hybrid, where her two cultural identities became an integrated whole; unlike Montague who on her return to England, surrendered the Turkish component of her identity in order to be accepted back into English society.

After my grandfather died in 2003 my mother decided to move my grandmother to the Netherlands, where my family was living at the time. My grandmother suffered from severe dementia, exacerbated by alcoholism. The move from the Netherlands to Africa when she was in her early twenties was the catalyst for my grandmother's drinking problem. Drinking was socially accepted in the 1950's in South West Africa

and my grandmother used it as a coping mechanism for her husband's long absences. Her alcoholism became worse and secretive when she moved back to the Netherlands in the 1960's; drinking was not as socially accepted in the Netherlands as it was in Africa. Her drinking problem was further exacerbated by her return to a low-income middle class status in the Netherlands. She was a mother of two small children and expecting a third. This situation was worsened by my grandfather's absence due to his conscription into army service. After the death of my grandfather in 2003, my grandmother's mental health deteriorated rapidly due to her alcoholism and the onset of dementia. My grandmother lived in a perpetual state of nostalgia and most of the time she believed she was in Africa with my grandfather. In her short periods of lucidity she was unhappy at the realization that she was living in the Netherlands. As discussed in Chapter One Bhugra (2004) stated that when migrating from one culture to another the migrant carries their knowledge and distress with them. The process of migrating can be painful because social networks are left behind and this causes feelings of loss, dislocation, alienation and isolation which result in the process of acculturation. Bhugra suggests that a person's ability to deal with these factors influences how they will acclimatize to a new culture when he says:

A series of factors in the environment combined with levels of stress, the ability to deal with stress, and the ability to root oneself according to one's personality traits, will produce either a sense of settling down or a sense of feeling isolated and alienated (Bhugra 2004:1)

Armbruster mentioned that many of the immigrants to South West Africa/Namibia saw themselves as "in, yet apart from Africa" (Armbruster 2010:1234). I believe that my grandmother shared this view of Africa. This view is pivotal in understanding the complex relationships between time and space, and how they affect identity and interactions with others in relation to the self. As Armbruster (2010:1234) states:

In many of these narratives speakers configured 'Africa' as a spatial and temporal entity against which they drew the boundaries of their own cultural map. Statements that Namibia 'was not really Africa', that is was 'Africa light', or 'Africa for beginners' were common and generally highlighted as mental separation between one's own spectrum of experience in the relatively affluent, white-networked

sphere of society and the black African 'rest' located outside its symbolic and territorial boundaries.

'Real' Africa or exotic Africa was often relegated to an amalgamation of European clichés much like the Orientalized view of the Orient perpetuated by the West. 'Real Africa' was however also an ephemeral landscape with wildlife that had the power to mesmerize. It was in the beauty of the landscape and nature that some of Armbruster's interviewees "found their true home as immigrants or where the attraction of 'Africa' became true for them" (2010:1235). The same can be said for my grandmother. She took every opportunity to tell us how beautiful Africa was and how different it was from her childhood and adolescence in the Netherlands. Until the day she died, she felt a bond with Africa that cannot be described in words; it was a feeling, the smell of the air.

My grandmother's original Dutch identity developed, due to cultural dislocation, into a hybrid identity, incorporating elements of both Dutch and Southern African culture; however the Dutch and South African components of her identity were not of equal proportion. My grandmother identified more with her original Dutch culture throughout her movement between the Netherlands and Southern Africa.

Geerdtruida Hendrika Koopmans - de Vries (1957 -)

Information regarding my mother's geographical and cultural dislocation, and the resulting shifts in her identity was obtained from interviews with her from 2012 to 2014. This discussion focusses on the period between 1975 and 1977 when my mother realized that her perceived homogenous Dutch cultural identity was no longer intact due to geographical dislocation. Friesen's (2013) concept of the crisis of *ought* self and *actual* self, is useful in contextualizing my mother's cultural dislocation. The *ought* self reflects what is expected, whereas the *actual* self reflects what is reality. As will be seen, my mother experienced shifts in her *ought* self and her *actual* self. This contradiction, caused by repeated movement between cultures, contributed to a dislocation and subsequent shift in my mother's identity.

My mother was born in South West Africa to Dutch parents. My mother was looked after by three nannies according to the social conventions in South West Africa at that time. At the age of three my mother relocated to the Netherlands with her parents. My mother had a typical Dutch upbringing, adhering to the prevailing social constructs and cultural norms of that time. As a result she had a homogenous Dutch identity when she returned to (South) Africa in 1975 with her parents and siblings. She was eighteen, but felt foreign in the continent of her birth, and longed to go back to the Netherlands. However, only a year later when my mother returned to the Netherlands for a few months in 1976, she became aware that she no longer fully identified with Dutch culture and customs. This is when my mother first realized that she inhabited a third space between two cultures (Grossberg in Hall 1997:91), not quite African, but no longer fully Dutch either.

In 1984 at the age of twenty seven my mother married my father Jan de Vries (1954 -), a Dutch immigrant. They settled in Secunda (Transvaal) where my brother and I were born. In 1993 the family relocated to Cape Town where we lived for seven years before immigrating to the Netherlands in 2000. My mother looked forward to reconnecting with her Dutch heritage. However her return to the Netherlands resulted in feelings of disconnect and cultural dislocation; twenty five years of assimilation into South African culture had redefined her identity. This made it difficult to adjust to life in the Netherlands. At this point my mother accepted her position as a subaltern, inhabiting a third space. In South Africa she raised my brother and I according to Dutch values, but within South African social constructs and cultural norms. My mother had an idealized memory of Dutch culture she remembered from her youth, similar to Nobokov's (1998) ideal memory (see Chapter One). Yet on her return to the Netherlands, when she was confronted with the realities of Dutch culture, she felt out of place and disconnected from it, because it did not adhere to her ideal memories. An ideal memory as explained by Nobokov (in Sells 2010) is used to "locate oneself within a time and space, but also to freeze a specific memory in time". This can be applied to notions of idealized memories of culture in the case of the protagonists. The concept of an ideal memory also hinges on nostalgia. Nostalgia is a "subset of well-being emotions, specifically categorizing nostalgia under feelings of distress and loss and the realization that an aspect of one's past is irrevocably lost " (Wildschut 2006:976). In this context my mother's

nostalgia was determined by the realization that the Dutch culture, in which she had grown up, no longer applied to the time and space she inhabited when she returned to the Netherlands.

My mother's dislocation was influenced by, but was not dependent on, the socio-political conventions of Apartheid. Because my mother was born in South West Africa and raised in the Netherlands from the age of three, she was not raised to believe that being White made her superior. After spending fifteen years in the Netherlands, where people of all races and creeds were considered equal, my mother returned to Africa in her late teens to be faced with the inequalities of Apartheid. Like my grandmother, my mother displayed the characteristics of a colonial female, within the context of Apartheid. As in the case of my grandmother, the convention of the derogatory use of the terms 'house girls' and 'garden boys', was an accepted part of my mother's experience. She found it difficult to deal with the obvious inequality and the separation of the races. My mother represents a teenager coming to terms with the language, culture and conflict of a new country. She also represents a mother raising children to respect all people, regardless of race, in the context of a society constructed under the racist ideology of Apartheid. My mother's stringent adherence to the social conventions of Dutch culture resulted in a cultural dislocation. She did not adhere to the complex social constructs put into place by an ideology that separated people according to race. As a result she was considered by her peers, to be different and Othered. This rejection of an individual is the result of a group mentality where people gravitate to those whose mental networks trigger the same responses, as described by Friesen (2013) in Chapter One.

