

TRACING OBJECTS OF MEASUREMENT: LOCATING INTERSECTIONS OF RACE, SCIENCE AND POLITICS AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

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1918 · 2018

*Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Social Anthropology in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at
Stellenbosch University*

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March 2018

DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

March 2018

ABSTRACT

This study departs from a confrontation with a collection of ‘scientific’ objects employed at Stellenbosch University in various ways from 1925 to 1984. Eugen Fischer’s *Haarfarbentafel* (hair colour table), Rudolf Martin’s *Augenfarbentafel* (eye colour table) and Felix von Luschan’s *Hautfarbentafel* (skin colour table) - a collection later joined by an anatomically prepared human skull - are employed in this study as vessels for revealing broader social, scientific and political narratives about race and racial classification, both historically and contemporary, in South Africa. The study traces the history of these objects at Stellenbosch University from one context to another, from one owner to the next, from active tool of measurement to dormant objects exuding powerful and lasting ideas, and from dormant objects to a confrontational re-emergence in 2013 – a moment which sparked controversy and debate about the place and nature of these objects at Stellenbosch University. Initially employed in studies of human measurement at Stellenbosch University (1925-1955) for the purposes of racial categorization, these objects were imbued with a strong eugenic slant, supported by racial and eugenic theories (most often stemming from German academic literature), to inform constructions of the racial self and other. Similar to Saul Dubow (2010), I highlight the malleability of these eugenic theories as they were applied to the local context. These biological notions of race continued to inform engagements with race throughout the apartheid era (see Dubow 2015). Over time these objects materialized in the results they produced – results that became scientific proof for racial difference and the foundation for further engagements with race. As the objects faded out of focus, the race knowledge they embodied, supported and produced, solidified in broader South African society where, as argued by Deborah Posel (2001b), race had become common sense. By the time the objects disappeared they were no longer needed to prove racial difference – for notions of race as the biological source of inherent difference had been deeply internalized by a populace that was both governed by race and applied this logic on a daily basis in their interactions with others. The objects had become “victims of their own productivity” (Daston 2000:11). Their re-emergence in 2013 proved to be unsettling as, on some level, they acted as a stark reminder of the scientific foundations of race-thinking in South Africa. It similarly highlighted the undeterred continued potency of race-thinking in a post-apartheid era. The objects revealed that the spectre of race is haunting South Africa.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie neem 'n konfrontasie met 'n versameling 'wetenskaplike' voorwerpe as vertrekpunt. Hierdie voorwerpe is vanaf 1925 tot 1984 op verskillende maniere by die Universiteit van Stellenbosch gebruik. Eugen Fischer se *Haarfarbentafel* (haarkleurtafel), Rudolf Martin se *Augenfarbentafel* (oogkleurtafel) en Felix von Luschan se *Hautfarbentafel* (velkleurtafel) – 'n versameling waarby 'n anatomies-voorbereide menslike skedel later aangesluit het - word in hierdie studie gebruik as 'n poort waardeur die breër sosiale, wetenskaplike en politieke verhaal oor ras en rasseklassifikasie, beide histories en tans, in Suid-Afrika ten toon gestel word. Die studie volg die geskiedenis van hierdie spesifieke voorwerpe aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch van een konteks na 'n ander, van een eenaar na die volgende, van aktiewe meetinstrumente na onaktiewe voorwerpe wat kragtige en blywende idees laat voortleef het, en van onaktiewe voorwerpe tot 'n konfronterende oplewing in 2013 – 'n oomblik wat kontroversie en debat oor die aard en plek van hierdie voorwerpe aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch tot gevolg gehad het. Tydens hul aanvanklike gebruik aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch vir menslike meting en rassekategorisering, het hierdie voorwerpe 'n sterk eugeniese inslag gehad wat ondersteun is deur rasse- en eugeniese teorieë (meestal vanuit Duitse akademiese literatuur), en gebruik was vir die konstruksie van die rasse-‘self’ en ‘ander’. Soortgelyk aan Saul Dubow (2010), beklemtoon ek die smeebaarheid van eugeniese teoretiese interpretasies soos toegepas op die plaaslike konteks. Hierdie biologiese idees van ras het voortgeleef in verdere interaksies met die konsep van ras gedurende die apartheidsera (sien Dubow 2015). Met verloop van tyd het hierdie voorwerpe materialiseer in die resultate wat hulle opgelewer het - resultate wat gedien het as wetenskaplike bewyse vir rasseverskil en die grondslag gebied het vir verdere akademiese interaksies met ras. Soos wat die voorwerpe uit fokus verdwyn het, het die rasekennis wat hulle beliggaam, ondersteun en vervaardig het in die breër Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing versterk. Soos aangevoer deur Deborah Posel (2001b) het ras vanselfsprekend geword. Teen die tyd dat die voorwerpe verdwyn het, was hulle nie meer nodig om rasseverskille te bewys nie - idees van ras as die biologiese bron van inherente verskil was teen hierdie tyd diep geïnternaliseer deur 'n bevolking wat beide deur ras regeer is en daaglik hierdie logika toegepas het in hul interaksies met ander. Hierdie voorwerpe het “slagoffers van hul eie produktiwiteit” geword (Daston 2000:11). Hul herverskyning in 2013 het ontsenu, want

hierdie voorwerpe was 'n blatante herinnering aan die grondslag van rasdenke in Suid-Afrika. Terselfdertyd het dit ook die onbetwiste voortdurende mag van rasdenke in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika beklemtoon. Die voorwerpe het verder openbaar dat die gees van ras steeds in Suid-Afrika spook.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This would not have been possible without the valuable guidance, support, and contributions of numerous individuals. While the acknowledgements here are most likely to fall short, I would like to take this opportunity to single out a few individuals.

Steven Robins, thank you for inviting me to join your research endeavours as you explored your family history. Without a request to find the Fischer-instrument this project would not have existed. Your continued guidance and support throughout in the completion of this study is most appreciated.

Kees van der Waal, thank you for introducing me to social anthropology and for providing continued guidance as I extended my knowledge in this field of study. Over the course of this research our conversations and your guidance were invaluable in shaping this study.

The Effects of Race group at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (Stias), Nina Jablonski, Gerhard Maré, Njabulo Ndebele, Barney Pityana, Crain Soudien, Zimitri Erasmus, George Chaplin, Göran Therborn, Chabani Manganyi, and Mikael Hjerm. For every annual workshop over the course of four years I was fortunate enough to benefit from your extensive knowledge and experience. My thanks to this incredible group of scholars with special thanks extended to Nina Jablonski, who has always been able to conceptualize this study much better than I could, to Gerhard Maré for our many thought-provoking conversations about race, and to Njabulo Ndebele for giving me “the rigour of madness”.

I would like to extend my thanks to Fiona Ross, for an important conversation in my final stages of trying to make sense of this study. Your generous insights were invaluable in framing this research. Jan Vorster, thank you for the numerous (candid) conversations about this research. I am deeply appreciative of your guidance and support. Alan Morris, for an enjoyable lesson in the history of physical anthropology – a field I knew very little of until I met you. Pieter Fourie and Sandra Swart, you provided valuable contributions in the very early stages of this research. Karlien Breedt, thank you for making the archive less of an isolating space. I extend my thanks to the staff in the Africana section and those at the Document Centre in the J.S. Gericke Library

of Stellenbosch University, as well as archivists across the country (University of Free State, University of Pretoria, Cape Town National Archives, Pretoria National Archives) who were extremely helpful. Dr Lydia de Waal, thank you for responding to my email and introducing me to the objects in February 2013.

Ousus, Peet, Julene, Anel, Cari, Mautie, Adrie, Emma, M.J., Adriaan, mom and dad, you provided support and sanity when I most needed it. Ousus, your ability to make light of a serious situation was my saving grace. Mom, thank you for knowing the value of being patient in libraries and bookstores throughout my life.

Michaela your support throughout this process contributed greatly to the finished product. Thank you for the endless conversations and debates about this work.

This study would not have been possible without the financial support of the Graduate School of Stellenbosch University and the financial support from the Effects of Race project at STIAS.

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Fig 4. *Datasheet used by Stellenbosch University's Zoology Department [back] (1937). Stellenbosch University. J.S. Gericke Library, Document Centre. Stellenbosch University.*

Fig 5. *Datasheet used by C. S. Grobbelaar of Stellenbosch University's Zoology Department [front] (1950). Stellenbosch University. J.S. Gericke Library, Document Centre. Stellenbosch University.*

Fig 6. *Datasheet used by C. S. Grobbelaar of Stellenbosch University's Zoology Department [back] (1950). Stellenbosch University. J.S. Gericke Library, Document Centre. Stellenbosch University.*

Fig 7. *A schematic illustration of the area known as Die Vlakte. In 1964 it was announced that this area would be reserved for whites only that set in motion a process of forced removals in the center of Stellenbosch (1964). Eikestadnuus, 4 September 1964.*

PREFACE

On Race and Racial Categories

This research deals first and foremost with race and racial categories. A more accurate way to conceptualise the study would be as one that focuses on the construction of racial categories according to a Foucauldian understanding of how human subjects are formed by discourse. In transforming this study from theoretical and archival research to written text, one of the most challenging and thought-provoking exercises has thus been my own use of, and engagement with, race and racial terminology. For in following Foucault (1972), the language used to describe subjects is understood to form lived experience and identity.

In the social sciences the broad consensus for the better part of a century now, has been to regard race as a social construction – a turning point that occurred when UNESCO proclaimed race to be a myth in 1952. This deviated from the previous scientific as well as social interpretation of race as a human characteristic firmly located in biology and therefore linked to inborn traits and predetermined capabilities. Discussions concerning race thus *used to* rest on a notion of inherent difference. Indeed, biologist Richard Lewontin (1972) determined that there was more genetic variation amongst people perceived to belong to a single race group than between individuals perceived to belong to different race groups. Yet despite such discoveries and the overarching consensus within the social sciences that race is nothing but a construct, notions of race-based difference continue to be present in the public domain to this day.¹

Since 1952, writings on race within the social science have had to provide a (by now) familiar disclaimer to distance the use of racial terms from ideas that these relate to biological difference:

¹ According to Mary Margaret Overbey (2010:452) 18th and 19th century race thinking is continually informing our contemporary notions of race: that is our tendency to categorise people into identifiable of groups. In the United States the division of the population into disparate racial categories is employed by the U.S. Census Bureau, as it is by Statistics South Africa, to compile population data. This approach is reminiscent of what Mitchell (2012:13) refers to as the use of race as a medium – “not simply something to be seen, but itself a framework for seeing through” (Mitchell 2012:13). While the importance of tracking racialised data is located in the ability for such information to aid contemporary attempts to address past racial injustice, the persistent employment of race to track school enrolment, health and mortality, and unemployment, can bring us to the brink of a return of “the idea of race as biology” (Overbey 2010:452).

‘In this text race is regarded as a social construction’. In addition to such disclaimers, many a text have made use of single quotation marks when writing the very word ‘race’ to indicate the constructed and contentious nature of the concept. Similar rules have applied for the expression of racial categories – using single quotation marks to highlight the problematic nature of naming groups along lines of racial difference. Recently Gerhard Maré (2014:27) argued that the issue of race in writing “had to be confronted and resolved in a more meaningful way than [the] uneasy ‘quotation mark’ approach”. In conversation he would tell you the usual disclaimer in a footnote is simply “boring” – a response to a predictable, repetitive, yet inadequate narrative.

W.J.T. Mitchell (2012:26) has similarly called for the removal of “scare quotes” employed by authors to “demonstrate that we are at every moment aware that race is both ‘nothing but a social construction’ and ‘merely a myth’”. He rather proposes that we “retain these formulations minus the diminutive, apologetic terms of ‘nothing but’ and ‘merely’” (Mitchell 2012:26). I am in agreement. Announcing that race is a social construction, coupled with the employment of an abundance of single quotation marks to enforce this position, has become a benign cliché (Goldberg 2016) in the social sciences. And it is not enough.

In his latest book David Theo Goldberg announces in the introduction: “The answer is all about race” (Goldberg 2016:3). Yet, there is no footnote to unpack how he is using the concept of race and no single quotation marks to accompany the troublesome word that is race. Goldberg's omission of these apologetic elements suggests that we have moved beyond validating our use of racialised terms. While I might be in agreement with this approach, I can't help thinking: Is this omission truly unproblematic when racial distinctions continue to have real, visceral effects on the lives of individuals in both this country and abroad? I remain at a loss. Yet I am willing to pursue such an approach in this piece of writing: I will not make use of ‘scare quotes’ when referring to race. I accept that race is indeed a social construction, and I ask my reader to remember this as they engage this study.

And yet, to announce that these racial categories are social constructs seems somewhat pointless. This study partly sets out to illustrate how racial categories have been constructed in South Africa – how racial difference was formed as a result of global theories within the sciences and local requirements of the state. Indeed, the unequivocal persistence of academics and politicians in the 1940s and 1950s to demarcate racial categories, even in the face of conceptual failure, has

been captured by Njabulo Ndebele as “the rigour of madness” (2016). It is a madness that continues in contemporary South Africa.

The question that remains is thus how to deal with racial terminology in this text. The risk of writing about racial categories is the perpetuation of the power located in the continued use of words that differentiate along lines of race. The word alone gives power to its meaning. As argued by Derrida (1978), we are left with “the restrained and restraining language of Western reason [...] Nothing within this language, and no one among those who speak it, can escape” (cited in Comaroff & Comaroff 1992:15). This dilemma manifests in studying or speaking of racial categories in South Africa, where we remain constrained by a continued use of apartheid era racial categories. Even in the event of challenging these categories, the restraining language of history allows no room for escape. Thus, even though this study serves to critique these categories, the text simultaneously confirms the existence of racial categories in my own use of racialised terminology. And, a refusal to use terms of racial categorisation would belittle the very real power and material consequences such words have had on the lives of people differentiated and disenfranchised because of their existence.

How do we acknowledge (and take account of) this historical ‘madness’ yet simultaneously continue to employ racialised terms? In this piece of writing I offer a response. Similar to the way in which we have de-capitalized apartheid in order to disempower as well as delegitimize not only the word but the ideology behind it, all racial designations will be de-capitalized in this text. It is in an attempt to strip these words of their power while simultaneously acknowledging their continued existence, use, and very real effects that this has been done – albeit in defiance of the rules of grammar.

In this text you will encounter more than 50 racial designations. Some have contemporary use: white, black, african, coloured, indian. Some are used historically: native, bantu, bushmen, hottentot, khoisan, korana, cape coloured, malay, european, negro. Some were employed in eugenic literature: teutonic, aryan/arian, nordic, northern race, western european. Some were (and are) conflated with nationality: dutch, british, german. Some are conflated with their location: rehoboth basters, african american. Some are conflated with religion and/or cultural and/or linguistic identity: jewish, white afrikaner, xhosa. These terms, when used as racial

designations (as encountered in literature during research), will not be capitalized unless it occurs in the text as part of quoted material.

I acknowledge that racial categories inform identity and, for some, form a very important part of their identity. But my own discomfort in seeing these categories decapitalized confirmed their normative nature to me and has provided further impetus to unsettle and dismantle these words. This act is an attempt to make the familiar foreign. What does it mean to see ‘your’ category, ‘your’ source of identification, de-capitalized? It hopefully offers an exercise in reflexivity – to think anew about these categories and ‘your’ relation, ‘our’ relation, to them.

I am of the opinion that the continued use of race in societal structures offers scant contribution to correcting the inequalities of the past. Yet, I myself continue to use these same terms in this research. In the words of Kenan Malik (1996:2), “Western society seems to be repelled by the consequence of racial thinking yet forced to accept its importance”. In South Africa we often remain enslaved by racial categorization and race-thinking. Maré (2014:25) is of the opinion that “[i]f we want to create a genuinely non-racial society, we cannot borrow, unquestioningly, from the language of apartheid and the segregationist and colonial eras”. We need to do more. To de-capitalize racial categories in this text is only an experimental (not to mention partial) solution. While it has been done in an attempt to comment on the constructed nature of racial categories it does not address the assumptions and stereotypes associated with them. The problem lies deeper. It is located in assumed causality, in the word ‘because’: racist ‘because’ you are white (*Sunday World* 2015 [online]), poor ‘because’ you are black (Jansen 2017 [online]), criminal ‘because’ you are coloured (Jensen 2008). These examples are but a few of the possibilities of what could precede or follow the word ‘because’. In order to truly move beyond race, in order to disempower race, we need to dismantle these assumptions in word and deed.

In this work I have shifted the responsibility onto you, the reader. Can this piece of writing be engaged without the brief mental flash of racialised assumptions when such a category appears in the text?

October 2017

INTRODUCTION

Encountering Objects

In an extended sense, objects throw themselves in front of us, smite the senses, thrust themselves into our consciousness [...] they possess the self-evidence of a slap in the face” (Daston 2000:2).

There was a skull in the box.

It was an unassuming cardboard box filled with items ranging from the banal to the outrageous: an old film reel and maps; a bruised and battered tin with Rudolf Martin’s name and the word *Augenfarbentafel* (eye colour table) printed on the lid and revealing 16 glass eyes ranging in colour when opened; another tin inscribed with Eugen Fischer’s name and the word *Haarfarbentafel* (hair colour table on) that would reveal 30 different shades and textures of synthetic hair threads. And then there was the skull.

I was making my way back to the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology of Stellenbosch University. The short distance from the University Museum, where I received this box of objects from the director, to the department where I have pursued my postgraduate studies, left little time to grapple with the objects contained in this unassuming cardboard box.

It is a skull. It is death. It is dead. Just like the other lifeless objects that surround it. But during my encounter with these seemingly lifeless objects they came alive.

Over the course of the next few weeks and months after their transfer to my department, the seemingly ‘dead’ status of these objects was called into question time and time again. From the risk assessment committee appointed by Stellenbosch University upon being informed of their existence, to the press conference, the subsequent reports in news, and the debates that ensued as a result of their emergence; all this energy seemed to contribute to an awakening of these long-dead objects. Indeed, the events appear to have resonated with Jane Bennett’s (2010) notion of ‘*thing-power*’ – “the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle” (Bennett 2010:6). It is what Bennett (2010:5) refers to as the “vibrant

vitality” located within objects. Bill Brown (2001:5) refers to these moments as “occasions of contingency”, while Louis Althusser (1986) defines them in relation to the “materialism of the encounter”. The reaction to these objects encapsulates “chance interruptions” (Brown 2001:5) or a moment that sparks action and, in this sense, “affirms that so-called inanimate things have a life” (Bennett 2010:18).

A Story Begins

In January 2013 I was instructed by Professor Steven Robins of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology to try and locate an instrument of German eugenicist Eugen Fischer. Robins was researching his family history at the time.² He had been made aware of this instrument by a former student of *volkekunde* who encountered this object in the Ethnology Museum of the *Volkekunde* Department of Stellenbosch University in the 1970s. *Volkekunde* is broadly regarded as a South African version of anthropology infused with the ideology of afrikaner nationalism (Sharp 1981). First established at Stellenbosch University in 1926, *volkekunde* was eventually extended to all other Afrikaans-medium universities in South Africa in the apartheid era.³ Historical writings on *volkekunde* have depicted this discipline as deeply involved with national politics – specifically its role in bolstering the National Party agenda for separate development (Gordon 1988; Gordon & Spiegel 1993; Hammond-Tooke 1997; Schmidt 1996; Sharp 1980, 1981). But in 2013 none of this was known to me. And my instructions as research assistant were simply to try and locate ‘this instrument’ of Fischer.

With little to go on, and not quite knowing what kind of instrument I was looking for, I sent out emails to the two museums linked to Stellenbosch University in the hopes that this instrument was still located in one of them. I contacted the Medical Pathology Museum located on the medical campus at Tygerberg (whose website indicated that their displays included a section for physical anthropology) and the local University Museum (then known as the Eben Dönges

² Professor Steven Robins is the author of *Letters of Stone* (2016). In this he recounts his family history from Nazi Germany to South Africa.

³ The establishment of *volkekunde* in 1926 at Stellenbosch University marked a split in the discipline of anthropology as taught and practiced in South Africa. This divide was seemingly witnessed along linguistic and institutional lines: social anthropology as taught at English-medium universities and *volkekunde* as taught at Afrikaans-medium universities (Sharp 1980).

Centre – more commonly referred to as the Sasol Museum) located on Stellenbosch campus. After initial inquiries sent to the respective curators of the museums, I was referred to Dr Lydia De Waal – the director of the (then) Eben Dönges Centre. On 5 February 2013 I sent an email.

Dear Dr De Waal,

I am from the Sociology and Social Anthropology Department and am involved with research regarding the history of this department, more specifically the role of *volkekunde*. We have recently uncovered that the works of German eugenic biologists were taught in this department during the 1930s. Amongst these were the works of Eugen Fischer, a self-proclaimed anthro-biologist, Director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology in Berlin, and supporter of Hitler's Nazi party. We have heard from another researcher that Eugen Fischer donated instruments for the measurement of human samples to the *Volkekunde* Department (now the Social Anthropology Department) somewhere during the 1930/40s. We are trying to find these instruments, or whatever it may be, and were hoping that the Sasol Museum may know something about this.

We would greatly appreciate your feedback on the matter and hope to hear from you soon.

Kind regards,
Handri

The email was constructed based on the information available to me at the time. As initial probes into unknown territory go, some information in the email was misguided. Although the work of Eugen Fischer was part of the *Volkekunde* syllabus in its formative years at Stellenbosch University, and the department did own copies of Fischer's published books, Fischer never donated any instruments to this department, nor is there any evidence to suggest that he was in contact with the department.

The response from Dr Lydia De Waal came on the same day:

Dear Ms Walters

I have items, locked away in my office, that might be the “instruments” you are referring to. You are welcome to come and have a look next week, Monday or Tuesday after 14:00.

Regards

Lydia de Waal

At the soonest possibility, shortly after reading the email, I hastily made my way out the front doors of the Arts and Social Sciences building, and walked down Ryneveld Street to the Eben Dönges Centre (recently renamed the University Museum). I entered the museum, requested to see the director, and was immediately granted access to her office. After introductions, Dr De Waal removed a box from her corner cupboard and, one by one, started to unpack its contents and lay the objects out on the table in front of me. “And this...”, as she carefully unpacked the last item, “this is a skull”.

I stared at an object neatly wrapped in tissue paper. I was somewhat speechless, unsure of how to respond. “Is it real?” I asked. I admit, it was not the most intellectually astute response.

Is it real? Real in the sense that it once formed part of a human skeleton? Real in the sense that it once contained brain matter, arteries, a sensory system, a scalp, hair, an exterior? Real in the sense that the two empty eye sockets were once home to eyeballs that observed the world around it, sending stimulants to the now empty cavity where the brain once was, trying to make sense of its surroundings?

“I have been meaning to return this to your department. Maybe you can use it for teaching purposes” said Dr De Waal. I was finding myself in the middle of a bizarre moment of repatriation – objects returned, after decades, to their supposed ‘rightful’ owners. Such acts of repatriation had seen museums face many challenges: in discussing the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, Jonathan Haas (1996:S2) has argued that “many [were] struggling with what kinds of objects they might want returned, and even whether they want the return of objects that were removed from their cultural context many years ago”. Time had passed in the world of academia. Metaphorically speaking, “songs [had] been forgotten, ceremonies [had] changed” (Haas 1996:S2-S3).

“Do you want to take these items with you now?” asked Dr De Waal. An immediate “no” came as a response. “I think it would be safer here”, I said. Then I changed my mind. I suddenly questioned the accessibility to these objects should I turn my back on them in the moment. What if the opportunity did not present itself again? “Yes, I will take it with me now”.