My mother's dislocation was further aggravated by time and space. She was born in South West Africa, but she identified with Dutch culture because she was too young to remember her pre – Dutch experiences. Relocating back to South Africa was the catalyst for a shift in my mother's identity through cultural dislocation. Her engagement with South African culture facilitated a new subjective identity, even though she, like my grandmother, adhered to Dutch norms and values. My mother often says that she feels completely African and that she does not feel Dutch at all - *"ik ben helemaal geen Nederlander"* (de Vries 2014).

Jetteke de Vries (1987 -)

My cultural dislocation is investigated through a personal narrative to foreground with a focus on the period between 2000 and 2006. During this period I was aware of not belonging to a homogenous cultural group and experienced a resulting loss of self and identity.

I was born in Standerton outside Johannesburg in 1987 and moved to the Western Cape on my sixth birthday. My father was born in Rotterdam and my mother in Namibia, both to Dutch parents. As a result there has always been a strong Dutch influence in my life. I started to notice this influence as early as six years old, because I found it difficult to relate to my South African peers in terms of customs and cultural norms. I intuitively absorbed modes of Dutch culture at home, but engaged with South African culture at school. According to Friesen (2013:2) children have no control over which mental networks are triggered because a child's mind is composed mainly of a disconnected collection of mental networks, which are triggered by the environment in which the child is located. Because my home cultural norms and customs differed to that of my peers, the wrong mental networks were often triggered in me, resulting in behaviors that conflicted with other's children's mental networks. I did not exhibit expected behavioral traits amongst my peers due to the misfiring of my mental networks; this resulted in feelings of not belonging.

I attempted to come to terms with this sense of not belonging when I was confronted with a homogenous Dutch culture after moving to the Netherlands in 2000 at the age of thirteen. Because I had grown up in an environment with a Dutch influence, I had formed an idealized perception of Dutch culture. This idealized version of Dutch culture did not match my expectations of lived Dutch culture. As a result, I was disappointed and confused. Brah (1996:18) explains culture within the whole spectrum of experiences, modes of thinking, feeling and behaving; the values, norms, customs and traditions of the social group(s) we feel we belong to. Like Johanna Maria van Riebeeck (1710), I felt an affinity with Dutch culture, even though I had never been to the Netherlands. However, unlike van Riebeeck who saw herself as being Dutch without ever being in the Netherlands, I did not consider myself as being Dutch, even though Dutch culture played a role in my early

development. This Dutch influence was not enough for me to pass as Dutch; thus I was seen as an outsider. This reinforced my feelings of a psychological dislocation from Dutch culture and a geographical dislocation from South African culture. I felt socially excluded from Dutch customs and rituals because I was seen as the Other.

Woodward (1997:29) explains how social exclusion and differences are integral in forming new identities:

Identities are forged through the marking of difference. This marking of difference takes place both through symbolic systems of representation, and through forms of social exclusion. Identity, then, is not the opposite of, but depends on, difference.

It was only after I dissociated myself from my South African subjectivity, and started to engage with certain institutionalized customs in the Netherlands, that I was able to negotiate acceptance. Friesen (2013:5) states “culture functions automatically and efficiently with a minimum of conscious thought”. It functions this way because the mental networks that drive culture are acquired in childhood. Intuitively knowing which mental networks drive culture creates a sense of stability, deep security and belonging. However, when the mental networks trigger the wrong response in others in a group this sense of stability, security and belonging disappear and are replaced with feelings of dislocations and loss of identity (Friesen 2013:5).

In 2005 at the age of eighteen, after five years in the Netherlands, I moved back to South Africa with my parents. I made a conscious decision to return to my land of birth. Despite living in the Netherlands for five years, I did not identify with Dutch culture and had no desire to stay in the Netherlands. Once I returned to South Africa, I became aware of being Othered by South African peers. In order to be accepted in the Netherlands I had created a new identity to mirror Dutch cultural norms. My new identity did not conform to South African social and cultural paradigms, leading to an alienation from my South African culture and a second cultural dislocation. Higgins (in Friesen 2013:6) stated that “mental symmetry suggests that the *ought* self emerges when core mental networks that represent other people impose their structure on personal identity” and in contrast “the *actual* self emerges when Perceiver thought decides which mental networks are always present” (Higgins in Friesen 2013:6). My *ought* self was associated with South

African cultural influences, but my actual self was determined by my multi-cultural experiences. I was now a combination of both Dutch and South African cultures; however disconnected and fractured that cultural identity might be, it was mine. I no longer displayed the behavioural and personal characteristics of one culture. This resulted in what I subsequently regarded as a duality in my cultural identity; I was too African to be Dutch but I was too Dutch to be African. I now understand myself to be a subaltern, inhabiting the space in between Dutch and South African cultures. This third space is a type of heterotopia as conceptualised by Foucault (in Nelson 2010:12):

[Heterotopias are] Places where the technologies and disciplines of social orders are out of sequence or momentarily suspended then re-sequenced or reconstructed to generate new spaces where microcosms of society are transformed and cosseted.

My interpretation of this third space as a heterotopia is understood as a space in-between where I can categorize my identity by what it is and not what it ought to be.

As part of my Bachelor's Degree of Technology in Fine Art (2010) degree I began to investigate this cultural duality, and the resulting displacement I felt, in an artwork that referenced the Dutch ideal of beauty and innocence titled **Boerinnetjes** (2010) (Figures 20 and 21). Although this piece began as a reference to Dutch values, the more I engaged with the piece the more I observed the Dutch essentialist cultural homogeneity that I was inadvertently depicting. On reflection I was subconsciously investigating my feeling of not belonging to a homogenous Dutch culture, but also how the Dutch influence still existed as a part of my identity. This marked the conceptual beginning of my journey to uncover, and reconcile my cultural identity, as a subaltern inhabiting a third space, in-between Dutch and South African culture.



(Figure 20) Jetteke de Vries. **Boerinnetjes**. 2010.

White earthenware clay and French Dimension glaze. 15cm x 100cm.



(Figure 21) Jetteke de Vries. **Boerinnetjes** (detail). 2010.

White earthenware clay and French Dimension glaze². 15cm x 100cm.

Before registering for a Master's Degree of Technology in Fine Art I decided to return to the Netherlands in 2011, for six months, as an au pair. I made this decision so as to gain an adult perspective on my teenage perceptions of the Netherlands, with an understanding of my position as a subaltern with a dislocated cultural identity.