In hindsight, it is unclear whether I had taken hold of the objects or the objects had taken hold of me. Somehow, upon seeing them for the first time, I instantly recognized their potency. Within a few minutes I was exiting the front doors of the museum and making my way back to the Arts and Social Sciences building with a large box containing the various items Dr De Waal had just laid out on the table in her office. Deemed unfit for exhibition and stored for more than a decade in a cupboard, these items had lain hidden from public view.

Box in arms, I made the short journey back to the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology to deliver it to a senior staff member, Professor C. S. (Kees) van der Waal. I also informed Professor Steven Robins, who was in Berlin for research at the time, that I had located the Fischer instrument. Unbeknownst to me Robins had viewed Fischer’s hair colour and texture table just days before in a museum in Berlin. These objects were seemingly global in their reach.⁴

Historically the features of the skull, as well as eye colour, hair colour and texture, and skin colour were deemed important markers for determining “the varieties of mankind” (Eze 2000 [1997]:79). During the late 18th, 19th and early 20th century these features were cemented as the markers of not only biological racial difference but further related to a human hierarchy – one that conflated biological and social inferiority and superiority. It was a logic that informed eugenic science of the early 20th century, when the scientific measurement of these features was considered the task (and expertise) of the physical anthropologist. The science, as applied for the determination of racial difference or racial categorization, both flourished in the first quarter of

⁴ The University College of London (UCL) has recently revealed similar instruments for measurement that once belonged to Francis Galton, located at this institution. At UCL these objects are now incorporated as part of a museum studies course (Challis 2013:19). It has similarly become the source of further research and subsequent publications. Emma Tarlo (2016) describes a similar encounter with Fischer’s hair colour and texture table and Martin’s eye colour table in her study of hair – a study that was inspired by an encounter with these objects.

the century and dwindled by the end of World War II.⁵ Yet, in a 1959 textbook for *volkekunde*, measuring instruments that functioned as a collective to determine human diversity are mentioned as “useful tools [developed to] facilitate the observation and registration of data” in a discussion of the determination of different racial types (Coertze 1959:25-26, own translation). A similar reference in subsequent prints of this textbook (in 1961, 1973 and 1977) confirmed the relation of an eye colour table, a hair colour and texture table, and a skin colour table to the general discipline of *volkekunde*.⁶

At Stellenbosch University in 2013, the instruments returned to the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology felt wholly out of place both in time and location. They were remnants of a discredited racial science – part of the *volkekunde* collection and not part of social anthropology as it had come to know itself. In the days that followed the arrival of the box of objects in this department, the chair as well as departmental staff members, the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and finally the rector of Stellenbosch University were informed of their existence as well as their historical relation to the university's *Volkekunde* Department. The matter was handed over to the university's risk assessment committee to investigate and discuss the way forward. The re-emergence of these objects and their relation to Stellenbosch University seemingly had to be handled with the utmost care.

⁵ The end of World War II marked a broad shift in the discipline of anthropology: from one ruled by essentialist notions of race and a Darwinist, evolutionary model of progress, to one that acknowledged environmental influences and societal complexity. Although this cultural relativism emerged after World War II had ended, the roots of this approach dates back to the writings of Franz Boas in 1913 – writings that were only generally accepted in the United States during the 1930s. The mid-1930s had marked a similar shift in British anthropology – one that culminated in a global reorientation of the discipline of anthropology as a whole and was cemented with the release of the UNESCO Statement on Race in 1950. Yet while a general reorientation occurred, race-based thinking in anthropology did continue in some circles even after 1950.

⁶ The centrality of race within the teaching of *volkekunde* has remained contested. While general interpretations of both *volkekunde* as a discipline and the apartheid state lean toward an emphasis on culture rather than race, the importance of biology for racial categorization is found both in the writings of *volkekundiges* and course syllabi. The discipline was believed to be aligned with the natural sciences in “the most intimate way” in order “to find a scientific explanation for humans and that which they brought about” (Language 1961:5). As a result, the hard sciences including biology, physiology, and genetics made “important contributions” (Jeppe 1971) to a conceptualization of race for this discipline, as it was physical features that were “most commonly used bases for classification [based on] skin color, facial features, hair texture, head form, and stature” (ibid). According to *volkekunde* theory, race and culture existed in a dialectical relationship – the one informing the other and both inescapable for the individual who were born into it. Culture became closely connected to biological composition (race) as it was believed that humans live their biological lives through culture (Coertze 1980:159). Culture was considered a closed system into which an individual was born (Sharp 1980:4).

Stellenbosch University: a historically Afrikaans-medium university (in 2013 controversially so),⁷ with historical ties to afrikaner nationalism formed the location where these objects were encountered. As Wendy Griswold, Gemma Mangione and Terence E. McDonnell (2013:346) has suggested, the importance of “meaning-making [as] a function of position and location”. For them, a location can frame the expectations and interpretations that stem from any encounter – in this case an encounter with a collection of objects (Griswold et al 2013:350). As the historical training ground of National Party (and apartheid) leaders and the “intellectual home to every South African prime minister from Smuts to Vorster” (Dubow 2015:238) – a period that spans from 1919 to 1979 – Stellenbosch University is often thought of as the birthplace of apartheid. It is a place in which disused instruments of racial science thus resonate uncomfortably with a history of racial classification, segregation, and disenfranchisement in South Africa.

For two months we waited while the risks of revealing these objects to the public were assessed. In the meantime, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences produced a report on the recovered skull. The report concluded that the skull was prepared for anatomical teaching and had once belonged to Stellenbosch University’s Department of Anatomy (Du Toit 2013b:1). The silence was broken in April 2013 when a press conference was organized by the University’s public relations office. At a long table in the conference room of the Administration B building, also home to the rector’s office, lecturers of social anthropology, the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the vice-rector of research for Stellenbosch University, and I sat down to face invited journalists from selected newspapers.

The following day, on 25 April 2015, the Cape Times reported: 'Hair-raising 'Nazi' discovery at varsity'. This headline, along with similar headlines, prompted an immediate backlash of discontent.⁸ After having lain dormant for at least ten years in the corner office of the University Museum, the anatomically prepared skull, the hair colour and texture table designed by Eugen Fischer, and the eye colour table designed by anthropologist Rudolf Martin were re-awakened. They became ‘real’ again. They were real in the sense that the objects were appropriated as tools

⁷ For commentary on the politically charged language debate I refer the reader to De Vos (2015).

⁸ The potency of these objects was particularly evident in the local Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Burger*, where a debate erupted in op-eds and letters to the editor. These events and the nature of the discontent will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

for the study of human diversity. Real in the sense that they rested on shelves and in cupboards, travelled between individuals and departments and, for some, informed beliefs and fuelled ideologies. Yet it became evident that there was broad disagreement about the place and nature of these objects. Their social salience, their ability to speak, and their place within the structures of society, both past and present, needed to be unravelled.

What was it about these objects that made them carry such force and potency? What was their relation to *volkekunde* and Stellenbosch University (both past and present)? How were these objects employed and for what purpose? How were these objects related to global and local scientific trends? And finally, how, if at all, were these objects related to the racial classification exercised by the apartheid state? These objects exuded their ‘*thing-power*’ (Bennett 2010) – they provoked questions that sparked this anthropological study. The reactions stemming from myself, the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Stellenbosch University, previous lecturers of *volkekunde* and university alumni, as well as the public, confirmed that these objects were alive. They spoke, and they provoked uncertainty and discomfort. As Igor Kopytoff (1986:89-90) has stated: “the drama, in brief, lies in the uncertainty of identity”. A similar interpretation can be applied to the aftermath of the re-emergence of these objects.

Entering the Zones of Taboo

Mary Douglas (1966), Julia Kristeva (1982) and René Girard (1977) explore ambiguity as central to the communication of societal norms and values as well as well as notions of ‘self’ and ‘other’. At the heart of Douglas’s (2002 [1966]:xvii) work on notions of purity and danger is the claim that “rational behaviour involves classification” – that classification is inherent to every society and that classification serves to eliminate ambiguity. According to Douglas (2002 [1966]) ambiguity upsets order. Her discussion of dirt as “a matter out of place” attests to the centrality of ambiguous ‘things’ in relation to order. Julia Kristeva (1982) offers a similar analysis of order through her engagements with the abject. For Kristeva (1982:4) the abject is something which “disturbs identity, system, order”. The abject signifies ejected matter; matter that has crossed the border from inside to outside; matter that has been permanently cast out (or abjected). Abject matter poses a threat to identity and order because of its ambiguous nature – it is *of* the self but no longer *part of* the self. Douglas (2002 [1966]) and Kristeva (1982) both interpret ambiguity as threatening. For Kristeva (1982:10) the act of abjection encapsulates “a

revolt *against*” ambiguity. Abjection, the process of restoring order, is a violent rejection of that which is deemed threatening to order.

A connection can be made here with the work of René Girard (1979[1977]) who explores the obscure, yet inseparable, relationship between the sacred and violence. Drawing on rituals of religious sacrifice and sacrificial rites in general, Girard (1979[1977]:31) argues that “[v]iolence is the heart and secret soul of the sacred”. In this sense violence expresses a counter to “outside forces that threaten” (Girard 1979[1977]:31). Protecting the sacred thus requires violence. Similarly for Douglas (2002 [1966]:9) the sacred “mean[s] little more than prohibition” and is that which needs to be “protected from defilement”.

The integral connections between the sacred and the violent (Girard 1979[1977]), the sacred and the defiled (as encountered in the Polynesian islands in the late 19th century), a classificatory (intended to safeguard society against ambiguity (Douglas 1966)), and the violent rejection of that which threatens order (Kristeva 1982), can all be related to notions of taboo – the forbidden or unspoken.

Early anthropological interpretations of the concept of taboo point to ambiguity as located within the concept itself. For instance, encounters of visitors to the Polynesian islands in the late 19th century reveal the uncertainty of taboo (or the Maori term *tapu*, generally meaning ‘forbid’ or ‘forbidden’) as referring to the ‘sacred’ or as referring to the ‘defiled’ (Knight 2010:682). In anthropology the concept of taboo has been studied and addressed by Edward Tylor (1871), James Frazer (1890), Bronislaw Malinowski (1929), A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1939), and further drawn upon by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1969) as well as Douglas (1966). Today the concept of taboo is widely used to refer to that which is prohibited, or that which is not talked about (Milner 2011:106).

The challenges to studying the notion of taboo have been identified by Nicky Milner (2011:106) as particularly hard to pursue in archaeology since many kinds of taboos “do not leave material traces”. Radcliffe-Brown (1952 [1939]:150) states that taboos can only be observed as manifested in symbolic expression. As a result, a study of that which is taboo is understood to be revealing of societal norms or societal structures in general. It is worth quoting Radcliffe-Brown at length:

Anything – a person, a material thing, a place, a word or name, an occasion or event, a day of the week or a period of the year – which is the object of a ritual avoidance or taboo can be said to have ritual value [...] The ritual value is exhibited in the behavior adopted towards the object or occasion in question (Radcliffe-Brown 1952[1939]:139).

For Franz Steiner (1967 [1956]:146) the notion of taboo refers to the dangers located in a situation. He writes: “[t]aboo gives notice that danger lies not in the whole situation, but only in certain specified actions concerning it” (Steiner 1967 [1956]:146-147). It is through studying avoidance behaviour that the ‘danger spots’ (as Steiner refers to them) of any situation can be located and the taboo thus pinpointed (Steiner 1967 [1956]: 147).

At Stellenbosch University in 2013 the careful navigation of Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and the anatomically prepared human skull spoke precisely to this kind of avoidance. Unlike Milner’s (2011) engagements with taboo, the case is somewhat different in the context of the present study. Here material objects in the form of an eye colour table, a hair colour and texture table, and a human skull prompted violent rejections (of the objects themselves) and the kind of ‘avoidance behaviour’ spoken of by Steiner. These material remnants of the past were perceived as a threat to good order. The objects were perceived as dangerous – seemingly embodying some recognizable ‘taboo’.

After their re-emergence, the actions of the university’s administration, the orchestrated press conference to reveal the recovery to the public, and the subsequent debate that unfolded after the press conference confirmed the social salience of this collection of objects. In addition, the resistance and silences I encountered from potential research participants pointed to the power these objects held.

At the initial ‘meet and greet’ preceding an interview with a previous student and lecturer of *volkekunde* at Stellenbosch, I was told in no uncertain terms that ‘we’ (members of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology) “didn’t know what we were talking about”. And the mere mention of my research topic during visits to Stellenbosch University’s archive, library and beyond was often met with raised eyebrows. It was as a result of these encounters

that I realised I had started to tread into what Veena Das has called the ‘zones of taboo’ (Das 2007).

A Study Unfolds

The centrality and usefulness of objects as revealing of broader narratives has been argued by many over the course of the past few decades (Kopytoff 1986; Appadurai 1986; Tringham 1995; Latour 1999; and, more recently, Bennett 2010). In social anthropology, the role of objects has historically been integral to understanding the ‘primitive other’. Thus, while the study of objects was certainly not a new phenomenon with the advent of the ‘material turn’ in the 1980s, the turn towards objects arguably shifted the emphasis away from people (such as research participants). The material products of society (material culture) were instead highlighted – understood to be capable of revealing social structures in and of themselves. However, while the focus of such engagements is less on people and more on the power of objects, the aim of such studies remains the unravelling of human relations and notions of self and other within broader societal structures.

The study of material culture simply involves “the study of human, social and environmental relationships through the evidence of people’s construction of their material world” (Miller 2003 [1994]:13). Both Arjun Appadurai (1986) and Kopytoff (1986) thus assert that a biographical approach to objects or commodities can reveal the complexities embedded in society.⁹ For Appadurai (1986:5), it is the things themselves that have to be followed in order to find “the meaning inscribed in their forms, their uses, [and] their trajectories”.

The ability for objects to reveal broader social and political narratives has been illustrated by Orin Starn’s (2004) anthropological study of Ishi’s brain offers another example of the power of objects to reveal entire histories.¹⁰ His study traces the search for the missing body part of Ishi, a

⁹ Kopytoff’s (1986:66-67) study was based on basic questions:

Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things? What are the recognized ‘ages’ or periods in the thing’s ‘life’, and what are the cultural markers for them? How does the thing’s use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?

¹⁰ Indeed, a number of similar arguments stem from the material turn that supports the importance of material objects as useful for further study (Dudley 2010; Edwards 2001; Kopytoff 1986; Pearce 1990).

famous native american of California whose brain was removed post-mortem, and donated in 1917 by cultural anthropologist Alfred Kroeber to physical anthropologists Aleš Hrdlička at the Smithsonian Institution for further study (information uncovered by Starn). The study was sparked by a call for the repatriation of Ishi's missing remains brought by the Butte County Native American Cultural Committee in 1997. The ethnography produced by Starn (2004) places Ishi's brain at the center of his research and it is through this object that the social, political, and historical forces at work in the practice of science and the production of knowledge are revealed and unravelled. Starn's study thus illustrates what Kopytoff (1986:67) had argued decades before: that objects "can make salient what might otherwise remain obscure".

Similarly, James Clifford (1997:188-219) has recounted his experience in the basement of the Portland Museum of Art in the mid-1990s. Here the museum's Northwest Coast Indian collection (acquired during the 1920s in southern Alaska and the coast of Canada) became the source of scrutiny. In an attempt to overhaul the original installation representatives of Tlingit (the original custodians of the objects) were invited to participate in discussions about these artefacts. Through an exercise of object elicitation in the museum basement the group was asked for comment as they were presented with objects from the collection. Clifford (1997:189) writes:

A headdress representing an octopus is brought out. So [one of the representatives] tells an octopus story about an enormous monster that blocks the whole bay with its tentacles and keeps the salmon from coming in [...] The Tlingit hero has to fight and kill the octopus to let the salmon come into the bay, salmon which are the livelihood of the group. The hero opens the bay so the group can live. And by the end of the story the octopus has metamorphosed into state and federal agencies currently restricting the rights of Tlingit to take salmon according to tradition.

The scene described by Clifford illustrates the value and importance of objects as the source of broader social and political narratives. For the Tlingit elders who partook in the process the objects were often referred to as "records, history, and law" (Clifford 1997:191). Rather than abandoning the human element, studying objects engages how these 'things' "act in the world"

(Hodder 2012:30), or how people draw on objects to “make sense of the world” (Attfield 2000:1).

For Andrew Jones (2002:65), this is closely tied to social relations and how the use of objects can both construct and reveal social relations. It is what Judy Attfield (2000:1) refers to as “the objectification of social relations”. This turn to materialism thus acknowledges “the resilience of matter” – how matter has both implicit meanings and can be “reconfigured by intersubjective interventions” (Coole & Frost 2010:7). Bennett (2010:31) has recently argued that the “interfolding network of humanity and nonhumanity [...] has become harder to ignore”. Viewed as things that have “historical forces buried within” (Gutting 1989:181), objects can be seen as revealing the past of which they formed part – they allow for an unravelling of various places, people, times and contexts and offer “one of several ways of narrating the past” (Pearce 2003 [1994]:21).

It is with this conviction that the present study is undertaken. Similar to the work of Clifford (1997) and Starn (2004), and Appadurai (1986) and Kopytoff (1986) before them, I take a collection of objects as a point of departure and the central focus for an unfolding narrative. Through tracing the life-cycle of Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, a skin colour table designed by Felix von Luschan (an item was once part of this collection but was not recovered along with the other objects), as well as the anatomically prepared skull at Stellenbosch University, broader scientific, social and political narratives of race and racial categorization in South Africa are investigated and unpacked. This study rests on the notions that material objects can ‘speak’, that they carry with them the ability to locate the past as well as locate the ‘zones of taboo’. The premise is that materiality should form an important part of an analysis of the social (Joyce 2010:219), and that “people and things are mutually constructed [and] things are enmeshed within human affairs” (Jones 2002:65).

This study argues for the importance of material objects as ‘living things’ that provide an entrance into, and an unpacking of, the history of the production of race knowledge. Yet in tracing such a history it is important to take into account that objects move through time and are thus “constantly transformed” by their context and the people they become “tied up with” (Gosden & Marshall 1999:169). No object can be understood at one moment in time (Kopytoff

1986); instead objects reveal and materialize an “accumulative history” (Gosden & Marshall 1999:170). The roles played by particular individuals and the significance of context, as both informed by time and place, thus become important factors to a narrative constructed around objects.

An object is subject to a change in meaning as it encounters a change in context (MacGregor 1999:259).¹¹ Yael Navaro-Yashin (2009), Patrick Joyce (2010), Lynn Meskell (2005) and Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (2010) all argue for the importance of context when dealing with objects. Navaro-Yashin (2009:9) places emphasis on the importance of politics and history; Joyce (2010:219) emphasises politics and power when dealing with the social; while Coole and Frost (2010:28-29) stress the importance of understanding political structures and the shifting relations within these structures for a broader understanding of the relations between people, ideas and material forces.

Even scientific objects may be addressed along these lines. Lorraine Daston (2000:11-12) argues that although generally deemed as objective “targets of epistemic activity”, they should at best be viewed as “stabilized for some historically bounded period”. Objects like those recovered and returned to the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology should thus be viewed as “unstable concatenations of representations” (Daston 2000:11-12) rather than as somehow historically or socially stable. This study therefore follows the eye colour, hair colour and texture, and skin colour tables, along with the anatomically prepared human skull over the course of almost a century: from the first institutional application at Stellenbosch University during the early 1920s to their re-emergence in 2013. It explores and interrogates the interconnections between the objects, the science(s) in which they operated, the social and political context that informed their production and use, and their contribution to racial categorisation in South African society.

¹¹ This resonates with the notion of “contextual archaeology” that posits “the meanings associated with an artefact are not fixed [but] rather transformed or altered according to the context within which the artefact is situated” (Jones 2002:84). Writing on the Nuxalk mask and its movement through space and time, Lisa Seip (1999:282) came to a similar conclusion: “[w]hen a ceremonial object is removed and taken into a new culture it takes on a new meaning [...] As time passed, so did the perception of these items” (Seip 1999:282).

By tracing the history of scientific instruments used for the measurement of racial difference, this study seeks to unravel the construction of racial categories and racial classification, beliefs about the racial other, and the broader political context within which these beliefs unfolded and were employed. Following Ian Hacking (1999:164), I attempt to unravel how subjects were “really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, [and] materials”.

Methodology

In the early 1970s Laura Nader (1972) called for a shift from the anthropological focus on the exotic other, to turning the anthropological gaze toward ‘First World’ cultures in order to understand the structures at work that produce outcomes such as social inequality.¹² It marked the beginnings of a methodological shift in anthropology that saw the field increase its focus on the act of ‘studying up’ – to ‘excavate power’ as it operates in western society at large.¹³ When ‘studying up’ conventional power relations within anthropological fieldwork are often turned on their head. And, as a result, one of the biggest challenges to such a method has been the issue of gaining access to potential participants (Priyadharshini 2003:422). It was similarly a challenge in this study.

After the coverage in the media, many key individuals that could offer some information related to the objects and their past at Stellenbosch University were cautious, if not completely unwilling, to talk to me. On the rare occasions that access was negotiated, it was done by pure coincidence through a third party that had mutual links (with me and the prospective participant). However, even these interviews provided little information about the objects. The content of what individuals were willing to discuss on the record was also a point of concern. On one occasion an hour-long interview that provided no useful information was brought to an end by switching off my voice recorder. My research participant responded: “[n]ow that that thing is off” and launched into a history that provided valuable context in my understanding of specific

¹² More recently, Ulf Hannerz has referred to this act as “anthropology at home” (Hannerz 2006:24).

¹³ ‘Studying up’ draws its inspiration from Foucauldian analysis in that it attempts to ‘excavate power’ as it operates in society at large. The label itself (‘studying up’) is located within the power relations that often characterize anthropological fieldwork. While the studying of ‘indigenous cultures’ in faraway locations equated the action of ‘studying down’ (with power assumed to be located with the anthropologist), a study of western society seemingly stripped the anthropologist of his or her power –pitting the anthropologist in an uphill battle against their research participants (where the real power was located).

time periods as related both to Stellenbosch University and apartheid South Africa. During the course of this research many valuable conversations occurred off the record and often behind closed doors. For ethical reasons some information could thus not be included in the written results of my research.

Due to these constraints, this research required moving beyond the conventional anthropological method that sees the ethnographer spending a year or more in the field to acquire a sense of the lived experience of their research participants and gain insight and understanding through interviews and participant observation. At Stellenbosch University, the institution at which I am enrolled as a student, my new role in researching this institution saw my position both part insider and part outsider. While I was intimately familiar with my site of research, aware of its general history and its present political context, access to key individuals (and thus elements of the university's institutional history) often eluded me. It prompted methodological inventiveness to complete this research.

In the initial stages of the project it became clear that what was being revealed through documents and conversations was not a history of a discipline or a department. It was the story of a set of objects that travelled between disciplines and spaces (from departments to the museum), and had effects beyond their academic homes. The propensity for storytelling located in material culture (as well documented in the field of anthropology) offered an alternative route to constructing a meaningful narrative when it became clear that the objects were simply more cooperative research participants than the people I had approached.

The importance of objects, and the non-human, as the starting point for unravelling important narratives and societal structures, is nothing new in the discipline of anthropology. Upon studying the Nuer, anthropologist Edward E. Evans-Pritchard declared '*Cherchez la vache!*' [Look for the cow!]. In a similar vein, Jean and John Comaroff (1992:14) argue that "in the career of everyday goods, of valued things, we grasp the constitution of complex social fields". The objects thus became the methodological focus as a response to the challenges encountered by 'studying up'. I thus decided that it was the objects that had to lead the study and historical records had to fill the gaps.