During the six months in the Netherlands I gained an insight into my conflicting feelings of identity and, through caring for Dutch children, into my childhood. I related to the nursery rhymes, stories and folk songs that the children learned at school. I experienced nostalgia in reliving my childhood experiences. Speaking a European language in South Africa set me apart. It made me different and special; knowing that I knew something that my peers did not. It was difficult to accept that my pivotal childhood experiences and memories were not special to the children in the Netherlands. It highlighted the differences between my childhood, and that of Dutch children raised with a mono-cultural identity. This experience made me realize that my childhood was different in one fundamental way. Even though my childhood was influenced by norms and values absorbed from Dutch parents, my experiences were rooted in an African context. This realization alerted me to the fact that I had experienced a cultural dislocation in the formation of a dual cultural identity.

When I left South Africa in 2000 at the age of thirteen I was, like the majority of white youth, sheltered from and ignorant of the social implications of Apartheid. However,

² French Dimension glaze is a thickened ceramic glaze that retains a raised three-dimensional aspect once applied and fired.

having lived in a non-racial society in the Netherlands for five years, on my return to South Africa I became aware of the deeply rooted injustices of Apartheid. My cultural identity is fragmented, due to moving between two continents. This fragmented and dislocated identity is a result of not understanding the complex social and cultural expectations of an essentialist Dutch cultural construct at a young age. This identity was further fragmented by my return to South Africa and its non-essentialist social and cultural structures, emphasized by the ideology of separate development under Apartheid. South Africa is made up of diverse cultures: differences in culture are more readily accepted than in the case of a homogenous, essentialist culture like that of the Netherlands. Like Farber I attempt to critique my culture, interact with other cultures and their practices and, in so doing, construct a subjective identity through these exchanges with others. But unlike Farber, who views herself as a cultural hybrid, I am still at odds with my dual cultural identity, due to past experiences and (to a degree) the socio-political climate in South Africa. I struggle to accept certain South African customs and behaviors because they are at odds with Dutch practices that I have adopted. Where South African customs dictate politeness the Dutch are honest and open about their feelings, even if it offends another person. This Dutch trait is particularly present in my family. This trait is also typically associated with Third Culture Kids. According to Friesen (2013) TCK's are subject to "core insecurity and peripheral savviness" (2013:7), which in turn affects the five levels of friendship that start at superficial contact and end with personal disclosure. TCK's pass quickly through the first two levels of friendship and move directly into phase three in which discussing emotional issues that do not relate directly to personal identity are the norm. TCK's however, struggle to move into levels four and five, which involve true intimacy and trust (Friesen 2013:7). I mention this because I find it easy to speak to almost complete strangers about politics and religion, where in most social circumstances in South Africa it is impolite to broach such subjects to people who are not close friends. This is a learned trait, which is reinforced by my position as a subaltern or third culture kid (TCK). This is important in understanding my construction of friendships and interactions with others and how this affects my sense of self within the context of cultural identity.

My displacement and that of my protagonists, though similar, cannot simply be defined as a struggle to discover a new subjective identity within a new and evolving

socio-political environment. Our dislocation stems from being literally displaced from one continent to another, in the context of original and adopted cultures. The idea of whiteness in the context of Apartheid, though relevant in an historical context, is, in this study, neither a contributing factor to a dislocated identity, nor the formation of a new subjective identity. In the case of the protagonists in my art practice, the notion of 'whiteness' and its implications can be applied when discussing the period, as well as the political environment, in which the protagonists found themselves. My grandmother was confronted with white supremacy in South West Africa in the 1950's. With her Dutch background she did not view whites as superior. However in South West Africa she found herself in a new culture, adopting values and customs that differed from her original Dutch cultural norms. She was also confronted with a homogenous German community, directly after her experience of the Second World War. I believe this inhibited her willingness to experience and assimilate herself into South West African culture. On returning to Southern Africa in the 1970's and settling in Pretoria, my grandmother was much more willing to absorb and experience South African culture. This second interaction with Southern African culture was the catalyst for my grandmother's nostalgia later in life when she relocated to the Netherlands.

My mother, who at the age of eighteen returned to South Africa in the midst of Apartheid, attempted to accept the status quo. My mother came from a liberal country where races were considered equal and freedom of speech and expression were considered a natural occurrence. My mother was arrested in Pretoria, shortly after returning to South Africa, for indecent exposure for wearing a top that, in conservative Pretoria, was considered inappropriate. My mother was further detained because she was suspected of being an illegal immigrant as she did not speak English or Afrikaans very well. This contested interaction with South African cultural norms contributed to my mother's alienation from South African culture. My mother realized that even though she was white and considered superior under Apartheid law, she was still considered foreign and the Other. My mother's Dutchness, not her whiteness, was a contributing factor in her negotiation of a new subjective identity in South Africa. Similarly, I do not believe that my position as a middle class white woman can be seen to be a contributing factor to my displacement and the interrogation of my identity. I am white and I am South

African, but my whiteness does not hold the same connotations for me as it does for Farber. I was too young to fully grasp the extent of Apartheid when I left South Africa. However, in the Netherlands, the fact that I was a white South African with Dutch colonial associations gave rise to my feelings of cultural dislocation. It is not a question of who I am as a white South African female with a Dutch heritage, rather, who am I in the context of culture, and what is my cultural identity?

Although each protagonist's journey between countries and cultures is different they all share experiences which led to a dislocated cultural identity. Time and space can be directly linked to a loss of self, feelings not belonging to a group and a resulting dislocation of identity. The different periods in which each protagonist's dislocation occurred defined the space, culture and socio-political constructs of the time. This is explored in a discussion of the exhibition titled *Discovering Home*.

CHAPTER 4

Discovering Home

This chapter consists of a discussion of the practical work submitted in partial compliance of the requirements of a Master's degree in Technology, in the form of an exhibition titled Discovering Home. The exhibition consists of glazed ceramics, embroidered panels, mosaic and found objects. The work will be discussed using action/reflection cycles and data from a cognitive reflective journal written during the making of the work. Reference will be made to theoretical frameworks discussed in chapter One and the work of Leora Farber, Viviane Sassen and George Alamedis.

As the title suggests my art practice sets out to question the meaning of home and more specifically what it means to belong in the context of cultural dislocation. In Chapter One Chloe Sells (2011) argued that identity is rooted in the land, that the place from where a person originates influences their identity. Thus no longer living in the place of origin can cause feelings of cultural dislocation, feelings of not belonging and a loss of identity. Furthermore, past experiences have an effect on shaping identity; this can be linked to migration and the process of establishing a new identity which according to Sells (2010) is influenced by a sense of home and belonging (Sells2010). Sells (2010) describes a home as a secular refuge, as a place of belonging. Re-establishing such a space is a contributing factor to the formation of a new subject identity and in some cases a heterotopic space, where immigrants can re-affirm their identity and negotiate their loss of self. Heidi Armbruster (2010:1232) speaks about the self-identification of immigrants. Armbruster stated that self-identification refers to how people not only arrange themselves in relation to others, but also in relation to time and space. It demonstrates how people feed off their social, cultural and historical knowledge and experiences to correctly situate themselves within existing cultural norms (Armbruster in Fairclough 2003:124). This ultimately leads to a feeling of belonging. However in the case of cultural dislocation, this sense of belonging does not occur; leading to a sense of social exclusion. Feeling socially excluded is an important

factor in the shaping and re-shaping of identity in new cultural circumstances. Fragments of the original culture always linger in the new subject identity, causing feelings of disconnect and cultural dislocation. As Grossberg (in Hall 1997:91) states in Chapter One “identities are contradictory and made up out of partial fragments” and “identities are fragmented and that this fragmentation can occur in either individual identities or in social categories or a combination of both”. Grossberg (in Hall and du Gay 1992:21) concludes that “identities can, therefore, be contradictory and are always situational”. This contradiction in identity is a major cause for a dislocation of cultural identity because mental networks function as a way to elicit the correct responses. When the networks are consistently triggered with incorrect information, as is the case in a new culture where circumstances require different actions and reactions, it causes a feeling of culture shock which can lead to cultural dislocation (Friesen 2013). The severity of the dislocation and the subsequent formation of a new subjective identity are dependent on time and space and the cultural circumstances at the time of dislocation. As a result each of the protagonists’ new subjective cultural identities is different, even though they experienced a similar type of cultural dislocation and trauma through migration. Chapter Three established the different factors that contributed towards a dislocation of identity and the subsequent creation of a new subject identity, in the lives of the three protagonists.