The 1960s were marked by a general “archival turn in the human sciences” (Cowan 2012:130).¹⁴ Fully embracing this ‘archival turn’, I delved into historical records and archival texts related to old syllabi, textbooks, correspondence between individuals and departments (academic and state), as well as photographs – based on the premise that “the structure of the present is not fully revealed without reference to its development over time” (Lewis 1968:xviii). While the archival turn in anthropology has been criticized by some anthropologists as “a wish to evade the risks and anxieties of fieldwork with complicated flesh-and-blood research subjects” (Cowan 2012:132), the turn towards the archive in this study was often a necessary one – a response to ‘flesh-and-blood research subjects’ evading me, the ethnographer. My research thus entailed visiting a variety of locations that could offer historical information on Stellenbosch University and broader political and social processes in which this institution operated.¹⁵ But archival research also poses methodological challenges.

One of the greatest critiques of archival research (and the acceptance of archives as constituting ‘official record’) is that “archives are often both documents of exclusion and monuments to particular configurations of power” (Hamilton, Harris & Reid 2002:9). In the words of Achille Mbembe (2002:20),

the archive is primarily the product of a judgement, the result of the exercise of a specific power and authority, which involves placing certain documents in an archive at the same time as others are discarded.

This renders the archive limited and flawed. While it can be incredibly useful in providing context and help chronologically structure an emerging narrative, the archive remains inherently incomplete. The act of producing a narrative from these records thus “involves manipulating archives” to put together “scraps and debris, and reassembling remains [...] which results in the resuscitation of life” (Mbembe 2002:25). Thus even in putting together information gleaned from

¹⁴ During this time new debates related to the intersection between the disciplines of history and social anthropology and the complementary nature of each discipline’s research methods was illuminated. The archives were no longer regarded as the exclusive stomping grounds of the historian, while research participants were no longer regarded the exclusive terrain of the social anthropologist as these became sources of oral history.

¹⁵ The Stellenbosch University archives, as well as the Africana section and Document Centre in the J.S. Gericke Library proved useful in this regard. So did visits to archives of Pretoria University, the archives of the University of Free State, the Cape Town National Archives, and the South African National Archives located in Pretoria.

the archive there is a necessary acknowledgement that any narrative that emerges from this source remains incomplete and open for interpretation and reinterpretation.

For the anthropologist a concern with history serves to establish the “interconnexions [*sic*] of events, with the structure of ideas, values, and social relations” (Lewis 1968:xi). Such an approach involved the construction of a narrative around the objects through the use of historical documents: when they came to Stellenbosch, how they travelled from one place to another, how these objects were employed (or not employed), and how their employment related to the broader social and political context. The approach relates to what Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:6) have called a historicised anthropology – an approach that problematises the western world (the historical home of the anthropologist) and renders it “a proper site for ethnographic inquiry” (ibid) ¹⁶

However, even though archival research informed a large part of this research, this study should not be viewed as purely historical. The aim of this study is to ultimately provide commentary on how the contemporary South African moment – as related to racial categorisation – continues to be shaped by its past. The historical tracing of the objects is thus coupled with the experience of their re-emergence. It entails an engagement with history from the perspective of the present.

The importance of studying the objects in relation to their broadly unknown histories was evident from the moment I first saw them. Initial responses following the recovery of the objects ranged from disagreements, to resistances and even silences when the objects became a point of discussion. This very behaviour verified that these objects were central to a significant narrative for contemporary engagements with race in South Africa and at Stellenbosch University. They were the source of ‘avoidance behaviour’ (Steiner 1967 [1957]) – and thus the need to study them became undeniable.

Chapter Outline

Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Von Luschan’s skin colour table (which used to be part of this collection), and the anatomically prepared skull are referred

¹⁶ This approach echoes Nader’s (1972) call for ‘studying up’ – studying the western world rather than exclusively focusing on the non-western other.

to in this piece of writing as ‘the objects’ – neither merely scientific instruments, nor dead things. Rather, they became revealing of a history that reached beyond the confines of their material being. In this study, I thus unravel the power of these objects by following their life-cycle at Stellenbosch University: from their production and use as part of a globally embraced science at the turn of the 20th century, the active employment of these instruments at Stellenbosch University from 1925-1955, their reduction to mere academic references at this institution in the 1950s and 1960s, their use as museum artefacts and teaching-aids until the mid-1980s, their subsequent disappearance from both use and record, to their sudden re-emergence in 2013. The narrative offered here thus intends to illustrate how “scientific objects broaden and deepen” (Daston 2000:13) – becoming “ever more widely connected to other phenomena, and at the same time yield ever more layers of hidden structure” (ibid).

Beginning with an overview of the kinds of scientific engagements concerning human (and racial) difference during the 18th and 19th century, I illustrate how instruments of measurement (including Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Von Luschan’s skin colour table) came to be. The historical emphasis placed on visible (and thus measurable) features within the sciences saw the production of scientific devices harnessed to not only identify difference in and of itself, but directly relate physical divergence to human worth. In keeping with the ideological forces of the time, scientific theories were translated into state policy in many localities around the world during the 19th and 20th century. In this regard physical anthropology provided the scientific means to classify and categorize populations and often became the vessel for scientifically determined categories to enter the realms of state rule (see Chapter 1).

Moving to the arrival of the eye, hair and skin colour tables at Stellenbosch University, the study illustrates how these instruments were present as tools of measurement and racial classification in the Zoology Department during the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. In particular, it is how these scientific objects were employed to establish scientific knowledge about the racial self and other at this institution that sees racial theory transformed into practice. This was achieved through the measurement of the white afrikaner self (particularly to establish their racial superior status as discussed in Chapter Two), through the measurement of the coloured other (particularly to establish a distinct biological profile for this designated racial category as discussed in Chapter

Three), as well as through the measurement and visual depiction of the korana (in order to cement the notion that visible, identifiable characteristics could allow for racial designation as discussed in Chapter Four). A closer inspection of the life of the objects thus illustrate the role of science in constructing distinct biological and racial categories as related to a Foucauldian formation of subjects – that is, subjects “[brought] into being” (Olssen 2010:65).

The scientific engagements with the racial self and other at Stellenbosch University arguably marked the creation of a scientific habitus of ‘race knowledge’ at this institution (see Chapter Five). Described by Pierre Bourdieu (2001:42) as “a system of largely unconscious, transposable, generative dispositions”, the ‘habitus’ operates as a structure of taken-for-granted practices that are produced and reproduced over time (1977:79). Once instilled as habits of mind or taken-for-granted knowledge, the result is “a non-reflexive habituality” that often remains unquestioned (Coole & Frost 2010:34-35). The racial knowledge produced through scientific engagements with the racial self and other, knowledge produced with the support of the recovered collection of objects, was embraced by social scientists at Stellenbosch University as proof of racial difference. The contribution of the social sciences during the 1940s and 1950s reinforced this scientific habitus constructed around racial categories, while also reinforcing the existence of these categories. It formed the foundation for further theorisation about race that would eventually be employed to shape apartheid policies in the 1950s and 1960s (see Chapter Six). Through prolonged implementation categories that were once “artificial inventions” thus became “categories that organize[d] people’s daily experience” (Scott 1998:82-83).

By the mid-1960s the objects moved to the Ethnology Museum as evidentiary relics of science, yet the ideas they represented remained salient. The knowledge they had contributed to producing became cemented in life outside the museum (see Chapter Seven). Once race had become common sense (Posel 2001b), there was no longer the need to support these theories with the aid of scientific instruments. The objects had become “victims of their own productivity” (Daston 2000:11) as the ideas and ideologies related to them no longer needed explanation or ‘proof’. Beyond the sciences, the act of racial classification had been internalized by most South African citizens. A complicit populace had been created and the objects themselves were allowed “to fade out of focus as they remain[ed] peripheral [...] and potent in marking partitioned lives” (Stoler 2013:5).

No longer worthy (or possible) to exhibit, these objects were left in a cupboard – waiting to be returned to their ‘rightful owners’. Their re-emergence in 2013 triggered a response that spoke both of the power these objects had as well as an unresolved past: the legacy of apartheid that continues to manifest in South Africa every day. Upon the re-emergence of Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and the anatomically prepared human skull, these objects embodied both the ruins of a discarded science, as well as the ruins of their deeds. While the objects once projected ideas about racial categories, racial purity and discourses of dirt and pollution, they were now viewed as dirty and polluted themselves – as “matter out of place” (Douglas 2002 [1966]:44) (see Chapter Eight). Indeed, as Douglas (2002[1966:152] argues in relation to the ritual life of the Coorgs, “[t]he most dangerous pollution is for anything which has once emerged gaining re-entry”. It poses a threat to the system.

The materialisation of ‘race knowledge’ in the structures of apartheid society through implemented policy can be regarded as a ‘project of ruination’, defined by Ann Stoler (2008:196) as projects “that lay waste to certain peoples and places, relations and things”. Such projects “bring ruin upon [and] exert material and social force in the present” (Stoler 2013:11), they produce ruins and political debris in their wake (Stoler 2013:2). In this study, the objects represent the scientific construction of racial categories (based on biological understanding of race) from which a broader racial and political history unfolded. A ‘project of ruination’ was set in motion in apartheid South Africa but also, and more specifically, in Stellenbosch. The collection of objects recovered from the University Museum not only revealed a history (Edwards 2001), but simultaneously served another anthropological purpose. Their potency as indicated by the ‘avoidance behaviour’ that manifested in their midst, revealed broader societal structures and the zones of taboo in South Africa.

Ann Stoler (2008:211) has urged us to “rethink what constitutes an effective history of the present”. Closely related to this is a reminder from Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:17) that “the discourses of the dominant also yield vital insights into the contexts and processes of which they were part”. In this sense, this study follows Stoler’s (2008:211) suggestion that an ‘effective history’ should not be aimed at simply dredging up the past or doling out judgments, but rather serves to determine “what is residual and tenacious, what is dominant but hard to see”. In other words, to uncover what lingering forces were set in motion by historical processes.

Introducing Rudolf Martin's Eye Colour Table, Eugen Fischer's Hair Colour and Texture Table, and Felix von Luschan's Skin Colour Table (the Objects)

By 1917 a set of objects was distributed to aid in the determination of visible characteristics drawn upon for the classification and categorisation of human beings. Rudolf Martin, Eugen Fischer, and Felix von Luschan (three German anthropologists) respectively developed the eye colour table, the hair colour and texture table, and the skin colour table. Coupled with existing scientific tools – including callipers, craniometers, anthropometers, a sliding compass (to name a few) and a photographic camera – these objects also came to embody race knowledge.

Manufactured by Artur Gneupel in Zurich, Switzerland (Grobbelaar 1956:107), and advertised for researchers across the globe, Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan's skin colour table were sold and distributed by P. Hermann at 71 Scheuchzerstrasse, Zurich, for a “moderate price”. The *Augenfarbentafel* (eye colour table) could be acquired for \$15.00 (a little more than \$300 by today's calculations), the *Haarfarbentafel* (hair colour table) for \$6.50 (approximately \$135), and the *Hautfarbentafel* (skin colour table) \$2.50 (just over \$50) (Wilder & Wentworth 1918:68). Cited in a variety of textbooks related to physical anthropology as instruments for the measurement of human diversity, these objects were global in their reach by the 1920s.

CHAPTER 1

The Visible, the Measureable and the Utilisation of Scientific ‘Evidence’

History, if viewed as a repository for more than anecdote or chronology, could produce a decisive transformation in the image of science by which we are now possessed – Thomas Kuhn (1962:1)

In 1925 the Zoology Department at Stellenbosch University reported the acquisition of instruments employed for the measurement of ‘qualitative characteristics’ as an addition to the recently introduced *Antropologie*¹⁷ course. Introduced in 1924, this new course on physical anthropology was established with a focus on practical anthropometry: a focus on the scientific measurement of the human body.

The acquisition of instruments used to measure ‘qualitative characteristics’ referred to an eye colour table designed by Rudolf Martin in 1903, a hair colour and hair texture table designed by Eugen Fischer in 1907, and a skin colour table designed by Felix von Luschan. At the time, these were part of a global scientific toolkit designed according to the standard methods of anthropometric measurement as prescribed by an international committee between 1910 and 1914 (Grobbelaar 1948:53; Van Wyk 1939:61). The eye, hair, and skin colour tables were produced and offered for sale to an international academic community and marketed specifically for scientists and researchers (Powerhouse Museum Collection 2015 [online]). These objects thus spoke of international academic consensus on their broad scientific use at the time (see Bashford 2010; and Weingart 1999 amongst others).

As a collection these instruments offered a scientific method to measure a variety of physical features as found in humans. For some who used these instruments, these physical features were

¹⁷ In the early phases of the development of this discipline the term ‘anthropology’ largely referred to what is now called ‘physical anthropology’ – i.e. the study of human biology and behaviour. In the first quarter of the 20th century this historical form of anthropology was distinguished from the field of ethnology which would later be labelled social or cultural anthropology.

translated into a racial ‘type’. By the time physical anthropology was introduced at Stellenbosch University, human measurement had developed into an intricate and complex science. The authoritative textbook written by Rudolf Martin in 1914, as well as his prescribed toolkit for measurement, attests to the rigorous nature of the science at the time. With the use of Martin’s toolkit, consisting of a calliper compass, a beam compass, a sliding compass, a craniometer, an anthropometer, a tape measure and about eight more tools for the various measurements of the human body, human diversity could be quantified and ultimately categorized. Detailed prescriptions along with a shared *instrumentarium* (or universally accepted instruments for the practice of physical anthropology) thus ensured uniformity in studies conducted around the globe. It similarly ensured the comparability of the results of these respective studies (Kyllingstad 2014:164). In the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University during the 1920s, students of physical anthropology were equipped with Martin’s textbook, Martin’s toolkit, and instruments to measure ‘qualitative characteristics’ of the human body. Under the guardianship of Professor C. G. S. (Con) de Villiers and Dr C. S. (Coert) Grobbelaar (both recent graduates of European institutions in Zurich and Berlin respectively) a body of literature that built on a disciplinary tradition of identifying racial difference through the measurement of visible bodily characteristics was prescribed.

Introduction

This chapter provides the background and lays the groundwork for a further engagement with Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table. It provides an overview and context of the theories that informed these objects and rendered them useful as conveyors of measureable racial differences. In this chapter I illustrate how the development of the discipline of physical anthropology was partly premised on existing notions of racial difference, finding its roots in Linnaean typology (1735) and its philosophical underpinnings in Immanuel Kant’s (1775) lectures on race. The notion of racial difference was based on visible characteristics – that which could be observed with the naked eye. Visible features thus became central to conceptualizations of the racial being. Results produced by this field of inquiry became evidence of racial difference and the existence of an inherent human (racial) hierarchy. This chapter provides a brief international overview of the development of physical anthropology and its contribution to the development of state policy and public opinion

in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The development of eugenics, an off-shoot of physical anthropology, is particularly of concern in the context of the 20th century when race formally became politics. In this context physical anthropology was considered to provide authoritative, scientific results useful for policy development. The theories developed by leading scientists also made their way to South African academic institutions in the interwar years. At Stellenbosch University, in the midst of a burgeoning afrikaner nationalist movement, it was particularly German-influenced physical anthropology that took root. Similar to other localities in the world, in South Africa, and at Stellenbosch University, global eugenic science was “conditioned by context” (Crook 2002:374). This chapter provides a prelude to engagements in the Zoology Department with the racialised human.

From Global to Local: Introducing *Antropologie* at Stellenbosch

Physical anthropology may be simply defined as a science that “dealt with the natural/physical aspects of the human body” (Morris-Reich 2016:52). By the 1920s Martin’s standardisation of and prescribed technique for obtaining meaningful results when measuring the human body gained international prominence in the field of physical anthropology (Morris-Reich 2013:493).¹⁸ As a result, his textbook, *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie* (its full title translating to *Textbook of Physical Anthropology in Systematic Presentation*) (1914), had become the definitive text on anthropometry throughout the world as well as in Stellenbosch where it was prescribed to students enrolled for the anthropometry course during the 1920s.

Martin’s publication offered the first comprehensive standardisation of anthropometric measurement methods (Spencer 1997b:429). The textbook provided meticulously detailed instructions on human measurement and it was in this publication that Martin conceptualised ‘type’, ‘kind’, and ‘variety’ as expressions of human differentiation (Morris-Reich 2013:498). The aim of this publication was “to secure a uniformity of techniques” in the face of increased scrutiny of the accuracy of human measurement. The results of these measurements became the

¹⁸ It was in the period 1899-1904 that Martin provided his own contributions to the improvement of measuring techniques as well as measuring instruments (Morris-Reich 2016:52). The photographic and measuring methods provided in the textbook were developed by Martin based on his own experiences in the field. In this regard his 1893 study in Tierra del Fuego and his study of Patagonian skulls in 1896 contributed to his identification of “deficiencies and inaccuracies in the then-current measuring techniques” (Morris-Reich 2016:52).

basis for definitive conclusions about human beings and various human categories (Penniman 1952[1935]:284).¹⁹

For Stellenbosch students of physical anthropology the work of Martin was accompanied by two more prescribed textbooks. Harris H. Wilder's *Laboratory manual of Anthropometry* (1921) offered a similar focus on measurement. Through the use of indices, angles, frequency curves, deviations and variation, students were introduced to the measurement of bones and the skull. With cross-references to Martin's work, Wilder meticulously unpacked the science of human measurement. Through the use of a calliper compass, sliding compass, anthropometer, beam-compass, and tape measure, these publications offered a quantitative approach to human categorisation.

On the other hand, Marcellin Boule's *Les hommes fossils* (or the English translation *Fossil men* by James Ritchie) (1923) offered a comprehensive guide, with photographs, to the most important fossil specimens recovered in various geographical regions of the world – “describing the fossil men of Asia and Oceania, Africa, and America” (Weckler 1959:712). The publication was highly regarded and deemed “a must for the library of every anthropologist who [was] interested in the problems of human evolution and for everyone who [taught] a course involving such problems” (Weckler 1959:713). It was seemingly also a ‘must’ for De Villiers and Grobbelaar in their quest to introduce physical anthropology to the students of Stellenbosch University.

In the Zoology Department the above-mentioned literature, and the respective instruments used to measure eye colour, skin colour, and hair colour and texture, guided students of physical anthropology in their interactions with human diversity and human categorisation. In the global context, physical anthropology was a science developed for human differentiation during the mid to late 19th century. Practical anthropometry was commonly employed to produce evidence (by means of measurement) of physical distinctions found in a variety of human types. The refinement of techniques for measurement – partly made possible by instruments like Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and hair texture table, and Von Luschan's skin colour table

¹⁹ In addition to writing the definitive textbook for anthropometry at the time, Martin also developed numerous instruments to aid the accurate measurement of the human body (Morris-Reich 2016:52).

– saw an institutional acknowledgement of the (scientific) value of such techniques. The discipline of physical anthropology was established in academic institutions around the world as a valuable contribution to the scientific study of the human race.

The Development of a Science for Human Measurement

Neurological studies reveal that primates, and particularly humans, “are fundamentally visual creatures” (Hayden 2010:201). It thus comes as little surprise that classificatory systems rely on our keen sense to identify visual markers for the categorical differentiation of human subjects. Skin colour, eye colour, hair colour and texture, the shape of the skull, the angle of the jaw, the nose and lips all became relevant characteristics in distinguishing racial categories in the developing science of physical anthropology during the latter half of the 19th century. Moving from the creation of human categories, to the employment of a racial hierarchy, and ultimately to an active pursuit of this hierarchy in the form of eugenics, physical anthropology played an all-important part in providing data and justifications for intellectual, political and public notions of race. The theories communicated in the prescribed textbooks located at Stellenbosch University were thus built on a long tradition of human categorization based on a science focused on visual markers. While the formative period of physical anthropology can be located between 1860 and 1918, scientific engagements with human diversity may be traced to the 18th century.

Linnaean typology and a fixation on classification and categorization became an influential cornerstone for the scientific development of these ideas. In 1735 Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) published *Systema Naturae*, offering the first comprehensive attempt to scientifically classify and categorize human populations. Postulating the existence of four varieties, as found on the separate continents of Europe, America, Asia and Africa (using place of origin and skin colour as important factors for classification), Linnaeus was the first to provide order to a somewhat chaotic world of human diversity (Haddon 1910:23).

Drawing on the Aristotelian logic of a *fundamentum* (a particular character or essence), Linnaean typology rested on a notion that mankind could be grouped according to shared features (Daly 1961:176). These methods of classification postulated that, while not all members of the group possessed exactly the same characteristics, racial groupings could nonetheless be determined by the appearance of common characteristics found in the group. The notion of aggregates, or the

“estimate of the degree of overall similarity” (Daly 1961:176), was thus employed to categorise individuals into main racial groupings. This logic marked the beginnings of scientific human classification and the introduction of the significance of observable differences – differences that would later become markers of moral worth (Synnot & Howes 1992:148).

Scientists acquired a philosophical underpinning for racial science through the work of German philosopher Immanuel Kant. The roots of the anthropological concept of race and engagement with the ‘racial’ being can be traced back to Kant’s ‘anthropological’ writings and lectures on the subject – most notably his publication *Of the Different Human Races* (1775). His writings offered a conceptualisation of humans that “set up a hierarchy of talents and potentials among different races” (Hedrick 2008:246) based on inherent capabilities, as well as the potential for development or advancement. For Kant “the white race possess[e]d all motivating forces and talents in itself [while] other races show[ed] only limited or non-existent potentials for developing themselves to this point” (cited in Hedrick 2008:252). The engagement of a variety of scientists, mostly anatomists and zoologists who attempted to produce scientific proof in line with these philosophical claims, would eventually lead to the formation of the field of physical anthropology (often simply called anthropology) in the early 20th century.²⁰

Following the development of Linnaean typology and Kantian conceptualisations of a human hierarchy, scientists extended ways of studying human beings by expanding the number of visible features understood to indicate racial difference. Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) added figure and stature (in addition to skin colour) as important markers of racial affinity (Synnot & Howes 1992:149).²¹ More significantly, German anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) added the shape of the skull as a significant indicator of racial identification (Spencer 1997b:427-428). It was this physical characteristic as related to racial type and human hierarchy that was to become one of the cornerstones of the developing science of physical anthropology.

²⁰ See footnote 17 for detail. In this work the designation ‘physical anthropology’ will be employed to avoid confusion.

²¹ In the field of physical anthropology these features remained important indicators in determining different racial types into the 20th century. While not discussed in detail here, attention is given to this element of physical anthropology in Chapters Two, Three and Four.

According to Blumenbach the caucasian skull was “beautifully symmetrical [and] somewhat globular”, while the mongolian had an “almost square” skull, and the “Negro [had a] laterally compressed” skull (cited in Synnot & Howes 1992:149).²² This scientific measurement and study of the skull formed the basis of general craniology which contributed to notions of an existing racial hierarchy. Many scientists pursued craniology towards the end of the nineteenth century in an attempt to perfect the science through added measurements. Building on the work of Blumenbach, Petrus Camper (1722-1789) added the degrees of the facial angle as a feature of racial identification. Anders Retzius (1796-1860) similarly expanded the ideas of general craniology by adding two new, yet critical, measurements to this science in 1844. These were the projection of the jaw (gnathism), as well as the cephalic index (indicating “the ratio of the breadth of the skull to the length, expressed as a percentage” (Haddon 1910:33) and broadly related to the shape of the head).²³ Pierre Paul Broca (1824-1880) contributed to craniology through the invention of a number of instruments used for precise measurements of the skull and, through this, propagated the standardisation of these measuring techniques (Haddon 1910:38). By the 19th century many physical anthropologists regarded the cranium as “the prime index of mental capacity and racial identity” (Hamilton 2001b:85). The dimensions of the skull were believed to be the index of not only biological but also social or cultural characteristics (Stepan 1982:28).

Moving beyond the initial focus on skin colour and skull form, variables such as colour as well as the shape of the nose and the lips were added to a range of visible features that were believed to allow for racial categorisation (Levine 2010:47). Hair, in both texture and colour, similarly became, for some scientists, a key defining feature of racial classification by the late 19th century (Keane 1909:174). French naturalist Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1772-1844) based his own

²² Blumenbach derived the term caucasian from the Caucasus region - the origin of the most beautiful skulls according to him. The Caucasus Mountains, particularly the site of caucasians, stretches from the modern-day border of Russia to the borders of modern-day Turkey and Iran. As this chapter will show, the interpretation of people from this region as the most beautiful and superior beings would be reinterpreted over the next few centuries by a variety of scientists who had a vested interest in establishing certain racial groups as more worthy than others.

²³ The measurement of the cephalic index could divide humans in two definitive groups – either the elongated dolichocephalic or the more round-headed brachycephalic (Stepan 1982:97). Later, an intermediate mesocephalic type was introduced to account for borderline cases (Stepan 1982:97). The protrusion of the jaw similarly offered a criterion for division through measurement – either identified as a prognathous type (more protruding jaw) or a orthognathous type (a less protruding jaw) (Stepan 1982:97).

classifications on “the character of the hair” (Haddon 1910:93), Broca and his student Paul Topinard also emphasised hair texture as one of the primary racial distinctions, and German biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) distinguished between straight, curly, woolly, tufted and fleecy hair as a defining feature of racial affinity (Haddon 1910:93). Coupled with an attempt to standardise the methods of anthropometry, tables for the measurement of hair, skin and eye colour were produced to aid the identification and measurement of visual markers in the early 20th century. Martin developed his eye colour table in 1903, Von Luschan developed the skin colour table in 1905, and Fischer developed his hair colour and texture table in 1907 (University College London 2017 [online]).

The importance of visual characteristics to a science of human categorization was cemented with the addition of the camera as a research tool. The daguerreotype, the first commonly used photographic process, was introduced in 1839 precisely at a moment when scientists “attempt[ed] to construct detailed typologies” (Hamilton 2001b:79) to document difference. The value of the photograph for physical anthropology was thus closely linked to the combination of measurement and statistics as it was perceived to capture and display a racial essence, or a racial type. Adolphe Quetelet (1835) had transformed human measurement into numerical data in order to reveal aggregates as found in race groups,²⁴ and thus “laid the foundations of all mathematical study of anthropological data” (Penniman 1952[1936]:138). The racial type “represented an average example of a racial group, an abstraction [...] that defined the general form or character of individuals within the group” (Wallis 1995:49).²⁵ While not used by Quetelet himself, the medium of photography became similarly employed to visually communicate statistical ideas.

Louis Agassiz was the first to employ this new technology for the production of “racial-type photographs” in 1850 (Maxwell 2008:21). Agassiz produced 15 daguerreotypes of african slaves

²⁴ Engaging in human measurement himself (in this case measuring Scottish soldiers) Quetelet offered the idea of an “average, or normal, soldier” and further postulated the existence of an ‘ideal type’ representative of “the general qualities that characterized racial groups” (Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]:242). The logic of an ideal type was not only applied to racial categories, but was by the beginning of the 20th century applied to a variety of human categories including criminal as well as mad types to name a few (Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]:242).

²⁵ Speaking to scientific representation, Sander Gilman (1985:204) has argued that when individuals are visually represented “the ideologically charged iconographic nature of the representation dominates [...] in a very specific manner”. As a result, the photograph of a single individual comes to stand for a ‘class’ of people “to which the individual is seen to belong [and] serve[s] to focus the viewer’s attention on the relationship between the portrayed individual and the general qualities ascribed to the class” (Gilman 1985:204).

on a plantation in Columbia, South Carolina. The subjects were photographed in the nude from the front, side and rear to document their physiognomy (body shape and proportions). A similar method was later adopted by Rudolf Martin and communicated in his 1914 textbook. Subjects were also photographed with a close focus on the head and upper torso in order to highlight the shape and characteristics of the head and face (Wallis 1995:46). The addition of photography to the study of the human body arguably had effects outside the natural sciences.

Bodies, Jacqueline Urla and Jennifer Terry (1995:6) argue, are regarded as “fundamentally authentic and material” – readily available evidence for the observer. Combining statistical ideas with the medium of photography saw a particular idea about race and racial difference emerge in the 19th century – namely that of deviant otherness. Deviance, as conceptualized during this period, related to both physical deviance (a body that differs from a statistical norm) as well as moral and behavioural deviance (Urla & Terry 1995:1). Believed to be readily communicated by the visible markers found on the body, deviance was seen as an identifiable characteristic that could make itself known to the trained viewer. Yet 19th century discussions and theories about deviant bodies emerged in tandem with those concerning the non-deviant body (Morris-Reich 2016:31): locating deviance in someone else cemented them as ‘other’, as ‘abnormal’ – and those who embodied non-deviant characteristics as ‘normal’. In discussing deviance there thus emerges a mutual link of categories of self and other: in defining another as deviant, the self is automatically defined in opposition.²⁶

Because deviance was understood to conspicuously mark the body, photography provided a means to document and locate its visible characteristics. Combining physical measurement and photographic depiction, Francis Galton and Cesare Lombroso perpetuated the biological conceptualization of the ‘criminal type’ in the early 20th century – one based on the evidence of the criminal body itself. Galton’s collection of composite criminal portraits was created to provide “a visual depiction of what average criminals looked like” (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:124). Lombroso similarly regarded the criminal as “an anthropological type” identifiable by physical features (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:269) As Lombroso claimed:

²⁶ This premise forms the theoretical underpinning of both Chapter Two and Chapter Three, where scientific studies of white students and coloured individuals at Stellenbosch University respectively speak to these ideas of self and other.

Thus were explained anatomically the enormous jaws, high cheekbones, prominent superciliary arches, solitary lines in the palms, extreme size of the orbits, handle-shaped or sessile ears [without discernable lobes], found in criminals, savages, and apes (cited in Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:270).

Rudolf Pöch and Egon von Eickstad's anthropological study of prisoners of war during World War I similarly captured the physical characteristics of these national others in order to transform them into "racialized political enemies" (Evans 2010:229). As a result, describing and photographing the other saw individuals constructed as "racial strangers, menacing enemies in need of control and confinement" (Evans 2002:228). Photography, at least when harnessed within the field of physical anthropology, may thus be understood to have operated as "an instrument of repressive social and political control" (Morris-Reich 2013:512).

David MacDougall (2005:234) argues that photographs like those used to identify human types "enable[d] clear identification" and served to "sum up the person in some fundamental sense". In addition, Peter Hamilton (2001a:15) argues that "[p]hotography offered a means for creating systems of inclusive classification which would incorporate ever more sophisticated distinctions". Photographs thus aided the process of classification based on visual characteristics as they were believed to "record data in a more reliable way than biased human observers" (Morris-Reich 2013:491). In and of itself photography offered the possibility to scrutinise the human body as frozen in time as well as allowing "cropping, enlarging, inscribing, measuring, and comparing images" (Zamorano 2011:450). Most importantly, photography was able to provide evidence of an individual's physical make-up in the absence of the subject. From the outset, the photograph was to function as a "somatic mapping" of the bodies photographed, allowing for comparative "biological analysis of human races" (Edwards 2001:138). And in visually reproducing racialised features, "the recognition of likeness implie[d] the recognition of unlikeness" (Haddon 1910:8).

Along with the categorical mathematics of human measurement (particularly as they related to the skull), photography played an important role in the contribution to identifiable "visual patterns" and "visual codes" within the sciences (Morris-Reich 2013:516). Through photography "showing had become very close to knowing [...] and a scientific methodology of observation and experience [...] provide[d] information and knowledge to enlightened opinion" (Hamilton

2001b:83). By the 1860s, this new technology was “widely applied to questions of physical anthropology” (Hamilton 2001b:86) and had become an integral part of anthropometric studies and thus instrumental to racial science (Zamorano 2011:430).

What started in the late 18th and the 19th century as the study of visible physical differences found in humans was transformed into a seemingly exact science of measurement by the early 20th century. Visual markers and the various combinations in which they manifested themselves were also drawn upon to communicate superiority and inferiority. For instance, in the 20th century, superiority was apparently embodied by the very specific characteristics of “a straight face [rather than a forward-jutting face], more or less white skin and straight hair” (Gould 1981:84).

The emergent scientific engagements with the human body offered new ways of categorizing diverse populations and simultaneously offered a manner to order out the world via zoological and mathematical engagement. Such investigations laid the groundwork for the development of physical anthropology – a discipline of human measurement aimed at human classification.

Anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon (1910:42) seemingly embraced the validity and usefulness of human measurement and its contributions to the field stating in the early 20th century:

From the beginning of the study, anthropometry was employed as a precise means of expressing the differences between man and the lower animals [...] Though no one measurement can be used for purposes of race discrimination, a series of measurements on a sufficiently large group of subjects, together with observations on the colour of the skin, hair, and the form of various organs – such as the nose and ears – and other comparisons of a similar nature, are invaluable in the study of the races of mankind.

Anthropometry, a science that subjected the human body in its entirety to measurement, became a widespread paradigmatic frame as well as a set of practices in scientific circles and in the field of physical anthropology. The practice of anthropometry became the cornerstone for classification as it was perceived to offer objective scientific proof of the differences to be found among various human races. “Callipers, footrules, measuring and photographic apparatus are without preconceived ideas” wrote Swiss anthropologist Eugène Pittard (1926:34). Indeed,

Pittard believed that the use of instruments for measurement had brought “an ensemble of exact (since they are obtained by measurement) morphological characters” (1926:35) for classification purposes. The standardisation of measurements and the resultant statistics that could be acquired thus became an integral part of physical anthropology. There was a firm belief that scientific measurements, as determined by a range of scientific instruments, could bring forth objective knowledge. As a result, it was through both the photograph as well as the development of Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table within the first decade of the 20th century that the salience of visual markers found its expression.

Anthropology and the State

Michel Foucault (1980) argues that power and knowledge are inherently linked – that it is both impossible to exercise power in the absence of knowledge, and that simultaneously knowledge produced within a particular context is always the product of power-relations (Downing 2008:vii). Going so far as to conflate these notions into a single term, namely ‘power/knowledge’, Foucault thus suggests a dialectical relationship between the exercise of power and the knowledge acquired about human bodies and behaviour – one that sees “knowledge always work[s] in the interests of particular groups” (Mills 2003:79). What this interlinked understanding of power/knowledge offers, is a critical means to examine the connections between science and state. As Deborah Lupton (2003:25) argues:

Through the body and its behaviours, state apparatuses such as medicine, the educational system, psychiatry and the law define the limits of behaviour and record activities, punishing those bodies which violate the established boundaries, and thus rendering bodies productive and politically and economically useful.

The colonial period offers the most fitting historical example of the relationship between power and knowledge as it is those bodies that fell under colonial rule that became the ‘site’ of overt “political and ideological control, surveillance and regulation” (Lupton 2003:25).²⁷ As a result,

²⁷ In the 19th century the British colonies became the source of a vast literature related to the indigenous landscapes and peoples. The production of information about the colonies was considered to be a duty of colonial authorities

the notion of power/knowledge can be related back to the formation of subjects as, in line with Foucauldian analysis, the subject is “an effect of discourses and power relations” (Mills 2003:98). Constituted by discourses gleaned through scientific, often anthropological, study of the very bodies they inhabit, human beings under colonial rule were thus 'made' by a body of knowledge in line with the socio-political requirements of colonialism.

The engagements of scientists in the mid to late 19th century were premised on an established belief in the existence of human races (as opposed to a single human race). The theories of human origins in the 18th and 19th centuries consisted of two opposing camps. Polygenists argued for separate human origins resulting in ‘independent stocks’ or rather different species, while monogenists recognised the common origins of a ‘single stock’ that was made manifest in variations as found in different areas of the world (Hertz 1928:22). Polygenists rendered their theories useful in the dehumanisation of the racial other and, through their work, offered justifications for discriminatory institutions such as slavery (Halley, Eshleman & Vijaya 2011:26-27). These engagements also supported the existence of a racial hierarchy – with europeans placed at the top and africans placed at the bottom (Stepan 1982:46). Scientific measurements related to skull size, mental capacity, and a host of other so-called racialised traits, provided the much needed support for determining the superiority and inferiority of specific racial groups. As Robert Chia (2000:513) argues, “[i]t is through this process of differentiating, fixing, naming, labelling, classifying and relating [...] that social reality is systematically constructed”. The institutional establishment of a ‘natural hierarchy’ based on calculable scientific facts would have dire consequences, particularly for those placed at the bottom of the hierarchy, through the implementation of highly discriminatory laws throughout the world.

In the latter half of the 19th century the intersection between scientific and political engagements with notions of racial hierarchy became ever more pronounced both in the discipline of physical anthropology and imperial or state policy. In the United States it was Samuel Morton (physician and natural scientist), naturalist Louis Agassiz, and physician Josiah Nott, all pursuing this new science of human measurement, who contributed their scientific knowledge to establish what

and often included the work of not only scientists, but novelists and travel writers who jumped on the opportunity to “expand global knowledge” (Mills 2003:71).

they regarded as the inferiority of the American negro (Baker 1998:16). Playing into the political context of 19th century America, their theories were often drawn upon to justify legislation, institutional discrimination, and public perception. Agassiz, a devout polygenist, employed his anthropological studies to prove that “various races of mankind were in fact separate species” (Wallis 1995:44). His illustrations of the various races were telling. For instance, he spoke of the “excessively prognathous jaws attributed to Negroes and Australians, and small crania given to all but Europeans and Mongol” (Synnot & Howes 1992:151). Contributing to his scientific investigation, Agassiz’s 19th century slave daguerreotypes served to substantiate these claims. While they firstly served a scientific purpose (to document the physical characteristics found in slaves from Africa) they likewise served a political purpose, namely to illustrate not only racial difference but to prove the biologically inferior position of black Africans when compared to European whites. In essence, Agassiz’s investigations saw black Africans perpetually relegated to inferior status, justifying their social position as slaves along scientific lines (Wallis 1995:40).

In a series of lectures presented during the 1840s Nott similarly supported slavery based on “the natural inferiority of the Negro”. For Nott, as for so many white Americans at the time, “Negroes were like children who needed direction, discipline, and the parentlike care of a master” (cited in Baker 1998:15). Morton postulated the existence of a similar hierarchy based on the relation to be found between cranial capacity and “moral and intellectual endowments” (Baker 1998:14). In his *Crania Americana* (1839) Morton (following Blumenbach’s model) identified five races in the world and attributed varied cranial capacity to each race. In ranking order, Caucasians were placed at the top followed by Mongolians, Malay, (Native) Americans, and Ethiopians. Cranial capacity seemingly also spoke to the moral characteristics of each race. As Morton proclaimed, Caucasians had “the highest intellectual endowments” while Ethiopians (with the lowest cranial capacity) were “the lowest grade of humanity” (cited in Synnot & Howes 1992:150). It was of course the “long-brained Caucasoid” (Baker 1998:14) who was deemed the pinnacle of civilisation, while the Negro was seen as the antithesis thereof. In this regard Morton similarly considered the African Hottentots as “the nearest approximation to the lower animals” (cited in Wallis 1995:49).

Such references to animal-like features were commonly related to the racial other (particularly those of African descent) in 19th century writings. As remarked by Brian Wallis (1995:53), in 19th

century anthropology “blacks were often situated along the evolutionary ladder midway between the classical ideal and the orangutan”. Indeed, references to ‘simian’ features related directly to the assumption that black africans were in fact the ‘missing link’ in the evolutionary scale between apes and humans.²⁸ In *The Savage Races* (1882) Alphonse Bertillon wrote of the bushman:

What contributes most to making their [baboon-like] physiognomy, is the projection of their jaws together with the flattening of the cartilages of the bones of the nose. The result is that their profile, instead of being convex like the Caucasian type, is concave like that of the apes (cited in Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]:257).²⁹

Similarly, the biological features of the so-called ‘Hottentot Venus’ (Saartjie Baartman/Sarah Bartman) from South Africa were directly related to the most primitive of primates by George Cuvier (1817), who remarked upon Baartman’s post-mortem dissection: “I have never seen a human skull more similar to that of monkeys” (cited in Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]:127).³⁰ The anatomical features of this individual were seen to illustrate “the Hottentot’s deviation from the

²⁸ For instance, the racial term bushman is derived from the Dutch *bosmanneken*, which in turn is a translation of the Malay word for orangutan (Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]:123). The relation does however not stop at categorical naming. In the 1800s black africans were often exhibited next to monkeys or apes. In the 1820s the Egyptian Hall of the London Museum displayed two bushmen children with monkeys to illustrate a similarity in movement and behaviour (Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]:130). These types of exhibitions continued. For instance, in September 1906 Ota Benga a “Pygmy Bushman from the Congo” was exhibited along with apes as a ‘missing link’ in the Bronx Zoo (Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]:136). The relation was made in everyday language as well. This type of direct relation, has unfortunately not disappeared in the 21st century. In the aftermath of 2016 New Year’s Day celebrations on Durban’s beach Penney Sparrow (a white estate agent) referred to black beachgoers as “monkeys” who should not be allowed to spread “dirt and troubles and discomfort to other [*sic*]” (cited in Nyamnjoh 2016:47). Confronted about her comments Sparrow responded: “I see the cute little wild monkeys do the same pick and drop litter [...] I wasn’t being nasty or rude or horrible, but it’s just that they [black people] make a mess. It’s just who they are [*sic*]” (cited in Nyamnjoh 2016:48). Similarly the accusation by Mathole Motshekga, a parliamentary affiliate of the African National Congress (ANC), that the recent discovery of *Homo naledi* was racist also spoke to these long legacies of relations drawn between black africans and non-human primates. Upon the discovery of *Homo naledi*, described as “a new species of human ancestor” (Kuljian 2016:280), Motshekga proclaimed “the discovery was an attempt to say that African people descended from baboons” (Kuljian 2016:282). Motshekga defended his stance by saying: “[w]e are all still suffering from the wounds of being called baboons or apes” (Kuljian 2016:282).

²⁹ Bertillon further remarked: “[b]esides, the capacity of the Bushman skull is very weak: 1250 cubic centimeters on average; that of the Parisian is 1560. The brain is consequently very small and distinguishes itself even more by the simplicity of its convolutions, which are reminiscent of our senile. In our country, an individual with a similar brain would be an idiot” (cited in Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]:257).

³⁰ Additionally, the work of Cuvier paid particular attention to the genital region of Baartman, linking her anatomy to that of the prostitutes of Europe and thus proposing the inherent sexual promiscuity of the hottentot race (see Gilman 1985).

physiognomy of civilized people” (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:124) – revealing (at least for Cuvier) the existence of an underlying essence. Through thorough investigation and observation, Cuvier had aimed to “delve beneath the surface, bringing the interior to light [...] and define the hidden Hottentot” (Fausto-Sterling 1995:2). And in the mind of his contemporaries, he had done just that.

Black africans were thus often considered as not quite human, and scientific observations and conclusions like those above served to dehumanise and exclude non-european races from the rights offered by western civilisation; their inclusion only extended to their exploitation. Drawing on the tools of physical anthropology, ideas like these remained a dominant part of not only the anthropological landscape but the socio-political terrain as well.

At the end of the 19th century anthropologists like Daniel G. Brinton (one of the great contributors to early anthropology in the United States) were able to restate “sociopolitical ideas about race” in scientific language by propagating a form of anthropology that was inherently tied to “an evolutionary paradigm” (Baker 1998:33). Similarly, Frederic Ward Putnam (a student of Agassiz) concluded on the back of his ‘anthropological’ encounters with african americans that they were a “degraded and degenerate race [...] and not of the same blood as we are” (cited in Spencer 1997a:42). Drawing on such notions, Nathaniel Shaler published *The Negro Problem* in 1884 in which he offered a scientific argument for “disfranchisement and segregation” of african americans – a population who he described as “incapable of shouldering the responsibility of citizenship” (cited in Baker 1998:47).³¹ Shaler, a “self-proclaimed practical anthropologist” (Baker 1998:48), hereby declared african americans as unfit to vote, serve on juries, or testify in court.

The writings of these anthropologists were eagerly taken up by politicians and other officials in American institutions and used to “justify the oppression” of the racial other, particularly during the 19th century (Baker 1998:52-53). These ideas were rarely communicated directly to the public by anthropologists themselves, but were rather communicated via “policy pundits and

³¹ This argument was not unlike justifications offered in 1950s South Africa for the removal of coloureds from the voters roll (see Chapter 5 for detail).

legislators” who used it “to sway public opinion” (Baker 1998:74). The use of anthropological racial constructs to support legislation, and the use of legislation to in turn support the validity of these racial constructs often resulted in circular and reciprocal arguments that cemented the existence of racial categories and a natural hierarchy that entitled some to rule and others to be ruled.

In the United States, the rise of anthropology as an academic discipline in the 1880s “was concurrent with the rise of American imperialism and the institutionalization of racial segregation and disfranchisement” (Baker 1998:26). Through the scientific establishment of the discipline in the United States, the scientific construct of race solidified, in no small part due to the work of leading anthropologists (Baker 1998:25). By the late 19th century the various theories concerning racial inferiority “served as a unifying ideology to guide [...] and [promote] the disfranchisement and segregation of Negroes” (Baker 1998:25).

Yet the relation between the rise of anthropology as a discipline and its use in colonial expansion and disfranchisement of non-european populations was certainly not limited to the United States. The case was very similar in other parts of the world where european expansion, encounters with the racial other, and subsequent colonial rule, were often supported by the employment of scientific (often anthropological) knowledge. In Britain, 19th century anthropology became closely aligned with the colonial project. Henrika Kuklick (2008:60) argues that “anthropology’s academic gains seem correlated with practitioners’ turn toward promoting the discipline’s utility for colonial rulers”. This was particularly the case for the evolutionary theories instilled in academic and public perceptions at the time.

David Green (1984:6) is of the opinion “the perception of a natural order of social structure and stratification was thought to be readily available in the evidence of the human body” during the 18th, 19th and early 20th century. The idea of an evolutionary scale visible in human bodies, as well as cultures, thus justified colonisation. In addition, by deeming colonised individuals and societies inferior to those of the West, the supposed need for western development as exercised through interventionist policies and laws was fuelled (Kuklick 2008:63). In this regard Philippa Levine (2010:43) is of the opinion that the expansion of “both anthropology and colonialism [...] at the ‘Darwinian moment’” is quite significant. In the colonies and elsewhere anthropological studies produced after the publication of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* in 1859

centered on “inquiries into the habits and customs of primitive peoples” (Penniman 1952[1935]:145). Thus in many respects it was “the emerging terms of evolutionary debate [that] also shaped anthropological ideas” (Levine 2010:45). While a conflation of science and state saw this type of research in the United States focus on native americans as the subjects of interest, elsewhere indigenous populations were likewise coming under similar scrutiny.