Issues of migration, identity and cultural dislocation are explored in the exhibition titled *Discovering Home* using ceramic and enamel plates, embroideries and found objects. The use of the ceramic plates references the Dutch custom of displaying plates on a wall. Placing a plate on a wall negates its function, but it also denotes it as being important. This use of wall hung plates, coupled with the cracked and broken shards provides a visual metaphor for fragmented cultural identities. My art practice juxtaposes images of Southern Africa and Dutch cultures. The embroidered calico panels reference colonial, feminine handicrafts providing a narration of the protagonist’s journeys. Using the disordered reverse side of the embroidered image provides a visual metaphor for the often messy formation and re-formation of identity. The large scale and method of presentation (as stretched canvases on a wooden frame) allow for a reading of the embroidered panels in a fine art context

whilst referencing handicraft, associated with colonial female pursuits. This duality provides a visual metaphor for the protagonists' dislocated identities.

Enamel plates provide a colonial African context to the reading of the exhibition; these plates are traditionally associated with colonial era servants or items sold in rural trading stores. The use of bitumen and stains references the way in which identity can become tarnished and dirtied through the trauma of migration. Similarly the use of broken, crumbling canal houses and smoke fired tiles are metaphors for the disintegration of a Dutch cultural identity.

The body of work reflects the struggle to acknowledge and accept a changing and dislocated cultural identity.

Discovering Home is located in memories associated with the protagonists. The work is rooted in my mother's memories of her mother and my memories of my grandmother and my mother. Researching the methodologies and work of Farber, Sassen and Alamidis facilitated and validated the interrogation of the journeys made by the three protagonists. Farber's investigation of her cultural identity, through three female protagonists, suggested the use of protagonists as a strategy to reveal the circumstances of my family's dislocation. Researching my family's history of dislocation revealed a wealth of stories and imaginings that I was unaware of. An exploration of the cultural dislocation of three generations of women in my family became the guiding force for this study. Spanning the study over three generations gave me the opportunity to reflect on how time and space affects both identity and the type of dislocation that is felt

The series of plates titled **Dislocated Relatives** (2012- 2014) began as an exploration of memory, an interrogation of my family's history and the journey between the Netherlands and Southern Africa. The plates form a visual narrative as the "pictorial representation of or reference to one or more 'events' that occur in a sequence of time and that bring about a change in the condition of at least one character. (Murray in Pimenta and Poovaiah 2010).

The use of the plate as non-functional, decorative wall pieces, dissociated from their function, is a visual metaphor for the feelings of dislocation felt by the protagonists, removed from their original context and placed in a new subjective context. The

circular shape of the plates has neither a beginning, nor an end this references identity as identities are transitory and forever changing (Hall in Woodward: 1997:52). The circular motif is referenced throughout my practical work.

The first four plates in the **Dislocated Relatives** series contain portraits and images that reference my grandmother's journey and her early life in South West Africa. The first plate is a portrait of my grandmother as a young and beautiful woman, surrounded by blue and white pincushion proteas, symbolizing the merging of the Netherlands and Africa (figure 22). The sepia tones of the portrait reference notions of age, memory, and nostalgia. The second plate consists of the ghostly image of a faceless man, a ship behind him, emerging out of a fog (figure 23). This plate depicts my grandfather as the catalyst for my family's journey to Southern Africa. The narrative continues with imagery relating to the dual nature of the protagonist's identities; this includes the use of geographical elements such as the drawn lines of the Netherlands and South West Africa, with the outline of a figure caught in between (figure 24). This figure caught between two geographical sites is a representation of a subaltern, metaphorically and literally inhabiting a third space (Grossberg in Hall and du Gay 1997). As there is no means of escape from this space, it becomes a heterotopia. The geographical reference is extended in a plate depicting a ship wreck (figure 25) on the skeleton coast in South West Africa. The image of the shipwreck is a metaphor for the disintegration, and remnants of Dutch culture in my grandmother's life. The Namibian coat of arms is subtly worked onto the plate with French Dimension so that it represents a ghostly juxtaposition between what was and what is. This duality references Friesen's (2013) notion of *ought* self, versus *actual* self.

The image of my mother as a windswept child (figure 26) with the dunes of the Namib Desert in the background is a visual metaphor for her African heritage. Only later in life did my mother come to the understanding that her origin played an important part in the shaping of her identity. This plate is followed by the image of my mother as a young woman with the Dutch emblem behind her (figure 27). This image references my mother's *ought* self (Friesen 2013) as from the age of three she was raised in the Netherlands with no ties to Africa other than the stories told to her by her parents. The visual narrative in the series of plates illustrates the evolution of identity and how it is inextricably linked to time and space. My mother

identifies with Africa saying that, “I was born in (South West) Africa, so I am African” despite not having identified with Africa in her early childhood. This is because she was too young to absorb (South West) African culture before she migrated to the Netherlands. However identity is defined by your origins (Sells 2010) and this holds true for my mother even though she spent 15 years in the Netherlands before returning to South Africa.

The last image in the **Dislocated Relatives** series is of me as a child in South Africa (figure 28). This image references my childhood in Secunda, Mpumalanga; it is a visual metaphor for my identity when it was undisturbed by migration and the resulting disruption of my mental networks.

The use of blue throughout the portraits is a reference to the Delft Blue porcelain that was traded in the colonies and is still produced in the Netherlands. The images of flowers, such as proteas, bougainvillea and cosmos serve as both a decorative and personal function. My grandmother’s favourite flowers were proteas as they were hardy and resilient, beautiful and distinctly African. *Proteoideae* occur mainly in the southern hemisphere and in South Africa there are three hundred and sixty different species of the flower. The variety in plant size, habit, flower size and colour of the Protea was the reason it was named after the Greek god *Proteus*, who could change his shape at will (Jamieson 2001). The image of the protea is used here as a metaphor for the resilience and adaptability, characteristics required to survive in the harsh conditions of Africa. Proteas are resilient enough to be cut and grown in many parts of the world if the seeds are sown in the right type of soil (Jamieson 2001). This ability to be transplanted to different places and grow and flourish is also a metaphor for migration and identity, relating specifically to my grandmother’s journey. The use of the protea references its status as South Africa’s national flower and references my grandmother’s time in Africa.