Under British rule, South Africa witnessed its indigenous populations such as the hottentot and the bushman become the subjects of scrutiny, and in German-governed South West Africa it was the nama and the herero peoples who were studied. The colonies thus offered a vast source of diverse human populations ripe for anthropological study while simultaneously offering a wealth of scientific data and supposedly objective knowledge that could be harnessed as a tool of the state.

Southern Africa proved to be fertile soil for scientific endeavours and the production of racial theories, some of which would inform state policy both at home and abroad. Here two figures are of particular importance to a discussion of race. Based on their experiences in southern Africa, Francis Galton and Eugen Fischer each developed influential ideas within the first fifteen years of the 20th century that drew on concerns about degeneration and the role of racial mixture in producing degenerate types.³²

Francis Galton (1822-1911), broadly considered the founding father of eugenics, explored a wide area in southern Africa between 1850 and 1852 encountering the likes of the damara and ovambo peoples. He published *Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa* as a result in 1853 in which the physical differences between various populations of southern Africa were evident to, and noted by, Galton. Following the scientific trend of the time and supported by his experience in southern Africa, Galton propagated the notion of a racial hierarchy that saw a privileging of the european races (Stepan 1982:127). Galton saw this as a fixed hierarchical order – thus rejecting the role education and the environment may have on improving capability. Instead,

³² Further notable visits to the area included Felix von Luschan, developer of the skin colour table, from 1898-1901 (Spencer 1997b:428), and Rudolf Martin, developer of the eye colour table and author of *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie*, who visited around the turn of the century.

Galton believed that such factors had “only a small effect on the mind of anyone” (Paul & Moore 2010:32).

A firm believer in the use of measurement as a means of classification, Galton published *Eugenics: Its scope and aim* in 1905 in which he defined eugenics as “the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage”. For Galton, the aim of eugenics was to “raise the average quality of [the] nation” (Galton 1905:3) and to ensure that “humanity shall be represented by the fittest races” (Galton 1905:5).

Galton’s 1905 publication followed shortly after the rediscovery of Mendel’s laws of genetics at the turn of the century. Gregor Mendel’s initial experimentation with peas (conducted between 1856 and 1863) had determined the existence of dominant and recessive genetic characters which manifested themselves in a ‘stable’ manner through inheritance (Penniman 1952 [1935]:243-244). Mendel had identified the long-term effect of crossing individual pea plants by tracking individual traits as produced in the next generations of hybrid offspring – and the same laws of inheritance were found to be present in humans.

While drawing on Mendel’s notions, Galton’s work also took inspiration from Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. Darwin’s mid-century publication *On the Origin of Species* (1859) had introduced the “struggle for existence” and the role of “natural selection” in the plant and animal kingdom.³³ And these ideas were developed further by Herbert Spencer in 1864 who first employed the phrase “survival of the fittest” with regards to human populations. He thereby introduced social Darwinism – a belief that humans were caught in a struggle for existence where, through natural selection, only the fittest would survive.

In light of this academic cross-pollination from the mid-19th century on, a particular understanding of human diversity was made manifest in the early 20th century. Mendel’s law of genetics circulated with increased vigour after its rediscovery in 1900. Its application to humans

³³ With this notion, Darwin made reference to economist Thomas Robert Malthus who had proclaimed in 1798 that “disease, accidents, famines and war act as positive checks to increase, and keep down the population of savage races to a lower average than that of civilized people” (James 1919:16-17). By drawing on this “doctrine of Malthus” Darwin thus similarly postulated that in nature we find a “preservation of favourable variations and the rejection of injurious variations” (1859:51).

provided new importance to the role of genealogies (historically recognized in relation to the determination of aristocracy). Heritable qualities such as “stature, bodily constitution, eye and skin colour, hair form and colour, anatomical features and peculiarities, mental traits and deficiencies” (Penniman 1952 [1935]:246) thus became significant considerations for studying human populations. For Galton, as for many others, biologically inherited traits offered the key to understanding various populations and racial groups.³⁴ Notions of racial purity and the effect of racial mixture on heritable qualities became key talking points in the developing eugenic debate and the existence of a spectrum of superior and inferior races.

Galton’s law of ancestral heredity (as discussed in his 1889 publication *Natural inheritance*) postulated that previous generations contributed genetically to the individual in varying degrees:

The share that a man retains in the constitution of his remote descendants is inconceivably small. The father transmits, on an average, one-half of his nature, the grandfather one-fourth, the great-grandfather one-eighth; the share decreasing step by step, in a geometrical ratio, with great rapidity (cited in Bulmer 2003:104).

What Mendel’s law of genetics had offered was a forward-looking prediction of recurring familial traits (Falk 2005:22). These applications of genealogy increasingly became part of

³⁴ Similar logics have been pursued more recently in the field of genomics (or anthropological genetics). Built on the strides made in genetic science over the course of the last 50 years, recent endeavours include the “construction of genomic pasts” (El Haj 2007:223). The field of anthropological genetics became indicative of the shift from a pure focus on phenotype (outward appearance) to genotype (genetic constitution (DNA)) – a shift prompted by the conclusion that “the outward appearance of the organism, or his [sic] phenotype, can be misleading” due to the inconsistent relationship between genotype and phenotype (Cavalli-Sforza & Bodmer 1999 [1971]:24). In this regard “[s]imilar phenotypes can arise from different genotypes”, while “[s]imilar genotypes can give rise to different phenotypes” depending on the environment in which the organism live (Cavalli-Sforza & Bodmer 1999 [1971]:24). Particularly the work of Cavalli-Sforza, a man who proclaimed that it is “practically impossible to define race” (as quoted in Bowman 2000:142), has formed the groundwork for the study of genomics. While this new field of study is firmly located within the race paradigms of post-World War II anthropology and the social sciences in general as first proposed by UNESCO’s statement on race in 1950, critics are seeing the emergence of a racial logic of old in the contemporary uses of genomics. Genomics has, in some cases, become a resource for the confirmation of existing racial logics and the formulation of groups and collectives (Santos & Maio 2004) – thereby often being “ongoing practices of race-making” (El Haj 2007:223). Faye Harrison’s (1995:49) prediction that race will “assume new forms [in which it could be] reconstructed and manipulated within a range of contemporary contexts” are particularly striking in relation to post-millennium genomics. The resurgence of biology as the encompassing characterisation of the individual or group, the idea that “racial identities are both legible in and fixed by our biology” (Hartigan 2013:372; see also Koenig, Lee & Richardson 2008), once again poses troubling questions for the construction and essentialising of categories and entire populations. As Duana Fullwiley (2011:33) argues, we need to regard “biological bodies [as] thoroughly shaped by cultural, political, and economic forces”.

medical research (to illustrate the inheritance of disease) and would later also serve the science of eugenics where inherited familial traits (often related to race) were drawn upon to determine the quality of the ‘stock’ (Kalling 2013:51).³⁵

The global consequence of eugenic science illustrates the close relation between science and policy during the first quarter of the 20th century. In the United States it was through the likes of zoologist Charles Davenport that eugenic arguments found an attentive audience. Drawing on Mendelism “to evaluate the social problems of America” (Marks 1997:362), Davenport focused on ‘abnormalities’ that included “the incidence of feeble-mindedness, insanity, epilepsy, alcoholism, and criminality” (Hannaford 1996:333). This intertwining of scientific and political concerns saw lawful sterilisation enacted in the United States in 1909 – leaving patients of state mental institutions as well as prison inmates vulnerable to involuntary sterilisation (Stern 2005).

Similarly employing his views to ultimately influence legislation, Madison Grant (an American lawyer who dabbled in eugenics)³⁶ and his co-thinkers were able to provide “a scholarly rationale” for the propagation and eventual implementation of discriminatory laws (Spiro 2009:220). Employing arguments related to the threat of the “lower races” (referring to the “American Indians and the Negro” (Hannaford 1996:358)) Grant argued for more stringent immigration policies in the United States. Fearing “the effects of swamping” with the influx of immigrants from the West Indies, Latin America, and “non-Nordic Europe” (Hannaford 1996:358), both Grant and Davenport³⁷ along with their supporters were able to record success in this regard with the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act in 1924.³⁸

³⁵ The use of genealogies for contributing to “psychiatric and anthropological applications” gained precedence after 1900 (Gausemeier 2005:180). In psychiatry in the early 1900s, it was the prevalence of mental illness within families that became the source of genealogical interest to identify “burdened families” (Gausemeier 2005:179). In the field of anthropology the genealogical method was developed by W.H.R. Rivers (1900) for the purposes of analysing social organisation among those studied. This required extensive interviews for recording names and determining descent as well as speaking to issues of inheritance and succession. While generally applied in the realm of kinship studies, this method has more recently been applied in the collection of social data for statistical purposes (harnessed for conducting household surveys, and research pertaining to migration, and disease).

³⁶ Grant also authored *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) in which he proclaimed the superiority of the aryan race (Marks 1997:363).

³⁷ Davenport’s fear that “the influx of immigrants to the United States threatened to ‘swamp’ better stock” (Hannaford 1996:334) was not unlike the fear of ‘swamping’ aired in South Africa by Herzog during the 1920s.

³⁸ The Immigration Act of 1924, otherwise known as The Johnson-Reed Act, limited the number of immigrants allowed into the United States based on their national origins. It further communicated the provision of “national

Theory *From (and In) the South*

Within South Africa, social engineering strategies were similarly a consequence of anxieties surrounding racial intermingling and influx control. Grant was a great supporter of Britain's approach to the indigenous populations of South Africa – particularly with regards to the “complete segregation of Bantu and white” (Hannaford 1996:358). Notions of racial purity and a racial hierarchy can be found as undertones to discussion of human diversity during the 19th and early 20th century that would have important repercussions for the colonial and settler races of South Africa. Indeed, it was the diversity of populations found at the southern tip of Africa that illuminated the emergence of a new racial entity at the turn of the century.

Described as a population who by 1867 reportedly consisted predominantly of dutch, german and french blood (in that order) (SA History 2011 [online]), the conceptualizations of the *boer* (later termed afrikaner in relation to its racial and cultural heritage) can be found sporadically in literature relating to the theme of race. While mostly considered a degenerate type by British rulers at the time, by the turn of the century scientists such as Karl Pearson would revisit this assumption concerning the *boer* during the South African (Anglo Boer) War (1899-1902).

Pearson (a British mathematician deeply influenced by the work of Quetelet and a strong proponent for eugenic science) postulated the existence of ideal types based on “a statistically representative sample” of a particular race (Stepan 1982:135). His research was driven by the composition of the ‘true’ british population and the preservation of this nation's teutonic (superior) ancestry.³⁹ Concerns about the degeneration of Britain's population were, for Pearson, reflected in the military struggles against the *boer*. Generally described at the time as “a social organism far less highly developed than [the british]” (cited in Stepan 1982:129), Pearson was, by the turn of the century, of the opinion that the *boer* was a ‘hardy’ rather than degenerate population.

origins quotas” while simultaneously completely excluding potential immigrants from Asia (United States State Department 2017 [online]).

³⁹ The term teutonic was employed by William Ripley (1899) to refer to races identified by tall stature, long heads, and light coloured skin and eyes (Leonard 2016:71). It also represented the purest blood (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:321). This designation can be deemed synonymous with Joseph Deniker's (1900) northern race, Arthur De Gobineau (1853) and Houston Steward Chamberlain's (1899) aryan type, and Madison Grant's (1916) nordic race.

Yet Pearson was not the first to allude to the positive genetic make-up of the *boer*. Upon closer inspection of late 19th and early 20th century literature on race one will stumble upon fleeting comments about South Africa's dutch population in relation to theories of racial contact, the merits of heredity versus environmental influences, and an existing human hierarchy. Shortly before Pearson offered his interpretation of the *boer*, the dutch had featured in the work of Joseph Deniker (1900) who proclaimed that “the Dutch of the Transvaal [still bore] a perfect resemblance” to their forefathers after multiple centuries. The dutch also made an appearance in Galton’s writings in the latter half of the 19th century: based on his travels in southern Africa, Galton concluded that the namaqua was a “superior Hottentot race”, who “contained a large infusion of Dutch blood” and appeared to be more civilized than “the Bushmen, and the Damaras” (Galton 1883:204). While Galton at no stage makes a direct claim for the positive influence of dutch blood in relation to the hottentot race, it appears to be a subtext of both his writings and the writings of physical anthropologists more broadly during this period.

The idea of racial mixture between european (dutch/afrikaner) colonisers and indigenous populations was further explored by German anthropologist Eugen Fischer in German South West Africa (modern-day Namibia) where he arrived in 1908. Fischer rose to fame after his ground-breaking study of the rehoboth basters,⁴⁰ a population defined as “descendants of European settlers and local Khoikhoi people” (Kyllingstad 2014:19).⁴¹ Applying a Mendelian approach coupled with genealogical studies, Fischer meticulously studied inherited traits (such as the cephalic index and eye and skin colour) as well as the effects of racial mixing as evident in this hybrid⁴² population (Kyllingstad 2014:19). Convinced that human populations were “distinguishable from [each] other by the tint of the skin, the growth of the hair, the shape of the nose, the lips, and the skull, and by other widely recognized differential characters” (Fischer 1931 [1921]:114), Fischer's approach would dominate anthropological thought in Germany during the interwar years. Indeed, with his publication *Die Rehobother Bastards* (1913),⁴³

⁴⁰ This community, located on a reserve in modern-day Namibia, still employs the term rehoboth basters to refer to themselves (Rehoboth Basters 2011).

⁴¹ This notion of racial mixture between indigenous and european populations will be brought to the fore in Chapter Three.

⁴² This zoological term was generally used to refer to the individuals and groups resulting from racial mixture and thereby also implied racial impurity, racial contamination, or simply a genetic deviation (Teppo 2004:89).

⁴³ The full English translation reads as *The Rehoboth Bastards and the Problem of Miscegenation among Humans*.

Fischer grabbed the attention of a large international audience (including a South Africa one) in the academic, social, and political sphere, and would later influence racial policy as his work marked the beginnings of the *Rassenhygiene* (racial hygiene) movement in Germany (Spencer 1997b:429). His ideas were reiterated in *Menschliche Erblichkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene: Menschliche Auslese und Rassenhygiene (Eugenik)* (1921), or its English version *Human Heredity and Racial Hygiene*, a text co-authored by Fischer and geneticists Erwin Baur and Fritz Lenz. This text became similarly influential in Germany during the 1930s.

The intertwining of race, science, and the state in the German context became most evident with the implementation of policies like the Sterilisation Law (1933), the Denaturalisation Law (1933), and the Nuremberg Laws (1935). According to Spencer (1997b:430) a “concern with issues of racial purity and taxonomy became an increasingly dominant feature of the anthropological literature” during this period. Fischer’s *Die Rehobother Bastards* (1913) “not only captured the ethos of German physical anthropology” at the time, but also embodied the kind of anthropology that would become prevalent after World War I (Spencer 1997b:429) – that is physical anthropology intertwined with genetic studies. Fischer's work was considered a trailblazing effort that successfully brought together Mendelian genetics and anthropology (Kyllingstad 2014:19). Both texts, *Die Rehobother Bastards* (1913) and *Human Heredity* (1921), can still be found on the open shelves of the J.S. Gericke Library of Stellenbosch University.

Scientific ideas related to human measurement and categorization were taken on and employed across the globe. With the rise of eugenic science these ideas were coupled with a new concern with genetics and became central tenets to an active pursuit of an already existing notion of a human hierarchy. It is thus in the era of eugenics (particularly its height during the 1910s and 1920s) that the relationship between science and the state became most pronounced.

Jonathan Marks (1997:363) argues that eugenic ideas as related to elitism and racism had come together in a manner that proved to be “attractive to both liberals and conservatives” in the immediate post-World War I period. The eugenics movement came to embody something that was “progressive, modern, and scientific” (Marks 1997:363). The standardisation of measurements and statistics derived from these measurements played directly into eugenic aspirations; and, as a result, the discipline of anthropology offered scientific notions of particular subjects and became, in some instances, a tool of the state. The measured differences between

various populations “became in the hands of certain people, a forcible political and social argument” (Pittard 1926:20). The height of eugenics can thus be understood as a time “in which the law, science and the public representations of the truth were made to harmonize” (Rabinow 1996:116).

Conclusion

By the 1920s, the discipline of physical anthropology had been employed to study human populations for some time. The importance of visible physical characteristics related to meticulous measurement remained central to this science. So did its ability to encapsulate and essentialise racial characteristics. Ideas about an existing human hierarchy and the active management of human heredity surfaced in the United States, Britain, and the colonies. The introduction of physical anthropology at Stellenbosch University during the interwar period thus coincided with a moment when the eugenics movement was at its height across the globe – a moment when biological determinism was generally accepted and scientific results were (at least in some localities) being used for the development of state policy.

In 1924, students in the Zoology Department at Stellenbosch University were exposed to the tools and theories surrounding the measurement and analysis of the human body. Through Martin’s measurement and description, the science of anthropometry was thought to produce valuable statistics related to human populations (Morris-Reich 2013:499).⁴⁴ References in the textbook to the studies of Eugen Fischer and the propagation of “a Mendelian understanding of heritability and race” (Kyllingstad 2014:91) provided further potency to Martin’s prescribed methods of human measurement. In addition to this textbook (and others prescribed to the students of anthropology as introduced in 1924), the instruments prescribed by Martin to measure ‘qualitative characteristics’ were similarly available in the Zoology Department by 1925 (*Stellenbosch Universiteit Jaarboek* 1925). Thus it was with the help of texts such as Rudolf Martin’s *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie*, Harris H. Wilder’s *Laboratory manual of Anthropometry*,

⁴⁴ In his last publication, *Handbook of Social Hygiene (Anthropometrie: Handbuch der Sozialen Hygiene und Gesundheitsfürsorge)* (1925), Martin addressed “the tasks of the social hygienist” and inserted anthropometry into the domain of social hygienists (Morris-Reich 2013:512). These ideas were eagerly taken up by German eugenicists in the 1930s.

and Marcellin Boule's *Les hommes fossils*, that Stellenbosch students were guided through the science of human origins as well as bodily measurement.

Over the course of the next 30 years Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, Von Luschan's skin colour table (along with a host of other tools for measurement and photographic documentation as prescribed by Martin) were employed for the measurement and documentation of various 'racial' groups in South Africa. But it was in 1925, shortly after physical anthropology was first introduced at Stellenbosch University, that a project was initiated to measure the 'Dutch-speaking' male students of this institution. After years of brief mentions in the literature of racial science, Dutch features became the subject of scrutiny at a university established by Afrikaner nationalists. At Stellenbosch University the newly introduced discipline of physical anthropology graduated from theory to practice only a year after its introduction.

PART I

From Theory to Practice: The Active Employment of Anthropometric Tools at Stellenbosch University

In the first quarter of the 20th century the theoretical basis offered for the existence of different racial groupings (or different human races) became operable through instruments of, and prescribed standards for, human measurement. In South Africa, and more specifically at Stellenbosch University, these instruments arrived in the Zoology Department at the height of the global eugenics movement. It also arrived in the context of a burgeoning afrikaner nationalist movement. Faced with a large non-afrikaner majority (that politically found expression in the ‘native question’, later the ‘coloured question’, as well as the ‘indian question’, and debates on the political inclusion of English-speaking whites especially during the 1920s), and a growing section of poor whites within the ranks of the white afrikaner minority, the establishment of the racial self and other became an important endeavour to ensure the political dominance of this white minority.

In the midst of a growing afrikaner nationalist movement, the academics of Stellenbosch University (established in 1918 as the first Afrikaans-medium University in the country) often became intimately involved with the political debates of the time. The racial self (a white minority identity) was gaining importance in the context of the afrikaner nationalist movement, while the racial other was becoming ever more significant with regards to segregationist policies.

Daston (2000:3) argues that scientific objects are “forged in specific historical contexts and moulded by local circumstances”. At Stellenbosch University the instruments used for measurement came to be the translators of race knowledge.⁴⁵ From 1925 to 1955 Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table were employed to contribute to a conceptualisation of the categories of the racial self and other. In this

⁴⁵ Here one can think of L.S. Vygotsky’s notion of semiotic mediation: that “higher forms of mental functioning are mediated by culturally derived artifacts” (Ferryhough 2008:228). The role of socialisation, artifacts (signs), language and societal structures are thus made manifest through semiotic mediation.

regard the instruments took on an old and familiar role in the discipline of anthropology as “knowledge itself was thought of as embodied in objects” (Stocking 1985:114).

The chapters that follow reveal the scientific engagements (as assisted by the objects of physical anthropology) with the ‘Dutch-speaking’ students of Stellenbosch University (read white afrikaner), the coloured population, and the korana. Chapters Two, Three, and Four thus serve to illustrate how the objects contributed to formulations of racial difference as both measureable and visible – knowledge that was to be used not only within but also outside of this discipline in the decades that followed. Through these engagements, the objects became the translators of science to public and political audiences (Gieryn 1983:782). Scientific race knowledge was made readily available to the layperson and simultaneously became embedded in the everyday structures of society. By the time the Population Registration Act was implemented in 1950 the South African public was legally obliged to apply popular understandings of racial difference outside of the scientific domain in their daily lives. Theory informed practice.

CHAPTER 2

The Measurement and Construction of the ‘Dutch-Speaking’ Whites of South Africa: A Superior European Self Emerges

The poor whiteism of the Afrikaner [...] does not derive from the land [...] It is even less in our blood, because we are children of the resilient and, on the economic terrain, the most enterprising and prosperous peoples of Europe – D.F. Malan, 1916 (cited in Vosloo 2011:4).

When the Ethnological Society of London requested the documentation of “the races of the British Empire” (Maxwell 2008:29-30) through photographs in the 1870s, Britain first and foremost directed their attention to the British population in 1875. Although not yet as deeply concerned with the degeneracy of the British people as Francis Galton and particularly Karl Pearson would become by the turn of the century, by this time a domestic concern with the “national character” of Britain seems to have already developed. Peter Hamilton (2001b:92) observed that this concern possibly stemmed from “the desire to confirm the natural supremacy of the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ or ‘Teuton’ race [which was] thought to have ‘conquered’ early Britain”. The contribution of scientific endeavours to prove the superiority of the Teutonic race also legitimized political dominance and provided a racial justification for imperial expansion (Hamilton 2001b:92).

For many European nations, anthropological studies of its local (white) populations contributed to a sense of a uniform nation and a growing sense of nationalism. Richard McMahon (2016:1) recently characterized the period of 1830 to 1940 as one in which human biology was investigated “in order to reveal the racial ‘true’ identities of European nations”. McMahon (2016:1) observes that forms of classification that could reveal or confirm a relation to particular ‘ethnic families’ (like Teuton or Aryan for instance) became “a key component of national identity”.

Amos Morris-Reich (2016:2) postulates that the notion of race appeared “when the European cultural arena was viewed as rapidly eroding because of accelerated modernization,

industrialization, and urbanization”. Morris-Reich (2016:2) argues, that “[r]ace is ‘discovered’” the moment it is perceived to be “on the verge of collapse” (Morris-Reich 2016:2). In 1920s South Africa a black majority and a large poor white population remained the biggest perceived threats to the future existence of a white minority. Perceived as being “on the verge of collapse”, the biological afrikaner self was thus similarly “discovered” at Stellenbosch University in 1925.