The bougainvillea plant was first discovered in Rio de Janeiro in 1768 by botanist Philibert Commerson, who named it after Admiral Louis Antoine, Comte de Bougainville, captain of the ship that carried Commerson to the New World (Ginsburg 2010). Most contemporary bougainvillea plants are hybrids derived from two species, the *bougainvillea spectabilis* (the species discovered by Commerson) and *bougainvillea glabra*. This plant is found in most tropic and sub tropic regions

around the world, but it is also grown in sheltered European regions, as a result of colonial expansion, as the plant was traded by colonists around the world (Ginsburg 2010). This plant has been successfully grown around the world, it is a hybrid and it is used as a reference to hybrid identity. The ability to move from a homeland, and adapt and flourish in a new geographical space, is a dominant theme in this research and my art practice.

The use of the cosmos flower represents my childhood in Secunda, Mpumalanga. The town of Secunda exists because of the oil refineries. Growing up surrounded by environmental degradation and dryness, I always looked forward to the time of year when the field behind my childhood home would bloom with beautiful pink, purple and white cosmos flowers. The name of the flower is derived from the Greek word *cosmos*, meaning balance, order or a harmonious whole (Mifflin 2000). This is the antithesis of dislocated identities which are anything but whole; the flower thus holds significance in my art practice as it serves as a symbol for my childhood, when my identity was homogenous.

The use of lace motifs and doily patterns (figure 29 and 30) references the domestic craft of crocheting and the social and cultural constructs and expectations of white women in 1950's South West Africa. These expectations hinged on the notion of "suppression of perception" and the need for correct and civilised living (in Farber 2012:80).

The linear way in which the plates are displayed reinforces the idea of a visual narrative, depicting the relationship between the three protagonists and their dislocated identities. The arrangement of the plates is punctuated by shards of broken ceramic plates (Figure 31) smoke fired to represent the negative feelings associated with a dislocated identity. These fractured shards contain imagery of dark, faceless figures trapped behind the crackle. The crackle is a visual metaphor for the fragmented identities of the three protagonists. This series visually depicts the journey of the protagonists but also serves as a reference for the ripples of dislocation felt by three generations of women in my family. My grandmother's experience in South West Africa shaped my mother's perceptions of culture and my mother's altered perceptions of culture affected my sense of culture. These ripples

are unseen, but they are ever present in the formation of the protagonists' new subject identities in a new geographical space.

Dislocated Relatives



(Figure 22) Jetteke de Vries. **Dislocated Relatives**. 20112-13. 45cm radius

White Earthenware, underglaze, Lucy Anne transparent glaze and French dimension.



(Figure 23) Jetteke de Vries. **Dislocated Relatives**. 20112-13. 45cm radius

White Earthenware, underglaze, Lucy Anne transparent glaze and French dimension.



(Figure 24) Jetteke de Vries. **Dislocated Relatives**. 20112-13. 45cm radius

White Earthenware, underglaze, Lucy Anne transparent glaze and French dimension.



(Figure 25) Jetteke de Vries. **Dislocated Relatives**. 20112-13. 45cm radius

White Earthenware, underglaze, Lucy Anne transparent glaze and French dimension.



(Figure 26) Jetteke de Vries. **Dislocated Relatives**. 2012-13. 45cm radius
White Earthenware, underglaze, Lucy Anne transparent glaze and French dimension.



(Figure 27) Jetteke de Vries. **Dislocated Relatives**. 2012-13. 45cm radius
White Earthenware, underglaze and Lucy Anne transparent glaze.



(Figure 28) Jetteke de Vries. **Dislocated Relatives**. 20112-13. 45cm radius
White Earthenware, underglaze, Lucy Anne transparent glaze and French dimension.



(Figure 29) Jetteke de Vries. **Dislocated Relatives**. 20112-13. 45cm radius
White Earthenware, underglaze, Lucy Anne transparent glaze and French dimension.



(Figure 30) Jetteke de Vries. **Dislocated Relatives** (detail). 2012-13. 45cm radius
White Earthenware, underglaze Lucy Anne transparent glaze and French dimension.



(Figure 31) Jetteke de Vries. **Dislocated Relatives: Shard**. 2012-13. 23cm x38cm x42cm.
White Earthenware, Lucy Anne transparent glaze and smoke firing.

My grandmother's history is largely hearsay and pieced together from stories from family stories told by my mother and other relatives. She died in 2005 and left no evidence of her time in Africa: as a result there is no firsthand account of her cultural journey. This has proved to be a hindrance because the facts of her life are incomplete. My grandmother's plates portray colonial imagery reflecting to her position in 1950's South West African society. Largely idealized images, based on my imaginings and colonial narratives, are a pictorial representation of my grandmother's subject identity. To a degree she is Othered because she is not here to tell her story. The pictorial imaginings of my grandmother's identity are based on Baroness von Blixen's narrative. The experiences of a European immigrant to Africa conjured up in this narrative; provide a sense of what my grandmother's initiation into Africa must have been like. Such as the confusion my grandmother must have felt as a migrant from war torn Europe, finding herself in a position of privilege and having to interact with African servants in her employ. Von Blixen exemplifies the love my grandmother fostered for Africa later in life. Von Blixen's narrative is a testimony to how Africa seeps into your blood, whether you were born there or not.

There are a number of similarities between Farber's family history and mine. Farber's grandparents immigrated to South Africa from Latvia and Lithuania in the 1930's, to escape religious and economic persecution. For them South Africa represented an opportunity for better prospects. My grandparents emigrated from the Netherlands to South Africa in the 1950's to escape the poverty and devastation caused by World War II. My grandfather also viewed South Africa as a place of better prospects. My grandmother's story is reminiscent of that of Bertha Marks. Both women migrated to Africa in their early twenties where they were expected to adapt in the absence of their family and culture. Farber portrays Bertha grafting Africa into her skin in an attempt to become African, and eventually succeeding as the graft takes hold and grows. Though Farber sees herself as a cultural hybrid, and depicts Bertha as a hybrid, my grandmother wrestled with her cultural duality for most of her life, not choosing one culture over the other, but not merging them either. My grandmother lacked a definitive identity until she was diagnosed with dementia, when in the last years of her life; she yearned for and identified with Africa.

Like Bertha, my grandmother came to South Africa to get married and she was alone for long stretches of time, as the head of the colonial homestead. My grandmother's

house was a reflection of the home she left behind in the Netherlands; however she was expected to adhere to the social structures of Apartheid rule that dictated racial and social inequality. I imagine that this led to the construction of a heterotopia within my grandmother's home. This was the one place where she could observe her personal cultural beliefs and rituals, without the interference of the homogenous German cultural community in which she now lived. This heterotopic space is where my grandmother sought refuge from the cultural and social pressures of 1950's South West African society, as well as it functioning as a space of remembrance, loss and nostalgia. This took the form of her longing for her life in the Netherlands, missing her husband who was away for long stretches of time, and her struggle to accept and negotiate her changing cultural identity. Nostalgic remembrance can be used as a tool to cope with traumatic situations. Collins et al (in Wildschut 2006:976) views nostalgia as a subset of emotions, specifically categorizing nostalgia under feelings of distress and loss and the realization that an aspect of one's past is irrevocably lost. The psychological similarities between Bertha Marks and my grandmother are quite striking. Bertha felt the need to hold on to rigid Victorian customs and cultural norms and I believe that my grandmother clung to Dutch cultural norms whilst in Africa. The need to adhere to one's cultural norms in another country, results in feelings of isolation from others and a sense of cultural dislocation and so Bertha and my grandmother Othered themselves, because of their inability to integrate themselves into a new culture.

The series of embroidered calico panels titled '**Into the blood**' makes reference to domesticity, trade and migration. The use of a VOC (East-India Trading Company) trading ship named the 'Vrouwe Petronella Maria' (figure 32) was the starting point for this series. The ship is a visual metaphor for the history of Dutch migration to South Africa. The 'Vrouwe Petronella Maria' traded mostly in porcelain and slaves and sailed between Batavia (Indonesia) and Amsterdam, stopping at the Cape of Good Hope (van Overbeek 2012). The placement of a Kruger Rand (figure 33) on the ship panel serves two purposes; one being to reference the ship's destination, but also to represent my family's migration to Southern Africa in 1953. The Kruger Rand is an internationally accepted symbol of (South) African wealth, here, in the context of my family's history; it references a land of opportunities.

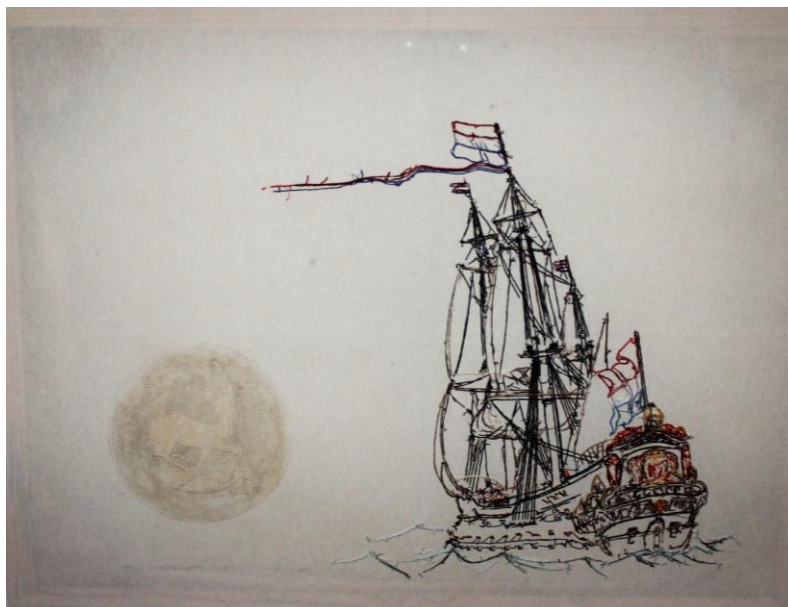
My grandparents and my mother came to Southern Africa on ships and there is, in additions, a nautical heritage in my family. My grandfather owned many vessels throughout his life as well as working on the *Kota Inten*; a trading ship that was renovated for military use in the 1950's (Koopmans 2014). Two of the embroidered panels in the series depict houses. One is an image of a deserted farm house in South West Africa (now Namibia) (figure 34) and the other is a row of Dutch canal houses in Amsterdam flagged on either side by a Cape Dutch house (figure 35). The image of the house refers to the concept of home, safety and belonging. This notion of safety is undermined through the depiction of an isolated, vulnerable farm house. The image of a shotgun at the bottom of the panel makes reference to the time and space in which my grandmother lived in 1950's South West Africa, associated with hunting and masculinity. The panel depicting the row of canal houses in Amsterdam represents the influence of an essentialist and rigid homogenous Dutch culture. On either side of the houses there are subtly embroidered Cape Dutch houses (figure 36), using thread the same colour as the calico, the gables are highlighted using Delft blue. This references the marginalized history of the Dutch in contemporary South Africa and the cultural duality experienced by the protagonists. The juxtaposition of the Dutch angular gables with the roundness of the Cape Dutch gable references adaptation to an African landscape. The fourth embroidered panel consists of a self-portrait (figure 37) stained with water colour and tea. The ephemeral nature of the portrait serves as a metaphor for my identity and how it has been shaped and re-shaped throughout my life. This panel also references the notion of home as is seen in the embroidered floor plans (figure detail) of the house I currently live in. This is the longest length of time that I have ever lived in one house (seven years). The floor plans thus reference a period of stability in which I have been able to interrogate my dislocated identity.

The final panel is comprised of passport stamps (figure) with the image of the South African emblem embroidered over the stamps. This panel references the act of migration as a passport, and its accompanying stamps serves as a record of travel and migration. The use of the South African emblem found on my passport denotes my acceptance of South Africa as home, even though I have a Dutch passport as well. The dates in the stamps are highlighted with burgundy thread (figure 38) as a

visual expression of the idea that Africa seeps into the blood, regardless of whether it is your land of birth or not. This piece is a depiction of a personal account of my journey of migration between the Netherlands and South Africa; the dates locate me in a specific time and a geographical space in which I negotiate my dislocated cultural identity.

The use of embroidery as a creative technique brought me closer to my grandmother who was well versed in domestic crafts such as knitting, crochet and embroidery. Objects that she made are amongst the only tangible things I have to remind me of her. It is a skill, had circumstances been different, that she would have passed on to me. The act of pulling a needle through calico is a visceral experience for me, bit by bit the image emerges from the empty cloth. Although the image is planned and drawn out before the embroidery begins the image is dictated by the flow of the thread in developing a visual identity of its own. This process relates to the formation of the protagonist's identities which were laid out but changed as they grew and migrated.

Into the Blood

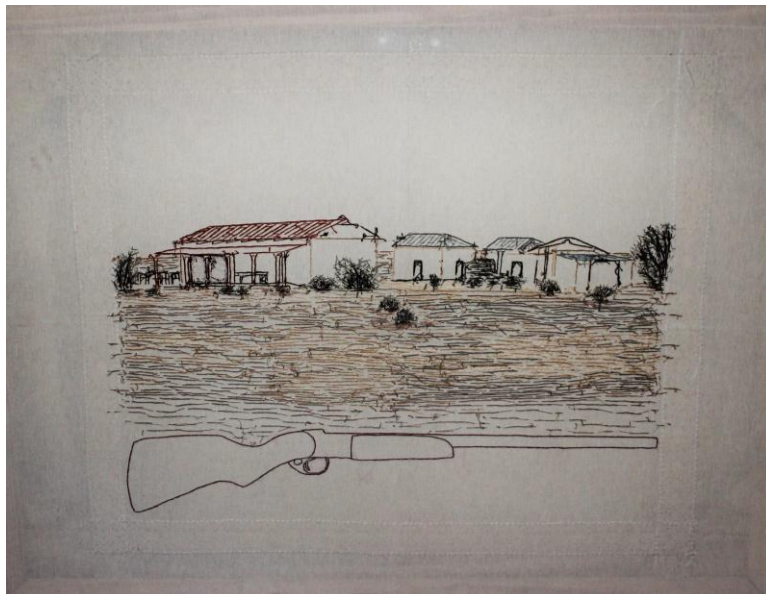


(Figure 32) Jetteke de Vries. **Into the Blood**. 2013-14. 95cm x 125cm.