Introduction

By the 1920s race had become politics in the global arena. As eugenic science reached its height, the notion of race sparked laws, foreign policy, and domestic nationalist movements across the world. A drive to determine the categories of self and other were rampant in claims for political control and state rule. David Green (1984:4) argues that “the status of scientific knowledge” stands in direct relationship “to the social context of its production, evaluation and use”. Placed within its social context, knowledge produced can be thought of as related to particular “objectives and interests” as framed by “cultural and historical circumstances” (Green 1984:4).

In this chapter I illustrate how the local South African context in the 1920s similarly stood in relation to the scientific knowledge produced. I will argue that a burgeoning afrikaner nationalist movement, coupled with the threat of a non-white majority, sparked a scientific attempt to determine the categories of self and other – establishing dichotomies which involves the creation of the ‘us’ first, followed by the creation of the ‘other’ (as “degraded, suppressed, exiled”) (Bauman 1991:14). Following trends of physical anthropology in Europe, at Stellenbosch University such investigations began with an attempt to define the white afrikaner self. In the university’s Zoology Department the measurement of ‘male, Dutch-speaking students’ closely followed the department’s acquisition of Rudolf Martin’s eye colour table, Eugen Fischer’s hair colour table, and Felix von Luschan’s skin colour table. Here the use of these instruments, coupled with eugenic ideas, came to reflect the nationalist ideals of a dominant section of the population that required stable and scientifically legitimated forms of racial categorization as well as self-identification. It entailed the conceptualisation of a cohesive and homogenous *volk* (the afrikaner nation). While eugenic arguments only offered partial solutions in the face of the poor white question, the employment of the instruments to establish the superiority of white afrikaners (by relating the population to the ‘tall races of Europe’), as well as their employment to guard against racial mixture, was strongly influential in the scientific study and subsequent

results produced by the Zoology Department. It was in a particular social and political climate that the white male students of Stellenbosch University were requested to offer up their bodies for measurement in 1925.

The Measurement of Male Students at Stellenbosch University

The field of physical anthropology by the 1920s was known for being “concerned with ‘racial’ characters” and more particularly the measurement of adult males as representative of those characters (Penniman 1952[1935]:380). While studies of physical anthropology in the late 19th and early 20th century are commonly perceived to be purely interested in the racial other, as if the white European was a racially known entity, Morris-Reich (2016:31) argues that “racial literature focuse[d] much more on the ‘I’ (the ‘Nordic’, the ‘Aryan’, the ‘German’) than the other (the ‘African’, the ‘Chinaman’, the ‘Semite’ and the ‘Jew’)”. Morris-Reich (2016:31) proposes that the self was also a racialized entity – often no less of a stereotypical representation than representations of the other.

The focus on the white self was significant in that it allowed a basis for comparison with the racial other – the two categories functioning in tandem to fulfil the intended purpose of identification and categorisation (Morris-Reich 2016:31). As McMahon (2016) argues, the conceptualization and characterisation of the racial self can only function in relation to the conceptualisation of the racial other. In the European context, the anthropological study of prisoners of war in German and Austrian camps during World War I conducted by Rudolf Pöch, Wilhelm Doegen and Felix von Luschan, contributed to “the racialization of the enemy” (Morris-Reich 2016:57); yet this came only after the wartime identity of the central powers had already been constructed. Thus the study of prisoners of war both confirmed “what qualified as ‘German’” and “who was excluded from that class” (Morris-Reich 2016:96). Similarly Hans Günther published *Racial science of the German people* in 1922 in which he relates the German people to Aryan sub-types through reference to their physical features (including eye, hair, and skin colour and other facial features) (Kyllingstad 2014:202). It was only after he had offered a conceptualisation of the German self that Günther proceeded to publish the *Racial science of the Jewish people* - thereby providing contrasting, physiological manuals supporting notions of self and other (Kyllingstad 2014:202).

In South Africa a similar need to conceptualise the white self, particularly the white afrikaner self (the *boerevolk* of dutch descent), was manifesting in the midst of social, political and economic threat fuelled by the presence of a black majority. The native question became the national political embodiment of engagements with the racial other in the 1910s and 1920s. A general conceptualisation of the native as ‘tribal’, ‘primitive’, and ‘uncivilized’ (supposed traits that stemmed from colonial engagements) provided the base for perceptions of the inherent otherness of this population when compared to the european whites.

The continued disenfranchisement of the racial other leading up to the establishment of the apartheid state was inherently linked to the safeguarding of a white minority, and (like the immigration debates of the 1920s in Europe and the United States) the idea of ‘swamping’ was drawn upon by South Africa’s (then) Prime Minister J. B. M. Hertzog in his speeches to argue against the extension of political rights to black africans (Dubow 1987:76). According to Saul Dubow (1987:76) these justifications for keeping black africans ‘at bay’ in the 1920s spoke to “the prevailing mood of the time with its paranoia about civilisation’s retrogressive tendencies and its vulnerability in the face of a ‘vigorous’ and ‘virile’ mass of ‘barbarians’”. The safeguarding of the white race, and specifically the protection of the white afrikaner, became central to engagements with the racial other. However, to safeguard this designated group of people required the scientific ‘knowing’ of the self (the afrikaner people or *volk*).

While studies to determine the self may be simply understood as the first step in demarcating self and other, studies of physical anthropology similarly served to confirm a particular bio-social status of its research subjects. For instance, in Norway a state-funded project of the physical anthropology of the Norwegian people was launched during the 1920s – similarly trying to conceptualise a *volk* (nation). Employing the methods of Rudolf Martin, the somatic data of this population was recorded and encapsulated as “the racial survey” (1923-1929) of Norway (Kyllingstad 2014:164). Norwegian anthropologist Halfdyn Bryn, together with Kathryn Schreiner, eventually published *Die Somatologie der Norweger* (The Anthropology of the

Norwegian) in 1929 – the results which were made use of to both create and boost a national character that spoke to a strong, healthy and superior nation.⁴⁶

The anthropological study of male students at Stellenbosch University was reminiscent of the Norwegian study and other similar studies conducted during the first quarter of the 20th century. At the time, physical anthropology was a new addition to the Zoology Department, but this subject had already been introduced at some English medium universities (often finding a home in the medical sciences). The growing interest in physical anthropology in South Africa was generally located in research about the racial other. Matthew Drennan, Raymond Dart, Robert Broom and James Drury were mostly occupied with determining the indigenous racial types found in southern Africa. However, at Stellenbosch University, the interest was with the racial self.⁴⁷ Like much international research into whiteness conducted with a eugenic incentive in mind, the study at Stellenbosch University appears “representative of the new formations of whiteness” (cited in Stephens 2014:2) taking hold during this period.

The study was initiated by Con de Villiers of the Zoology Department. De Villiers had by then completed his PhD studies in Zurich and showed a keen interest in human biology and genetics.⁴⁸ He also happened to be described as “quite a nationalist” (Zimmerman 1935).⁴⁹ Both

⁴⁶ A similar study was launched in Brazil, and the results likewise published in 1929 (see Roquette-Pinto 1929). Although the Brazilian study did not herald the population as a racially pure one, it similarly served to empower a previously disempowered population – confirming their capability to rule themselves. Conducted at the height of the eugenics movement, the Brazilian study illustrates the malleability of eugenic arguments to fit local context.

⁴⁷ The study launched at Stellenbosch University in 1925 was believed to be the first of its kind in South Africa (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:11).

⁴⁸ Within his first few years at Stellenbosch University, De Villiers presented the following papers: *Die algemene probleme rakende die afstamming van die mens* (The general problems concerning the origins of man) (1923) and *Die wette en resultate van die Ewolusieleer* (The laws and results of evolution) (1924). Both were presented to the *Wetenskaplike Vereeniging van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch* (Scientific Society of Stellenbosch University) (*Stellenbosch Universiteit Jaarboek* 1925:310). In 1926 De Villiers presented *Die moderne studie van die gesigsdele en die hare by die mens* (The modern study of human facial parts and hair) as his Presidential lecture for this society (*Stellenbosch Universiteit Jaarboek* 1927:330). Although trained as a zoologist, De Villiers took an interest in physical anthropology having been introduced to this field of study by Otto von Schlaginhaufen, student of Rudolf Martin, during his studies in Zurich.

⁴⁹ De Villiers received an invitation from the Carnegie Corporation for International Peace to guest lecture at a number of American universities (Harvard, University of California, University of Oregon, and the University of New Mexico) in the mid-1930s. During the two years abroad he additionally guest-lectured at the *Citta Universitaria* in Rome, and in 1935 he also guest-lectured at a number of German universities (Universities of Göttingen, Leipzig, Munich, and Breslau) (De Kock & De Kock 2001:119). In the aftermath of his visits he was praised by these universities for his academic excellence. However, the letter from his host at the University of New Mexico remarked that De Villiers was “quite a nationalist” (Zimmerman 1935). In 1936, upon his return to South

his academic interest as well as his political beliefs may have been the driving force behind the project to measure the Dutch-speaking students of Stellenbosch University. And thus, during the course of 1925, some 130 male students lined up to be measured in the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University (*Stellenbosch Universiteit Jaarboek 1925:213*).

Framed as an investigation of “the Dutch-speaking population of South Africa” (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:11) the results obtained from the measurements of only 130 students was deemed “approximately representative of the European population of the Union” (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:11). Individual bodies were lined up to be meticulously measured using calliper-compasses, sliding-compasses, beam-compasses, an anthropometer, and finally a tape measure. While these instruments were variously used to measure the height and circumference of the body and its greater parts (such as the breadth and length of the head as well as the foot, the arm, and the pelvis), smaller measurements went so far as to determine the distance between the inner corners of the eyes, the distance between the pupils, the length, width and height of the nose, as well as the breadth and length of the earlobe. This endeavour marked the first time the newly acquired ‘qualitative instruments’ were put to use and, with them, the newly obtained *Augenfarbentafel*, *Haarfarbentafel*, and *Hautfarbentafel* were also used to determine eye colour, skin colour, and hair colour and texture.

Students who volunteered to participate were taken to a private room in the Zoology Department, placed under a large electric lamp and subjected to a process of measurement that lasted about 20 minutes. The procedure is described by G. C. A. van der Westhuyzen, post-graduate student in the Zoology Department and the eventual author of *An account of anthropometrical and anthroposcopy observations carried out on male students at the University of Stellenbosch* published in 1929, as follows:

Africa, De Villiers’s nationalist (maybe even anti-semitic) tendencies were revealed when he objected to the arrival of the *Stuttgart* (the last ship carrying jewish refugees allowed into South Africa before the tightening of controls in 1936). Alongside his university colleagues, Dr J. Basson, Dr J. A. Wiid, Dr C. G. W. Schumann, and Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, De Villiers publicly protested jewish immigration in the Western Cape. De Villiers spoke especially favourably of the Institute for Anatomy at the University of Göttingen – home to Blumenbach’s large collection of skulls (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen 2015 [online]). In 1935, when De Villiers had guest-lectured there, the Institute listed amongst its personnel Karl Saller, “whose closeness to Nazi politics was no secret” (Ude-Koeller, Knauer & Viebahn 2012:309), and Dr Werner Blume “who were [later] committed to Nazi activism” (Ude-Koeller, Knauer & Viebahn 2012:309). Given his outspoken opposition to jewish immigration in South Africa, it seems the german nationalism may have made a lasting impression on De Villiers.

each individual had to stand erect against the wall, and as closely to it as his heels and buttocks would allow. The occiput [an anatomical term referring to the back of the head], however, should never be allowed to touch the wall for then the head will no longer be in the Frankfort horizontal [a term referring to the anatomical position of the skull that mimics the position of the head as normally found in the living subject]. The position then is that of standing at attention, the arms and fingers hanging down by the side of the body, and the palms of the hands pressed against the thighs. Previously all the points should be located and marked by means of a tiny ink dot on the skin. This procedure is not only safe, but if carefully done, it also ensures more uniformity of results [...] When all points are duly marked and controlled, the person should stand as close to the wall as possible and in the position already indicated. Attention should be paid to the position of the head, which should be in the Frankfurt horizontal position, before the stature can be taken.

The importance of stature stemmed back to early physical anthropology in the late 19th century. Divided into the categories of 'tall', 'medium', and 'short', it was believed that stature could be correlated to racial descent. In *The races of Europe*, published in 1899, William Z. Ripley divided the European races into the categories of Teutonic, Alpine and Mediterranean. The publication offered maps of Europe “detailing the distribution of hair colour and head shape, along with mug-shot photographs of ideal racial types” (Leonard 2016:71). The Teutonic type (overlapping with Joseph Deniker’s Nordic type, and Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s Aryan type) was identifiable partly through its tall stature, long head, and light coloured skin and eyes (Leonard 2016:71). It also “represent[ed] the highest form and the purest blood” (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:321).

In contrast, the Alpine and Mediterranean types were described as having a stature of medium height. Differences in eye, hair, and skin colour were also noticeable in this regard. The Alpine type had a round head (brachycephalic) and intermediate skin and eye colour. The Mediterranean type also donned a long head, but had dark coloured eyes and dark coloured skin (Leonard 2016:71). It was even postulated that the Mediterranean type had the lowest cephalic (or cranial)

index and thus, if located within the human hierarchy, would illustrate the “greatest resemblance to Africans” (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:321).⁵⁰

The science of human measurement was often drawn upon to relate specific populations to one of the European types and thus to claim a superior status.⁵¹ Teutons (or Nordics, or Aryans) were viewed as the “most superior in their physiological and mental characteristics” and thereby the most “capable of ruling the world” (Sharma & Sharma 1997:69). In stark contrast, it should be noted, were the short-statured pygmies of the Congo Basin – believed by some to be the missing link between man and ape (Clarke 2007:26).⁵²

For the study at Stellenbosch University all measurements and observations were conducted as prescribed by Martin in *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie*. By the end of the procedure the subjects had been exposed to 70 bodily measurements, 49 measurements of the head and facial features, and five somatoscopic observations (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:2). In the Frankfurt horizontal position the stature of the students measured between 1,700 mm and 1,799 mm. According to the prescriptions of Rudolf Martin this placed the subjects within “the tall group” of races (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:11). Van der Westhuyzen (1929:12) thus concluded: “Here then is some definite proof of the common opinion that the South African European is of tall stature”.⁵³

⁵⁰ These typologies proved to be especially influential in the eugenic debates that ensued in the early 20th century. In the United States Madison Grant premised his argument for stricter immigration controls on a distinction to be made between Nordic [Teutonic] immigrants (English, Scandinavians, and Germans) and ‘degenerate types’ [Mediterranean and Alpine types] such as Italians, Slavs and Jews (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:321). In the 1930s the Nazis similarly drew on this concept to pursue an agenda of legislated racial hygiene. In *Jews and race: writings on identity and difference, 1880-1940*, an edited volume that speaks to the contradiction within racial typology. Moritz Goldstein (2011:255) was thus led to conclude: “[t]he theory of Teutonism [...] teaches us what a dangerous science anthropology is” (Goldstein 2011:255).

⁵¹ John Beddoe conducted a study of the Scottish male population only to claim in 1866 that the Scots were on average “taller than their English counterparts, by 3.71 cm, and taller than their Welsh counterparts, by 2.72 cm” (cited in Riley 2000:107). The measurement of stature was central to anthropological investigations of the various populations. The study of the stature of military recruits was also a popular avenue to pursue in physical anthropology. Beddoe similarly measured Scottish military recruits, as did Alphonse Bertillon in France in the late 19th century, and Rudolf Pösch and Egon von Eickstadt in Germany during World War I.

⁵² In 1906 Ota Benga, a Congolese pygmy measuring four feet and eleven inches, was famously displayed in the Bronx Zoo alongside a monkey to illustrate this link. At the time American eugenicist, and later author of *The passing of the great race*, Madison Grant was the secretary of the zoo (Clarke 2007:18).

⁵³ This outcome described by Van der Westhuyzen indicates the linkage between not only the kinds of engagements with the white races of Europe (as conducted during 1929 in Norway by Bryn and Schreiner), but similarly follows the logic of another ‘discovery’ of the white self – namely, the search for ‘Normman’ by the American Museum of Natural History in the United States. Normman, a fictional statistical ideal of the supposed average American man,

In a neatly outlined box illustration containing columns marked ‘Race’, ‘Mean Stature’, and ‘Author’ (of the study in which comparable statistics could be found), Van der Westhuyzen provided his reader, in ascending order, with the stature measurements of the french, the belgians, the dutch, the polish, the danish, the swedish, the norwegians, the english, and the scottish – all with references to the original anthropometric studies.⁵⁴ Compared to these statistics available at the time, the Stellenbosch students had the largest height average; they were seemingly the tallest of all the european races.

Through cephalic measurements it was also concluded by Van der Westhuyzen (1929:32) that his subjects belonged to “the mesocephalic group” – a group to which the english, scottish, irish, americans, and hollanders similarly belonged (Skinner 1955:97). With regards to the nose height and width, the subjects were allocated to the ‘leptorrhine’ group (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:34), the nose being “narrow and high” (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:35). At this stage it was assumed and accepted that the relative length of the nose was “considered to be a significant racial characteristic” (Skinner 1955:113) and found to be low “in the Black Races” (Grobelaar 1963:410). With regards to the shape of the eye, it was found that the “majority of students presented *straight, moderate, spindle-shaped eye-slits*” while “some had *slanting eye-slits*” (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:58, original emphasis).

A somatoscopic summary of the subjects revealed that skin colour was fairly light (falling between numbers 12 and 13 on the Von Luschan table), that the hair colour ranged from “very dark to light brown” on the Fischer table, and that the eye colour ranged between numbers 2 and

was calculated from the measurements of decommissioned World War I soldiers (Cryle & Stephens 2017:373). Created to “to prove a eugenic point” Normman was “an aspirational figure, the idealized embodiment of the physical and mental elite of young white American masculinity” (Cryle & Stephens 2017:373). In the same manner that this ‘search’ limited its participants to physically fit males, the South African study at Stellenbosch University likewise saw a limiting of its data pool. While conducting the study at a university both allowed the research to occur within a controlled and well-equipped environment (as well as under the guidance of trained and academically versed professionals), it also limited the source of these measurements to individuals who were likely to have been subjected to both a degree of socio-economic affluence (hence their enrolment at a private university) as well as been at a ‘prime’ physical age when enrolled and thus measured. By measuring young male students at an exclusively white institution, results were thus guaranteed to be in keeping with eugenic notions of the racial superiority of white South Africans.

⁵⁴ Here Van der Westhuyzen made reference to Beddoe’s 1866 study of those living in the Scottish Highland, Houzé’s 1883 study of the european population, Daae’s 1885 study of nordic students, Pearson’s 1899 study of the british population, Retzius and Fürst’s 1902 study of the swedish population, and Ribbing’s 1908 study of the danish population.

16 on Martin's table (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:51-56). For Van der Westhuyzen (1929:56), the predominance of light eye colour was to be expected given the light skin colour and light hair colour of his subjects. A general correlation between skin, eye and hair colour as simultaneously related to racial affinity was perceived as an accepted fact in the literature of physical anthropology at the time. For comparative purposes, it was highlighted that the occurrence of intermediate eye colour was almost identical to that found in the German population, yet the occurrence of light coloured eyes among the South African students was almost twice as high in number (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:57).

In the published results of the study constant comparisons were made with the European races – the research subjects illustrating “a remarkable correspondence” (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:41). The various categorizations were used here to indicate the close relation between white South Africans and the white populations of Europe. In Van der Westhuyzen's 1929 report, this was continuously highlighted and statistically supported by the documented sitting height of the students of which the “mean value for South African Students [...] tallie[d] well with those of other European races” (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:41). It was also hard to ignore the relation of height to historical perceptions of the “tall-statured Aryans” – a reference that would be alluded to by Coert Grobbelaar (1963:571) in his studies of the white population of South Africa almost 35 years later. The establishment of white South Africans belonging to the “tall races of Europe” seemed to have carried a substantial amount of significance for subsequent studies as it was both referred to and supported by later publications stemming from the Stellenbosch University's Zoology Department. The conclusions drawn by Van der Westhuyzen thus alluded to a construction of the white, Dutch-speaking South African self in terms of its likeness to European types.

The notion of “racial likeness” as postulated by Karl Pearson (1926) seems to have been informative of this logic.⁵⁵ In the European context such studies dated back to the latter half of the 19th century: for instance, Armand De Quatrefages published *La Race Prussienne* in 1871 to prove that “the Prussians were not Teutonic at all, but were descended from the Finns, who were

⁵⁵ The term ‘coefficient of racial likeness’ referred specifically to resemblance found between races as related to skull measurement. However, the logic of racial likeness is more broadly applied in this case.

classed with the Lapps as alien Mongolian intruders into Europe” (Haddon 1910:44). Thus in many of these anthropological studies aligned particular racial categories to ruling notions of superiority or inferiority, as well as to identities of self and other. At Stellenbosch University, Van der Westhuyzen’s (1929:41) results left the reader with a stark reminder of the European likeness found in the Dutch (Afrikaans)-speaking subjects – a conclusion that was “applicable also to [white] South Africans in general”:

The meso-chamae-tapeincochepalic head form, the moderate broadness of the face and of the root of the nose, which in itself is coupled with a relatively preponderant leptorrhiny, while the face in general seems to be of a leptoprosopic character, are all extremely interesting features. The rather large percentage of incidence of epicanthus in these individuals is also a noteworthy point, which seems to demand some further investigation. The Mongolian folds [or Epicanthic fold referring to a fold of the skin of the upper eyelid that covers the inner corner of the eye]⁵⁶ have a low percentage incidence, as may be expected (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:63).

While it was due to an “unwillingness on the part of many students to present themselves for observation” (Van der Westhuyzen 1929:64) that Van der Westhuyzen’s (1929) study had to make use of relatively few subjects,⁵⁷ he was not deterred from drawing general conclusions about white South Africans from these results. It is in the commentary on, as well as references back to, this study in later years that the attempt to relate white South Africans to other Europeans of tall stature is most clearly illustrated. Subsequent studies from the Zoology Department reiterated this connection. It was seemingly an important association to establish as it implied (and confirmed) the racial superiority of whites in South Africa when compared to the country's indigenous races.

⁵⁶ The Epicanthic (or Mongolian) fold is commonly related to geographical distribution and is believed to predominate in certain population groups – specifically those of Asian descent. It is also found in other population groups.

⁵⁷ The low number of participants was noted in a review of the study published in *Anthropologischer Anzeiger* in 1930. Providing a brief summary of the findings the review stated that the values and tables seem to be in order, but conclusions were tentative due to the low number of participants (Bach 1930:50).

But the study also contributed to an imagining of the white South African self. Similar to anthropological studies of European nations (the collective European self), the study at Stellenbosch University confirmed the existence of “transnational communities of blood, history and destiny” that could further “demonstrate the superiority of [the] national race” (McMahon 2016:17-18). As elsewhere, such findings proved to be politically useful as they could be employed to support “particular social ideologies” (McMahon 2016:17-18). The relation of white South African students to the tall races of Europe fostered both a sense of a white ‘Europeanness’ coupled with a sense of superiority and a quasi-colonial justification for white rule.

The Poor White Problem: A Population Reconsidered

Although not the last anthropometric study to be conducted at Stellenbosch University, the importance of measuring white students in the mid-1920s and the publication of these results in 1929 becomes particularly interesting when considering the historical moment in which these events occurred. Many authors (see Hyslop 1995; Roos, 2003; and Willoughby-Herard 2015 amongst others) have written about how the poor whites of South Africa were conceived as a redeemable rather than inherently unfit population. The status of whites as a minority group, coupled with aspirations of white Afrikaner rule, certainly contributed to this disposition (Giliomee 2003:315). However, a conceptualisation of the white Afrikaner as belonging to the “tall races of Europe” appear to have similarly contributed – at least discursively.