Embroidered Calico.



(Figure 33) Jetteke de Vries. **Into the Blood** (detail). 2013-14. 95cm x 125cm.
Embroidered Calico.

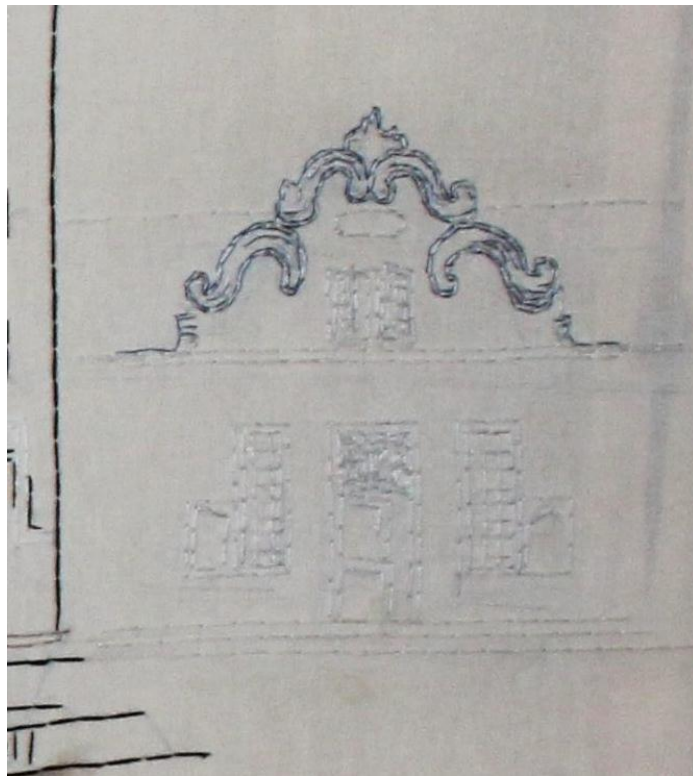


(Figure 34) Jetteke de Vries. **Into the Blood**. 2013-14. 95cm x 125cm.
Embroidered Calico.



(Figure 35) Jetteke de Vries. **Into the Blood**. 2013-14. 95cm x 125cm.

Embroidered Calico.



(Figure 36) Jetteke de Vries. **Into the Blood** (detail). 2013-14. 95cm x 125cm.

Embroidered Calico.



(Figure 37) Jetteke de Vries. **Into the Blood**. 2013-14. 95cm x 125cm.
Embroidered Calico.

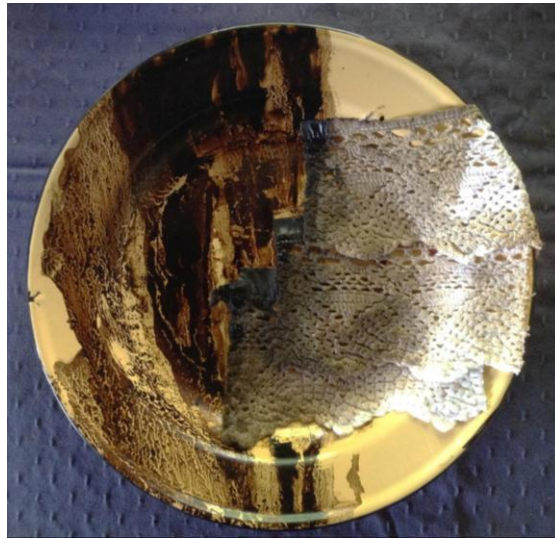


(Figure 38) Jetteke de Vries. **Into the Blood**. 2013-14. 95cm x 125cm.
Embroidered Calico.

Up to this point I had found it difficult to find suitable medium to express negative experiences related to my family's history of migration and cultural dislocation. My initial interpretation, using fired clay and embroidery, did not adequately

communicate the pain of cultural dislocation felt by the protagonists. I began looking for other modes of expression to convey the feeling of not belonging, I began using enamelled tin plates in a series titled '**Alles was beter in Africa**' (everything was better in Africa. I chose to use enamelled tin plates as they represent something intrinsically African to me. I stained them with bitumen and scratched images into it (figures 38). The process of staining, applying layers, removing layers and scratching into these layers reflects the process of transformation associated with the development of a new subjective identity. There is constant transformation that occurs when migrants move from one culture to another and the process of scratching into the bitumen was akin to working through and processing the trauma of migration. The image of my old school shoes (figure 39) carved into bitumen on a tin plate served as a nostalgic awakening and reintroduction to my childhood. The layers of bitumen came away unexpectedly while I was working on the piece. This represents unforeseen cause and effect and how it is impossible to determine identity as a solid and unmoving entity. Even though I was raised in a Dutch household in South Africa, my childhood experiences were fundamentally African. The image of a pair of school shoes evoked intuitive memories of school and childhood experiences. These tin plates, displayed on a wooden mantel piece, portray the African-ness of my childhood and the lasting association my mother and grandmother have had with Africa. They are displayed as objects of remembrance; however, as colonial objects of servitude they carry a darker reading.

Alles was beter in Afrika



(Figure 39) Jetteke de Vries. **Alles was beter in Afrika**. 2014. 32cm radius.

Enamelled tin plate, bitumen and lace.



(Figure 40) Jetteke de Vries. **Alles was beter in Afrika**. 2014. 32cm radius.

Enamelled tin plate and bitumen.

I made the decision to use ceramic shards as a metaphor for a dislocated identity late in my study. The image of a ceramic shard conjures up notions of fragility and hurt. Smoke firing the plate shards gave them a damaged appearance; as such they reference the trauma of a dislocated identity. The process of smoke firing a whole

plate is risky and the results are always surprising. The plates can break into pieces due to the temperature of the flames, but also due to small imperfections in the clay itself; this process can be seen as a visual metaphor for the unexpected outcomes of migration. The silhouettes on the shards are a visual metaphor for a transformed identity, of the impression that remains once identity has been fractured. There will always be a trace of a person's original culture; the silhouettes and shadows represent these remnants of a cultural identity that is no longer applicable.

In a work titled '**In Holland staat een huis**' (there is a house in Holland), crumbling canal houses (figures 40 and 41) presented in box frames represent the disintegration of the protagonists' identities. Some form of destruction or deterioration is necessary for the growth and an emergence of a new identity, resulting from the trauma of displacement from one's original culture. This series relates to Alamidis' exhibition titled I.D. Alamidis' use of identity books interrogates displacement and loss of identity through migration. In this piece I use the deterioration of a cultural symbol as a visual metaphor for both cultural dislocation and emergent new subjective identities.



(Figures 41 and 42) Jetteke de Vries. **In Holland staat een huis**. 2014. 17.5cm x11cm x 7cm.
Material One cast Dutch canal houses.