The study produced by the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University had inferred a biological superiority of the white Afrikaner race by likening it to the superior races of Europe. However, the study also confirmed that those whites who fell below this measurable ideal (be this in relation to physical, socio-economic, or behavioural characteristics) should be considered as redeemable. Thus unlike many parts of the world that had essentially ‘written off’ supposedly degenerate classes of Europeans (in the eugenic sense of the word), South Africa's poor white population was seen as one that could be salvaged. Far from the degenerate status previously attributed to the *boer* by the British colonists, the toolkit of physical anthropology had been harnessed by members of this population to produce scientific results that proved the inherent strength of this racial group.

Although eugenics was a worldwide science, its popularity and ability to take hold of scientific theory and practice in various localities across the world seemingly “varied widely according to the specific issue at stake” (Crook 2002:364). This insight corresponds to the work done by Diane Paul (1998), Nancy Stepan (1991), and Frank Dikötter (1998) who have illustrated the multidimensional nature of eugenics as a global science. This “science was constantly conditioned by context” (Crook 2002:374), and physical anthropology had been and continued to be harnessed towards nationalist ends.⁵⁸ In the context of the 1920s, eugenic ideas were rampant in many parts of the world, yet the crudity of their application differed from one location to the next. Even in its global reach, eugenics was appropriated in a variety of ways dependent on the local setting in which it landed, flourished, or dissipated.

In South Africa, eugenic-related ideas surfaced in a number of discussions related to levels of intelligence, miscegenation, and degeneration – a discourse that was mostly inspired by the poor white problem and inter-racial contact in the country’s urban slums. In this country, as well as globally, it was thus a subtle language of eugenics that was part of most scientific circles during the 1920s. As argued by Frank Dikötter (1998:467):

eugenics belonged to the political vocabulary of virtually every significant modernizing force between the two world wars [... its] main tenets were embraced by social reformers, established intellectuals, and medical authorities from one end of the political spectrum to the other.

As has been argued by Saul Dubow (2010), in the South African context eugenic science was used as a scavenger piece – selectively utilized and adapted for specific political purposes while often lacking an “internal logic” (Dubow 2010:286). Indeed, Susanne Klausen (1997:30) argues that when it came to the poor white problem “varying degrees of emphasis [were placed] on the

⁵⁸ In 1920s Brazil physical anthropology was similarly employed for nationalist purposes. Driven by “an emerging interest in the types that made up the Brazilian people” (Santos 2012:S24), soldiers from across the country were subjected to measurement. According to Ricardo Santos (2012:S25), this study was informed by a political agenda whose ultimate aim was to illustrate that “the Brazilian (mestizo) people themselves were capable of settling the land and exploring the country’s resources”. The study set out to disprove the assumption that the Brazilian people were comprised of an inferior race – one with a “weak (racial) constitution” or one consisting of “raceless masses” (Santos 2012:S27). The study of the Brazilian people in the 1920s thus became a nationalist project to liberate the people “from the shackles imposed by racist ideals” (Santos 2012:S27).

role of heredity and environmental influence”. For instance, Grobbelaar's later research activities into the normative physical growth of white children saw anthropological studies drawn upon to identify ‘enfeebled’ individuals that needed rehabilitation. Thus (while eagerly embracing arguments related to racial typology within the realm of physical anthropology) the evaluation of poor whites revealed both a eugenic language alongside a strong Boasian belief in the influence of the environment upon physical characteristics.⁵⁹ The two (seemingly contradictory) theoretical trends came together in one argument to postulate that an inherently superior population had been crippled by their environment. Contradictions and paradoxes were often rife. The position of poor whites in South Africa was being reconsidered for political purposes.

The Poor White Problem in South Africa – a report of the investigation into poor whiteism in South Africa published in 1932 – reiterated the capabilities of white South Africans as a superior race. Drawing on the work of M.L. Fick (1927, 1929),⁶⁰ it was claimed by Stellenbosch psychologist R. W. Wilcocks that “the majority of poor white children [and] poor white adults possess[ed] normal, and, in part, even more ordinary innate intelligence” (cited in Butchart 1998:117).⁶¹ The study of and subsequent report on the poor white problem were both part of an important moment in the conceptualisation of poor whites in South Africa.

The first conceptualisation of this population (offered by the Dutch Reformed Church Commission for Poor Relief in the early 1920s) concluded that a poor white was “a person who has become dependent to such an extent, whether from mental, moral, economic or physical causes, that he is *unfit*, without help from others, to find proper means of livelihood for himself” (cited in Grosskopf 1932:18, own emphasis). In ‘Part One’ of *The Poor White Problem in South*

⁵⁹ In terms of anthropological theory it seems that those investigating the poor white question seemingly embraced the influence of the environment above the role of fixed, heritable, and unchanging characteristics. In the United States, Franz Boas had challenged the widespread assumption that all characteristics were inherent with no noticeable influence by environmental factors based on his own anthropometric studies of immigrants in the United States between 1908 and 1910 (Penniman 1952[1935]:285). In ‘Changes in Bodily Form of Descendants of Immigrants’ Boas (1912) argued that “long headed immigrants to the United States tend to change their head-shape within a period of about ten years” (Penniman 1952[1935]:285). At the time, Boas’s argument was not generally accepted. In the United States it was rather the work of Charles Davenport and Madison Grant that found an attentive audience. But in the 1930s there was a turn in some parts of the international academic community to reconsider his findings.

⁶⁰ See Fick (1929), *Intelligence test results of poor white, native (Zulu), coloured, and Indian school children and the educational and social implications*, and Fick (1939) *The educability of the South African native*.

⁶¹ Wilcocks (1932:69) also concluded that “the ‘average intelligence’ of Africans was equivalent to that of ‘mentally defective whites’” (cited in Butchart 1998:117).

Africa, a shift in the interpretation of this population can be noted. Here J. F. W. Grosskopf (1932:19) defined the poor whites as victims of “the process of impoverishment, with its sequels of moral and spiritual degradation”. In this second conceptualisation, poor whites were thus no longer viewed as an inherent strain on society. Rather, poor whites were the casualties of their environment. As argued by Herman Giliomee (2003:315), “the poor deserved assistance because they faced problems that were not of their own making”. They were victims that could be rehabilitated because of their natural superior capabilities.

Underlying this belief regarding poor whiteism were 19th century proclamations related to the hardiness of the *boerevolk*, of which the most prominent examples were those of medical geographer Luigi Sambon (1897) who described *boere* as “fair, tall and robust [...] the finest men in South Africa” (cited in Barnard 2006:146). Similar praises had been sung by Pearson about the *boer* during the South African War.

But *The Poor White Problem in South Africa* illuminated another, more pressing, concern. While the poor white population was largely viewed as redeemable, their close proximity to coloureds and natives in urban slums was suggested as a cause of concern; it posed a direct threat to the future purity of the white race.

The study of male Dutch-speaking students at Stellenbosch University had related this population to the “tall races”, to the teuton or nordic races, to the “most superior” race worthy of rule (Sharma & Sharma 1997:69). However, the biggest threat to their superior status was racial mixture that would see a detrimental addition to the physiological and mental superiority of the teutonic race (Sharma & Sharma 1997:69). E. G. Malherbe, who contributed to *The Poor White Problem in South Africa*, seemingly drew inspiration from this type of thinking by proclaiming that poor whites were “a menace to the self-preservation and prestige of the white people, living [...] in the midst of the native population” (cited in Giliomee 2003:346). Racial mixture was deemed threatening to both the rehabilitation of the poor whites, as well as an afrikaner nationalist movement that thrived on notions of racial purity.⁶²

⁶² The issue of racial mixture will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three in relation to the coloured population.

The rehabilitation of poor whites thus required the policing of whiteness, particularly in relation to bodily and spatial borders. Klausen (1997:49) is thus of the opinion that white fears “crystallized in a eugenic discourse on blacks, 'Coloureds' and Asians as toxic threats to white germ plasm and civilization”. As a racial minority the possibility of miscegenation and thus the degeneration of whites became a central concern not only for eugenicists, but also a growing afrikaner nationalist movement that needed to mobilise a white minority for political purposes. Racial segregation thus became a remedy to the overall preservation of a pure white race (Teppo 2004:33).

Amongst other things, homogenising and preserving the white self required a clear distinction between whites and impure racial elements – a need that became ever more clear after the publication of *The Poor White Problem in South Africa* in 1932. The Zoology Department at Stellenbosch University seemingly took notice and, in 1937, turned their attention to the racial other by launching an anthropometric study of coloured males in the Stellenbosch area (to be discussed in Chapter Three). However, the increasing number of studies related to the racial self continued to characterise the agenda of physical anthropology at Stellenbosch University throughout the following decades.

The Measurement of Male Students: An Anthropological Study of the *Boerevolk*?

In November 1941 an anonymous ‘Buurman’ (translating to ‘Neighbour’) contributed a two page article in *Wapenskou* – the official publication of the *Afrikaner Nasionale Studentebond* (ANS) and the mouthpiece for rightist political views during World War II. In *The necessity of anthropological survey of the Boer people (Die noodsaaklikheid van antropologiese opname van die Boerevolk)*,⁶³ Buurman acknowledged the numerous studies conducted on indigenous peoples, with specific reference to Fischer’s study of the rehoboth basters. Postulating the existence of a “racial unit stemming from the white races of Europe in a part of the world that differs geographically as well as climatologically from Europe” (Buurman 1941:42, own

⁶³ The specific term *boerevolk* or *boerenasie*, as racial designations, was similarly employed by sociologist Geoff Cronjé, geneticist Gerrie Eloff, and *volkekundige* P. J. (Pieter) Coertze. These academics argued for the superiority of this group of people who were believed to be of western european descent and the beacons of civilization in South Africa. See Chapter Five for further discussions.

translation), Buurman suggested that this new 'biological unit' known as the *boerevolk* required further investigation.

Buurman was speaking to the possibility of new racial formations stemming from intermixture (in this case between the dutch, german and french who settled in South Africa). With reference to an unknown study pertaining to the measurement of 400 men, Buurman (1941:43) claimed that the *boer* had outgrown his northern ancestors. The identity of the anonymous Buurman remains a mystery, but the author was seemingly familiar with existing studies as well as the methods employed in physical anthropology to determine racial affinity. The author was also familiar with the possible challenges in measuring skin colour, for as he argued:

An anthropological survey of the colour of the skin will be a timely process because the determination of skin colour is hard and requires practice with the coloured blocks [Von Luschan's skin colour table] – much harder to employ than the other instruments available (Buurman 1941:43, own translation).⁶⁴

As a final request in his article, Buurman (1941:43) reached out to the government to launch an anthropological investigation of the *boerevolk*.

Curiously enough, it was in the same year as the anonymous Buurman's (1941) plea that the research on white male students continued at Stellenbosch University. This time it was Grobbelaar who spearheaded the study. A zoologist by training, Grobbelaar started his undergraduate studies with Robert Broom – a man who showed a keen interest in fossils (especially those of skulls) and their relation to the origins of man and racial composition (Tobias 1997:223-225).

Grobbelaar pursued his PhD studies at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin and obtained his doctoral degree in 1923. Upon his return to Stellenbosch University, he joined De Villiers at the Zoology Department. It was De Villiers who familiarised Grobbelaar “with the anthropometric techniques that he learned in Zurich” (De Kock & De Kock 2001:118). In fact,

⁶⁴ Original text: “'n Antropologiese opname van die huidskleur sal 'n langdurige werk wees, want die bepaling van huidskleur is moeilik en vereis oefening met die kleurblokkies wat moeiliker is as dié met die ander toestelle” (Buurman 1941:43).

Grobbelaar was so taken by these anthropometric studies that he departed for Munich in 1939 to pursue further studies in physical anthropology. But he was forced to return to South Africa in the same year due to the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 (S2A3 2015 [online]). Had his plans worked out, Grobbelaar “would have been trained in one of the most extreme of the German schools of racial science” (Spencer cited in Morris 2012:154).

Upon his return, Grobbelaar spent a year studying physical anthropology with Matthew Drennan at the University of Cape Town (UCT) (Morris 2012:154).⁶⁵ His plans to equip himself with the latest developments in physical anthropology followed Stellenbosch University’s announced plans for establishing the Department of Physical Education. An invitation was extended to Grobbelaar to teach physical anthropology to the students of the new department – a task taken up by him in 1940.⁶⁶ According to Grobbelaar (1964:1), the objective of this course for was “to teach the methods and techniques used by physical anthropologists for the determination of standard body measurements, and the proper use of apparatus”.⁶⁷ The course required students of the Department of Physical Education to “familiarize themselves with the classic and modern literature of the various disciplines” for which knowledge of the German language was ‘essential’ (*Stellenbosch Universiteit Jaarboek* 1960:247, own translation).

⁶⁵ Although initially appointed as a lecturer of anatomy at UCT, Drennan’s anthropological interests in the populations of southern Africa became his primary research focus in the 1920s (Louw 1969:194) and would later secure his prominence as UCT’s physical anthropologist. At UCT Drennan would later offer courses in physical anthropology and produce a published volume on the subject in 1937 (Morris & Tobias 1997:968).

⁶⁶ This department was established in the latter half of the 1930s after the “need [for physical education as related to growth and nutrition] had become widely recognized” (Grobbelaar 1964:1). This ‘need’ had been identified shortly after the release of the report on the poor whites of South Africa. In *The Poor White Problem in South Africa* (1932) W. A. Murray discussed the shortcomings and long-term effects of bad nutrition in relation to this population and “the various factors that undermine the health of the poor in all parts of South Africa”. It highlighted the need for an extensive bodily knowledge of the white population (particularly related to issues of health). It seemingly sparked further action at Stellenbosch University where physical education became incorporated as a course to study the human body as related to nutrition and general health. It was in 1939 that a three-year diploma course and a one-year certificate course in physical education were instated (Thom et al 1966:117).

⁶⁷ The relation between physical anthropology and physical education stemmed from the early 20th century. In the American context, anthropometry had in fact been a major part of physical education since the late nineteenth century. Here studies relying on student measurement were conducted at both Amherst College (initiated by Professor Edward Hitchcock of the Department of Physical Education and Hygiene) and Harvard (where about 18 000 students were measured between 1880 and 1917) (Malina 1997:91). Professor Edward Hitchcock, of Amherst College, proclaimed: “The ultimate and philosophical aim of anthropometry is to ascertain the ideal or typical man and this must be the result obtained before we can do our best work” (cited in Malina 1997:90). Even within the realm of physical education the role of physical anthropology was to determine a ‘type’ for comparative purposes.

Drawing on his training under Drennan, the work of Rudolf Martin, and his unwavering interest in physical anthropology, Grobbelaar set in motion the somatometrical measurements of 50 male students of Stellenbosch University from 1941 to 1944 (*Stellenbosch Universiteit Jaarboek* 1942:35, 1943:29, 1945:35).⁶⁸ For Grobbelaar (1948:53), the importance of physical anthropology in this study was to investigate “the normal standards of physique of [the] adult European population, of the Coloured Races and of the Bantu”. Emphasising the “practical applications” of anthropometry, Grobbelaar (1948:53) argued that “the method ha[d] been extensively and fruitfully applied in medicine, eugenics, social hygiene and physical education”. Through physical anthropology, and specifically “[i]n the field of race hygiene or eugenics”, anthropometry could be implemented to study and determine a course for the “biological rehabilitation of subnormal individuals” (Grobbelaar 1948:57).

Drawing on the work of Eugen Fischer, Grobbelaar (1948:53-54) argued that the body’s physical constitution was heritable and that specific characteristics within the body were often linked to a particular race. Early 20th century forms of racial typology were seemingly still informing Grobbelaar’s physical anthropology within the post-World War II period. Within the realm of nutritional studies (as closely related to the methods of physical anthropology and anthropometry), outward features and corporeal indices were directly related to the internal workings of the body. In postgraduate studies produced by Grobbelaar’s students between 1940 and 1945, physical attributes (or the physique in general) were often related to innate capabilities such as intelligence.⁶⁹ Physical anthropology thus remained a tool for deducing invisible differences from visible characteristics. It similarly remained a tool for comparative purposes.

Concluding his speech to the *South African Association for the Advancement of Science* in 1947, Grobbelaar (1948:60) made the following statement:

⁶⁸ In 1944 he presented *Anthropometric investigations carried out upon physical education students of Stellenbosch University* as a public lecture in Cape Town (*Stellenbosch Universiteit Jaarboek* 1945:22).

⁶⁹ See for instance N. B. K. Roothman, *Die verband tussen liggaamlike en geestelike prestasies: soos ondersoek by 'n groep van 60 skoolseuns tussen die ouderdomme 11-18, in Standards V, VII, IX en X te Worcester* (The relationship between physical and mental performance, as explored in a group of 60 schoolboys between the ages of 11-18, in Standards V, VII, IX and X at Worcester) (1942); P. B. Kemp, *Ondersoek na die korrelasie tussen liggaamsbou en skolastiese prestasie* (Investigating the correlation between physique and scholastic achievement) (1944); and H. N. B. de Villiers, *Die invloed van liggaamsopvoeding op die geestelike prestasies van skoolkinders* (The influence of physical education on the mental performance of schoolchildren) (1945).

The sum total of the results obtained from [anthropometric] researches would provide us with that knowledge of the heredity, composition, physique and potentialities of the diverse races in the Union which is also essential to the framing of policies for the preservation and development of the most valuable genetic types of the population and for the maintenance of peaceful relations between the ethnic groups in South Africa.

For Grobbelaar physical anthropology produced evidentiary results. From the outset he understood the discipline as useful for political and legislative use, and until the end of his career he regarded this discipline as important to establish “comparisons with Western peoples of the same racial stock” (Grobbelaar 1964:1).

Grobbelaar continued his measurement of university students throughout the 1940s. By the end of the decade, 133 male students had been subjected to measurement in a room in the Zoology Department that by then had been permanently allocated and equipped for anthropometric studies. Based on his findings, Grobbelaar published ‘The distribution of and correlation between eye, hair and skin colour in male students at the University of Stellenbosch’ in the *Annals of the University of Stellenbosch* in 1952. In this article, Grobbelaar (1952:2) identified pigmentation (of the eye, skin and hair) as an inherited characteristic – reiterating a commonly accepted fact in the fields of both genetics and physical anthropology. These biological aspects of the human, Grobbelaar argued (1952:2), remained constant with little variation or environmental adaptation over time.

With the assistance of Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table, Grobbelaar was able to provide statistics of occurrence as found in his male student subjects. It was found that 30.1% of the students had brown eyes, 43.6% had intermediate coloured eyes, and 26.4% had blue eyes.⁷⁰ With the support of Fischer’s hair colour table it was found that 2.1% of the students had black hair, 82.3% had brown hair, 2.1% had red hair (relating closely to the 2.5% found amongst the population of the Netherlands and thus “not

⁷⁰ Although Martin’s eye colour table had a range of 16 different eye colours it was customary to divide the total into three categories: numbers 1-6 were deemed blue in colour, numbers 6/7-12 were deemed intermediate, and numbers 12/13 -16 were deemed brown in colour (Grobbelaar 1952:7).

surprising if one bears in mind the fact that the students examined were mostly of Dutch descent or either one or both of the parents were English, Irish, Scotch or German” (Grobbeelaar 1952:8)), and 13.3% were blond.⁷¹ For the measurement of skin colour Grobbeelaar employed Von Luschan’s skin colour table and found that 14.2% of the students had “off white untanned skin [correlating with numbers 7 and 8]”, 64.8% had “carmine white skin [correlating with numbers 9 to 13]”, and 29% had “dark carmine white (beige) skin [correlating with numbers 14 to 18]” (Grobbeelaar 1952:10). Drawing on existing conclusions in the field of physical anthropology and Mendelian genetics, Grobbeelaar (1952:5) reiterated the “definite correlation between eye and skin colour” and “a correlation between hair and eye colour”. Grobbeelaar also stated that this correlation was sometimes interrupted by “crossings between races” (Grobbeelaar 1952:5) – a disruption that could potentially pose a conundrum to government officials tasked with the act of racial classification.

The timing of Grobbeelaar's article was curious. It was published within less than two years after the introduction of the Population Registration Act of 1950, and less than a year after the “first round of mass racial classification” occurred in 1951 (Posel 2001a:57). Although apartheid racial classification rested on race as both a social and biological construct – and was thereby often reliant on commonsense notions of race on the part of government officials (Posel 2001a:64) – the occurrence of physical features such as skin, hair, and eye colour as well as hair texture played an important role. In fact, in apartheid South Africa, skin colour became a primary factor for racial classification.⁷²

Official racial classifications under the Population Registration Act were, however, not unproblematic as evidenced by the number of cases brought before the Race Classification Appeal Boards. For instance, a man who self-identified as coloured, had a fair skin colour and blue eyes was classified as native (Posel 2001a:58). As a result, physical anthropologists and geneticists were often called upon by appellants “to testify that their physical features (such as

⁷¹ Similar to the grouping of categories on Martin’s eye colour table, it was also customary to group together all shades of brown (numbers 4-8 and numbers 28-30) and group together all shades of blond (numbers 8-26) when using Fischer’s hair colour table (Grobbeelaar 1952:7).

⁷² In addition to skin colour (or complexion), eye and hair colour as well as the texture of the hair became markers for classificatory purposes during apartheid (South African Institute of Race Relations 1958:32).

skin, hairs, ears, and nose) did not conform to the racial category officially assigned to them” (Posel 2001b:107).

The significance of Grobbelaar’s article may have been exactly located in this fact. Establishing close correlations between hair, eye and skin colour could have proved to be beneficial to the act of racial classification under apartheid. Whether the apartheid government was following Grobbelaar’s research and results cannot be confirmed, but Grobbelaar was certainly following what he perceived to be important political events related to his research, and may have attempted to respond to state concerns through his work. Grobbelaar concluded that a significant correlation was found between hair and eye colour, while the correlation between skin and eye colour was found to be insignificant.

While Grobbelaar did by no means directly provide the scientific underpinnings for a system of racial classification in South Africa, his research and commentary illustrates the interest in race as a biological construct in the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University. The research that stemmed from studies of physical anthropology in the Zoology Department (and published in the *Annals of the University of Stellenbosch University*) remained mainly confined to the institutional realm of Stellenbosch University. Thus, while Grobbelaar was well-known by other South African physical anthropologists (he frequently attended their conferences), and received funding from the National Council for Research for his studies, his work and results seemingly remained Stellenbosch-centered.⁷³ What his work *does* indicate, however, is that arguments related to racial difference (as based on measureable and visible features) were present at Stellenbosch University – an institution that remained central in the development of the apartheid state.