The mosaic (figure 42) titled '**Shifting Identities**' serves a similar purpose. It consists of smoke fired white tiles with bitumen stained images and Dutch souvenir clogs that portray the subtle shift and fragmentation of the protagonists' identities over time. This shift is made visible through the transition of light and dark tones on the mosaic surface (figures 43). The circular arrangement of the ceramic pieces and clogs has the appearance of a clock face and references the span of time during which my family migrated between the Netherlands and Southern Africa. This piece is a testament to the remnants of Dutch culture in the lives and identities of the three protagonists. However much we have successfully assimilated into South African culture, my family's heritage is Dutch and it always will be. Negotiating this heritage, while finding out what home means and where we belong is the way in which we identify ourselves.



(Figure 43) Jetteke de Vries. **Shifting Identities**. 2014. 95cm radius. Mixed media.



(Figure 44) Jetteke de Vries. **Shifting Identities** (detail). 2014. 95cm radius. Mixed media.

Images of a third space are prevalent in my work; they provide visual expression to the experience of being caught between two cultures. The exhibition revolves around the notion of opposing cultures being forged into a homogenous whole. In the context of cultural dislocation; however, the success of this amalgamation of cultures is not as important as the process of becoming. The protagonists negotiated different cultures on their own terms and arrived at an acceptance of a new subjective identity.

Discovering Home is a visual expression of the experiences which influenced each protagonist's journey of becoming in the context of a particular time and space.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to investigate the use of cultural dislocation in the work of Leora Farber, Viviane Sassen, George Alamidis and my art practice. In order to contextualize the study reference was made to discourses on culture, identity, cultural identity, cultural dislocation, diaspora, difference and the Other, in the writings of Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (1997), Lawrence Grossberg (1997), Kathryn Woodward (1997), Edward Said (1987), Heidi Armbruster (2010), Chloe Sells (2011), Lorin Friesen (2013), Dinesh Bhugra (2004) and Michel Foucault (1967).

The writings of Said (1987) and Hall and du Gay (1997) pertaining to cultural identity were vital in providing a theoretical context for the research as well as serving as a point of departure for further research into this area of study. These readings provided an understanding of the complex nature of identity in the context of socio-political climates and theories of the Other. The writings of Armbruster (2010) and Sells (2011) provided a valuable insight into how identity is influenced by notions of home, loss of self through migration and feelings of not belonging influence identity. Similarly the concept of mental networks (Friesen 2013) provided a basis for an understanding of the psychology of not belonging. This was further explained by Bhugra (2004) through his study of personal trauma resulting from migration. Foucault's (1967) concept of heterotopias provided a context for an understanding of firstly the protagonists reactions to social exclusion and not belonging and secondly how the protagonist's set up other spaces within their new cultural environment to cope with their feelings of loss and trauma, so they could negotiate their new cultural identity in a space of their own creation. Bhabha's (in Hall 1997) theories of the subaltern and the third space re-interpret this heterotopic space and apply it to a cultural identity. By interweaving these theories I was able to understand that the traumatic process of migration is a major contributing factor to cultural dislocation; and how time, space and socio-political and historical factors influence the negotiation of a new subjective identity.

The writings of Lady Montague (in Kietzman 1998), Maria van Riebeeck (in Bosman 1952) and the narrative of Baroness Blixen (Dinesen 1937) provided an understanding of how individuals react to new cultural situations within the context of time and space. Baroness Blixen also provided a colonial reference to my imaginings of my grandmother's initial time in South West Africa.

An investigation of the work of Leora Farber, Viviane Sassen and George Alamidis revealed differences in the interrogation of identity dislocation and the resulting formation of a new identity. The various strategies employed by these artists relate to both theory and practice.

In an exhibition titled *Dis-Location/Re-Location* Farber (2006-2008) explored her dual Jewish and European cultural identity within the context of colonialism. Farber investigated her simultaneous dislocation from, and attachment to, South Africa (Buys 2008) by 'grafting' Africa into her skin. An analysis of Farber's work reveals an investigation of cultural dislocation based on the lives of three female personae, Bertha Marks, her mother and herself in various heterotopic spaces. Farber's work reflects on the dichotomy of displacement and relocation and how this in turn has had an effect on the creation of South African immigrant identities. I used a similar strategy in exploring the cultural dislocation experienced by female members of my family, as a result of migration between the Netherlands and Southern Africa. Through the lives of these women Farber interrogates her own identity. Marks' colonial garden and bedroom served as a space of displacement and tension where Farber, as Bertha, negotiates her identity in a new cultural environment, whilst clinging to Victorian aesthetics and Bertha's ideal notion of home. These heterotopic spaces of crisis function as a secular refuge where Bertha commits to the act of grafting Africa into herself in an attempt to become African. Farber uses imagery of colonial feminine handicrafts such as embroidery, together with the image of grafting, to signify dislocation for and attachment to Africa. Embroidered images in my work evoke feelings of nostalgia in the context of migration and cultural dislocation.

Sassen's photographs of African subjects, disguised by objects or shadows investigate her location in between cultures; this is related to my research and my art practice. Sassen interprets her position, in a space in between by investigating and challenging the notion of colonial representations of Africa. Her depictions of African

subjects address the spaces in between, the dislocation between home and away, night and day, life and dreams (Botha 2012:8-9) often through the use of light and shadow. The dark skin of her African subjects is rendered black, devoid of detail so that “the shadow turns a person into a kind of symbol. It’s not about the particular person anymore; he/she represents an idea. So it’s much more about the universal than the personal, it’s about what we don’t see” (Sassen in Schuman 2012). Her work expresses her closeness to the African subjects in her photographs whilst understanding that she is separate from them despite having spent her early childhood in Kenya. This sense of connection and simultaneous separation correlates with my experience of Dutch culture. This is one of the major factors which contributed to my cultural dislocation.

The notion of a loss of self and the trauma of migration are captured in Alamidis’s exhibition through his use of identity cards and the meaning that these documents hold. In common with Alamidis I address issues related to the trauma of migration through the use of images relating to identity such as the national emblems and pages from passports. A passport or identity document only provides information relating to our age, personal appearance and nationality; it does not reveal who we are.

Theories of cultural dislocation and identity provided a platform for an investigation of cultural journeys of my grandmother, my mother and myself. An analysis of the work of Farber, Sassen and Alamidis reveals that the work of each artist in some way resonates with the cultural identity of the three protagonists explored in my art practice. My grandmother suffered the trauma of war and the loss of her identity when she migrated to South West Africa; a similar trauma and loss of self is depicted in Alamidis’ exhibition of Greek identity books. The persona of Bertha Marks, her arrival in Africa as a bride and her subsequent cultural dislocation, is mirrored in my grandmother’s narrative.

Sassen’s investigation of not belonging to one culture, but being caught in between resonates with my understanding of my cultural identity, as a subaltern inhabiting the space between Dutch and South African cultures. I do not categorize myself as a cultural hybrid, because I continue to wrestle with certain aspects of my dual cultural identity. I am in the space between cultures, in a metaphysical cultural limbo.

This metaphysical cultural limbo and the factors which contribute to the creation of such a space is an area for future investigation, in the context of Foucault's (1967) concept of a heterotopic space. This research will ultimately serve to define the type of cultural space in which I find myself, but more importantly how this space influences the negotiation of my dislocated cultural identity.

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