A Swan Song for Measurement

Martin’s eye colour table, Von Luschan’s skin colour table, and Fischer’s hair colour and texture table were first employed to measure the male students of Stellenbosch University (representative of the white self) in 1925. Over the course of the next three decades the objects

⁷³ Grobbelaar might not have necessarily brought his ideas to the government himself but they did eventually travel to state level through other individuals at Stellenbosch who were aware of his work. This introduction of his ideas and their implications for state policy will be illustrated in Chapter Six.

would be employed in numerous studies, but from 1953 to 1954 they were employed for a final time for purposes of measurement. The active use of the objects ended where it started: with the male students of Stellenbosch University. Over the course of two years 300 male students were measured by J. H. Skinner, a post-graduate student in the Zoology Department, to determine the percentage distribution of the six european races as outlined in Deniker's publication *The Races of Man: An Outline of Anthropology and Ethnography* (1900).⁷⁴

Skinner's study in Stellenbosch was reminiscent of mid to late 19th century anthropology that sought to relate groups and individuals to the "essential nature" of the "original races" (McMahon 2016:96). Like his predecessors in the Zoology Department, Skinner employed the eye, hair, and skin colour tables along with Rudolf Martin's textbook to measure his subjects (Skinner 1955:80). The results of Skinner's measurement of non-metrical characters, the eye, hair and skin colour closely resembled those of Grobbelaar (1952). Martin's eye colour table illustrated that the majority of Skinner's research subjects had an intermediate eye colour (Skinner 1955:121). The majority of the research subjects had either black-brown or brown hair, while black hair was "conspicuously" absent – as shown by Fischer's hair colour table (Skinner 1955:126). Von Luschan's skin colour table illustrated that 27.01% of the students had a carmine white skin (correlating with number 11 on the table), 22.37% had an off-white skin colour (correlating with number 8), and 25.75% had darker shades of carmine white skin (correlating with numbers 13 and 14) (Skinner 1955:129).

Skinner (1955:90), like Van der Westhuyzen (1929) before him, also found that the "long-headed type predominate[d]" among those measured. The head length thus fell within the category of 'very long' – longer than swiss recruits, german students, the french, hollanders, the

⁷⁴ Deniker designated six primary races (the northern race, the eastern race, the iberio-insular race, the western or cevenole race, the littoral or atlanto-mediterranean race, and the adriatic or dinaric race) as found across the globe. It was understood that these races could be distinguished based on physical features such as skin, hair and eye colour, bodily stature, and facial features. Each individual and group could also be related back to one of the primary races through visible comparisons and meticulous measurements. Deniker was of the opinion that 'race-characters' (to use his terminology) were not necessarily affected by a new environment, and that there were instances where no outward change can be observed even where acclimatization has occurred.

english and the welsh. The breadth of the heads of the students was narrow – narrower than all other comparable populations except for the swiss recruits (Skinner 1955:93).⁷⁵

Skinner (1955:81) found the mean value of the height of his subjects to be 177.16 cm – even taller than what had been postulated by Van der Westhuyzen (1929) and Grobbelaar in earlier studies conducted at the university. Skinner’s subjects thus fell into the ‘tall’ category (170-179.9cm); in fact they were on the brink of being in the ‘very tall’ category (180-189.9cm). When compared to other europeans, the new group of Stellenbosch students measured by Skinner were taller than hollanders, swiss, the french (parisians), the irish, the english, Leipzig (german) students, the scottish, american students, and South African (white) students (as measured in 1925) (Skinner 1955:83).

In the 1950s, the Stellenbosch students (deemed representative of the european population of South Africa) thus belonged to the tall races, donned a narrow and long face, coupled with a narrow nose – a near perfect definition of William Z. Ripley’s (1899) teutonic type. According to Skinner’s measurements, the male students of Stellenbosch University had literally outdone themselves.

Conclusion

The studies produced by the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University illuminated attempts to relate the white South African racial body to other europeans of ‘tall stature’ (the teutonic, the nordic, the aryan). It was seemingly an important association to establish as it contributed to an imagining of the white afrikaner self as associated with racial superiority – results that could (and would) be harnessed as justification for political rule. The results produced by the measurement of the Dutch-speaking students of Stellenbosch University were testament to the inherent superiority of white (afrikaner) South Africans. But in the greater South African context of the 1930s, whiteness did not necessarily index ‘good’ middle class neighbourhoods, secure jobs, healthy bodies, and overall financial security – traits Martha Mahoney (1995:1661) attributes to prevalent contemporary notions of whiteness.

⁷⁵ The length of the nose relative to its length was related to both the leptorrhine (narrow nosed) and mesorrhine group (Skinner 1955:113).

In fact, poor whites represented quite the contrary. For the rest of the white Afrikaans-speaking population, poor whites embodied the exception to whiteness and inspired feelings of shame, low self-esteem, and resentment (Grosskopf 1932:17). Within the ranks of the poor whites the expectation of whiteness thus remained unfulfilled. But contrary to responses elsewhere that saw the poor relegated to a degenerate type (as was particularly the case for Francis Galton's engagement with the British lower class), in South Africa the general trend of eugenic thought offered a paradox in the case of the poor white problem.

Here the white afrikaner minority (until recently regarded as second-grade citizens while under British rule) was faced with the threat of an overwhelming black majority. Political control and a shared sense of self-worth could only be established through mobilising every possible afrikaner body. In the South African case poor whites were thus not to be eliminated, but rather uplifted by unlocking their potential to achieve 'appropriate whiteness'. As a result, eugenic thought only provided a partial answer to the conundrum of poor whiteism in 1930s South Africa as the apparent 'degeneracy' of whites was necessarily attributed to environmental circumstances (rather than inherent failings). Eugenic thought in this country thus required a slight adaptation – it seemingly needed to stem from an awkward marriage between innate, inborn, superior qualities and an environment suitable to enliven those qualities.

The 'white potential' of the poor whites had to be unlocked. This required, first and foremost, the removal of degenerate aspects in their midst. Poor whites had to be removed from the slums, their contact with the racial other had to be eliminated, they had to be educated, they had to be employed and made part of a thriving economy, and they had to be made into middle class citizens in order to fulfil the supposed potential (and thus nationalist expectations) of whiteness. Thus, despite the clash of racial theories, notions of racial purity still dominated the discussion of the way forward for the white afrikaners of South Africa.

It was the threat of racial mixture that particularly loomed in the urban slums of the 1930s. The dangers of racial degeneration among the white afrikaner population became a central tenet to the afrikaner nationalist drive towards racial segregation and the policing of white borders (both spatial and biological). In this regard the policing of racial boundaries required both a conceptualisation of the racial self (as offered by the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University in 1929 and beyond), and a conceptualisation of the racial other. While the 1920s can

be characterized by growing afrikaner nationalism and a need to locate a homogeneous white nation, a new challenge emerged in terms of conceptualising the racial other and the successful policing of white borders.

While the perceived differences between white and native were seemingly self-evident and scientifically stable, it was the coloured population that proved to be a particular point of concern for afrikaner nationalists from the mid-1930s onwards. This ‘hybrid’ population, who could ‘pass’ for white (Findlay 1936), was perceived as posing the biggest threat to the continued purity of the white race. A clear definition of the coloured was required. In this regard the Zoology Department at Stellenbosch University once again provided a contribution – this time to assist in biologically defining this troubling category.

CHAPTER 3

Measurement Prescribes a ‘Coloured’ Category

In seeing their blackfaces with their thick lips and grimacing teeth, the wool on their head, their bent knees, their elongated hands, their large curved nails, and especially the livid color of their palms, I could not take my eyes off their faces in order to tell them to stay far away – Louis Agassiz on his first encounter with a black man (cited in Wallis 1995:43).

Had Louis Agassiz ever been introduced to Charlie May of the Stellenbosch district he might have had a similar reaction.⁷⁶ According to the description on his data sheet Charlie was of “Bushmen” and “Hottentot” descent. His dark forehead correlated with number 25 on Von Luschan’s skin colour table, his large teeth appeared ‘yellowish’ and ‘scissor-like’. According to Fischer’s hair colour and texture table his hair correlated with number 27 – dark black and forming narrow waves as it protruded from the scalp. He had ‘thick’, ‘long’ fingers with ‘large’, ‘narrow’ and ‘curved’ nails. In comparison to his dark skin colour, Charlie had strikingly light coloured palms – correlating with number six on Von Luschan’s table.

Charlie May was 21 years of age when he was observed and measured by the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University in October 1937. There were others like him, others who also would have evoked a reaction from Agassiz based on the descriptions found on their data sheets: Douglas Rampi (described as a “typical Basutu”); Izak Roby; Dawid Davids; Maart Arnols; Maynard Samuals; Jan Karels; Salie Beeswink; Moos Samuals; John Thomas; Frans Geyseraan; Willie Hendriks; Sollie Lewis; Alfred Plaatjies; Isak Low; and Jan Jonker all shared

⁷⁶ Throughout this chapter the full names of those measured by the Zoology Department in 1937 are used as they appear on the data collection sheets – documents that are open to the public. The use of their names stems from an acknowledgement that these subjects were merely a means to a ‘scientific’ end while becoming victims to the racialized gaze of those who led the study. The use of full names is here employed to humanise those who were subjected to, and objectified by, a racialized gaze. While anonymisation has historically been used to safeguard the identity of vulnerable persons, it simultaneously has the effect of dehumanising and alienating these individuals. The use of full names in this case urges the reader to recognise these faceless subjects as individuals and as human beings who were victims of a racialised science. Similar arguments for the use of full names have been made by Rory Du Plessis (2015) and Julie Parle (2005) in relation to their work dealing with pathological subjects.

similar characteristics – at least on a data sheet. By the end of the study, their individuality was foregone in favour of a supposed group status illustrated by their typology.

As I sift through the data sheets I find myself able to pick and choose individuals whose characteristics fit those of which Louis Agassiz spoke. The chosen individuals listed above were by no means representative of the 133 subjects who were observed and measured, yet I had the power to ignore those who did not resemble Agassiz's characterisations in favour of those who reinforced his observation and ideology. The absurdity of racial categorisation became evident to me in this moment. On their respective data sheets these individuals became the racial other to the white self that had been defined in a previous study by the same department at the same institution. The measurement of the coloured males of Stellenbosch set in motion a process to tell these subjects, as Agassiz once did, to 'stay far away'.

Introduction

When Franz Boas wrote of his experience studying the North-Western Tribes of Canada in British Columbia, he observed the similarities between the local indians and the europeans in terms of their lifestyles. Contrary to common expectations, the european ethnographer was confronted by his own double. As Christopher Bracken (1997:8) commented: “[t]otally other and yet the same, the aboriginal people of Victoria reflect[ed] the observer's Europeanness back to him while changing it utterly”. The way in which many ethnographers who visited the area dealt with this “specular image” was to return to expressions of absolute difference: “[h]e desires either an ‘Indian’ who is exactly equal to himself or one who can be held at an absolute – ‘thorough’ – distance” (Bracken 1997:20).

In a similar vein it is argued in this chapter that coloured and white afrikaner sameness became threatening to a nationalist movement whose foundation rested to a large extent on the preservation of a pure white race. Inspired by eugenic theories related to racial hybridity and the supposed detrimental effects of racial mixture, the importance of creating distance between white and coloured peoples was pursued through the measurement of the coloured males of Stellenbosch in 1937. The Zoology Department's anthropometric measuring tools along with Martin's eye colour table, Von Luschan's skin colour table, and Fischer's hair colour and texture table were once again to become the arbiters of racial characteristics and racial types.

Drawing on the work of Jacqueline Urla and Jennifer Terry (1995), it is argued that measurement contributed to the construction of the coloured category as a ‘deviant other’ – that in providing a scientific summary of the coloured body it was marked “in some recognizable fashion” (Urla & Terry 1995:3). Through measurement, a new category was created and efforts were made to stabilise it, even while the coloured category itself remained somewhat vague and uncertain. And yet this scientific endeavour marked the beginnings of the systematic biological and (following this) legal formulation of a racial category that would soon become the target of state policy.

Background: The Coloured as Deviant Body

The concept of the deviant body has historically been linked to the belief that the materiality of the body can testify to social deviance – an understanding that has in the past resulted in active processes of categorisation across all sectors of society. While during the late 19th century Joseph Jacobs (a jewish member of the Council of the Anthropological Institute in Britain) may have drawn upon anthropologically ‘typical’ features of the jewish type to argue for the purity of the jewish race, other (anti-Semitic) anthropologists argued that these same features indicated their hybridity – thereby locating the jewish people as a deviant type (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:247-250). Indeed, in addition to the criminal type, Galton had also postulated the ‘jewish type’ – composite of racial portraits used to illustrate “the race characteristics of the Jews” (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:246). Such scientific endeavours to establish type spoke powerfully to the relation between biology, physical features, and moral character – embodied identities visibly marked for every onlooker to behold.

It is what Urla and Terry (1995:3) refer to as ‘embodied deviance’ – postulating “that the bodies of subjects classified as deviant are essentially marked in some recognizable fashion”. Yet the varying interpretations of supposedly jewish features also speak to the malleability and adaptive nature of scientific (and particularly eugenic) theories to fit a particular context. Indeed, the “somatic territorializing of deviance” seen in the scientific classification of racial types are understood by Urla and Terry (1995:1) to speak to “a larger effort to organize social relations according to categories denoting normality versus aberration, health versus pathology, and national security versus social danger”. As a result, while notions of self and other may be substantiated by scientific observation and description (as seen here in the case of the jewish type, as well as Pöch and Von Eickstad’s study of prisoners of war during World War I), such

studies had “concrete political consideration[s]” buried as motives for the study (Evans 2010:229).

The scientific reasoning for constructing deviance in other parts of the world was selectively drawn upon within South Africa by intellectuals and politicians who “[sought] authority for their actions and ideas” (Dubow 2010:286). Like the ‘scavenging’ of eugenics, scientific studies were – at their core – political projects. And the study of the coloured population of Stellenbosch appears to have been no different.

While already recognised as a separate population group in Cape Town towards the end of the 19th century, and identified as a separate racial group in the Cape census of 1904 (Goldin 1987:158), it was only in the 1930s that the coloured race manifested in academic debate and governmental action as a concern in relation to racial admixture. Historically viewed as the result of “all the peoples that have met and mingled at the ‘Tavern of the Seas’” (Green 1953), coloureds were considered a racial anomaly – the product of miscegenation. With the drive towards legal conceptualisation and categorisation, racial difference and subsequent spatial distance became a key point of concern and contention. The coloured population was persistently defined within an essentialist framework of racial hybridity – a result of sexual contact between white colonialists and the racial other – to the disdain of many afrikaner nationalists who would rather ignore this historical detail.

Following the view of Lord Selborne who argued in 1908 that coloured people should be given “the benefit of their white blood” (cited in Giliomee 1995:205), General J. B. M. Hertzog, leader of the National Party, similarly argued for extending the same political and economic rights that whites had to this population in the 1920s (Giliomee 1995:208). However, D. F. Malan had different ideas: in 1919, Malan had proposed the removal of coloured people from the voters roll. And in the 1930s, as leader of the newly formed *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party*, Malan would pursue this further – taking a much more radical stance towards the coloured people.

The name of Malan's party may have alluded to his stance on racial categories in South Africa,⁷⁷ as the conservation of the purity of the white race remained a central tenet to its ideology – with the self-preservation of white afrikaners as their primary goal. In the American South at the turn of the century, attempts to keep african americans off the voter's roll were similarly driven by motives for establishing white political control. Here it was achieved through claims that the african americans were “unfit to participate in politics” (Giliomee 1995:201). A similar narrative would drive the eventual removal of coloureds from the South African voters roll in 1954. Yet, during the mid-1930s, Malan's attempt to remove the coloured population from the voters roll in ultimately failed because of the difficulty to determine exactly who the coloured population was “in the absence of a clear definition of a coloured person” (Giliomee 2003:415).

Investigations into the poor white question during the late 1920s and early 1930s had illuminated the close relationship between poor whites and coloureds living side by side in urban slums – challenging notions of racial boundaries and ‘acceptable’ racial proximity. The more conservative afrikaners particularly took issue with poor whites who “had to live with coloureds [and] chat like neighbours” (Giliomee 2003:343). In a climate of growing afrikaner nationalism, the survival of a white minority the threat of miscegenation loomed as one of the largest challenges in relation to poor whites specifically.

The coloured population posed a particular problem for the nationalists: whites and coloureds shared a language and geographical origin (the Western Cape) (Goldin 1987:168), yet the latter were branded “as the physically and mentally mutant offspring of an illegitimate mixing of European civilisation and African slavery” (Goldin 1987:161). In the interest of safeguarding a white minority, the coloured population had to be constructed as “unwanted elements” or “strangers in society” (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen 2001:127) – a process inherent in the development and implementation of social boundaries (Lamont & Molnar 2002:168).

The perceived threat of coloured people had been brewing among afrikaner nationalists for a while, but it reached new heights in the 1930s. In 1936, a sign of the tension reared its head when

⁷⁷ The rights of the coloured population became a contentious issue in afrikaner party politics and proved to be one of the dividing lines between Hertzog and Malan in the early 1930s. When the South African and National Party merged in 1934, Malan seceded to form the *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party* (Purified National Party) (Thompson 1949:27).

a proposal for a “bill to ban marriages between a white and coloured person” (Giliomee 2003:344) was presented in Vrededorp, Johannesburg. The bill was turned down after a commission of inquiry recommended against it (ibid). However, Malan’s antagonism towards the coloured population only grew from this point forward – propagating a law against mixed marriages, mixed neighbourhoods and a mixed voters roll (Giliomee & Hendrich 2005:182).

In the years that followed, Malan’s public appearances in Stellenbosch were accompanied by an outspoken need for segregation and a separate voters roll for the coloured population – framed as the only way to address both the poor white question and the coloured question (Giliomee & Hendrich 2005:182). In 1949, as newly elected Prime Minister, Malan introduced the possibility of officially removing the coloured population from the voters roll based on them being “a corrupt and immature electorate, whose votes could be won either through bribery or trickery” (Loveland 1999:260). Malan thus set in motion the development of a formal Act to allow for separate representation in parliament.

Accompanying the categorical definition of the coloured category was thus a systematic stripping of their rights. However, the period between 1930 and 1948 (when the National Party was elected into power) provided ample opportunity for further engagements with this population group. Scientific contributions to the construction of this category of people as different *to*, and separate *from* whites was a key development in the ultimate disenfranchisement of the coloured population. Thus, although racial mixture and hybrid populations in southern Africa had been the subject of scientific research since the first decade of the 20th century (specifically in Fischer's ground-breaking study of the rehoboth basters),⁷⁸ notions of racial impurity and contamination found new footing later in the century with more direct investigations into the coloured population.

Until the 1920s the field of physical anthropology had been consistently “concerned with ‘racial’ characters” as, after 1900, it was mainly “urbanized European and American subjects” represented by “adult males” (Penniman 1952 [1935]:381) that formed the central point of interest. Stellenbosch University had followed suit in this regard when its zoologists launched a

⁷⁸ See Chapter One for more detail of Fischer's study.

study of Dutch-speaking male students in 1925. Ten years later, in 1935, T. K. Penniman (1952 [1935]:381) proclaimed in *A Hundred Years of Anthropology* that the time was ripe to launch “comparable inquiries on aboriginal peoples” as this would be “immediately enlightening”. In South Africa the time was similarly ripe for the scientific study of the racial other.

This was particularly the case for the coloureds of South Africa. In the midst of a growing afrikaner nationalist movement, eugenic literature on hybrid types, and the growing need to police the borders of whiteness (as discovered in the wake of studying poor whiteism), the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University launched an anthropometric study of coloured males residing in the Stellenbosch area in 1937.

Perceived to be a dangerous threat to the preservation of the white race, the possibility of coloureds passing for white was especially threatening. In this regard the 1936 publication of George Findlay’s *Miscegenation: a study of the biological sources of inheritance of the South African population*, was quite controversial.⁷⁹ Here Findlay, later labelled a communist by his afrikaner critics, reminded South Africans that the Immorality Act of 1927 was limited to whites and natives – excluding the categories of coloured or ‘half-castes’ who could similarly “infiltrate European stock” (Findlay 1936:32).

According to Findlay (1936), there were hundreds of thousands of coloureds who had passed for white. The coloured people were perceived as a “destabilizing” population (Dubow 2010:278) who: were sometimes hard to racially identify (some possibly passing for white as a result); held within them the danger of producing degenerates when racially mixing with whites (based on eugenic literature of the time); possibly offered a surprise element of a Mendelian throw-back long after ‘the crime of intermixture’ was committed. Findlay’s publication thus proclaimed a reality that was unthinkable (and unacceptable). According to him the white purity of the afrikaner had long been breached. At the time Findlay’s study both questioned and complicated

⁷⁹ According to Dubow (1995:188) Findlay’s publication “bought into many of the most common racist assumptions in the process of rejecting them”. Drawing on Mendelian genetics, Findlay described the coloured population as the result of mixture between the two ‘pure stocks’ (white and native) while also critiquing racial categorisation and its flawed nature in South Africa – particularly as it allowed for the ‘passing’ of coloureds (thus defeating the whole purpose of these distinctions).

one of the central tenets of the afrikaner nationalist narrative: the deeply entrenched notion of white purity and its future preservation.

While Findlay (1936) offered a narrative of Mendelian genetics fitting of the time, on some level his publication pointed to the fallacy of race – that coloureds had been passing for white in large numbers without notice. His publication thus simultaneously challenged the notion of a pure white race as well as complicated the supposed scientific certainty of racial difference based on physical (and thus visible) distinction. As a result, Findlay's publication was met with much criticism – particularly stemming from conservative white Afrikaans-speaking academics who had dedicated themselves to ideas of racial purity. It was reflective of the opinion of a large portion of afrikaners as well. According to Dubow (1986:8), “the opinion of the average white South African [was] that the admixture in blood of the races [was] the worst that [could] happen”.

Yet despite the controversial nature of Findlay's publication at the time, it was still deemed important enough to be translated from English into Afrikaans.⁸⁰ The translation was printed in Pretoria – home to a growing conservative group of academics who propagated segregation of the races based on ideas surrounding the preservation of a (pure) white race.⁸¹ One of Findlay's most outspoken critics was Geoff Cronjé, a notable contributor to the apartheid debates raging in the 1940s. Cronjé would later proclaim:

The mixing of blood between the white and black races produces inferior human material in biological terms (physically and mentally). Miscegenation between whites and non-whites is therefore shown by biological research to be detrimental (Cronjé 1946:74).

The very idea of unregulated ‘passing’ occurring in their midst was simply unthinkable to individuals like Cronjé. The way in which Findlay's publication undermined claims of white

⁸⁰ See *Bloedvermenging. Swart en wit in Suid-Afrika: die faktore wat bloedvermenging vertraag of versnel* (translated to: *Miscegenation. Black and White in South Africa: the factors that delay or accelerate miscegenation*). In this regard the title was not a direct translation of the original, but rather a reformulated one.

⁸¹ Pretoria University was also the home of the *Afrikanerbond vir Rassestudie* (*Afrikanerbond* for Racial Studies). In its official journal, *Rassebakens*, miscegenation and the preservation of a pure white race became some of the central issues addressed. The journal was highly conservative, sometimes radical, and reflected the local disposition of an influential group of academics at this university.

purity was similarly resented. Indeed, geneticist Gerrie Eloff, at the time lecturer in zoology at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits), provided a scathing review of Findlay's publication in *Die Huisgenoot* of 15 August 1941.

A supporter of 'positive eugenics' and intervention in the form of regulated marriages to combat to the dangers of miscegenation (see Eloff 1933 and 1938),⁸² Eloff criticised and dismissed Findlay's work as communist propaganda (Eloff 1941:67). He remained sceptical of Findlay's claims, calling for concrete evidence in the form of genealogies (Eloff 1941:67) – a suggestion that rested on Mendel's law of genetics,⁸³ the development of Galton's law of ancestral heredity, and later Pearson's tracing of familial traits. Eloff's request for concrete evidence in the form of genealogies was aimed to reveal the identification of racially 'burdened' families – that is, white families burdened by racial mixture. And at Stellenbosch University, the head of the Zoology Department, De Villiers, shared a similar interest in genealogies.

For De Villiers the tracing of a family tree was revealing of racial descent. He was quite strongly convinced that the french ancestors of the afrikaners (including the De Villiers's own family) were not of mediterranean or latin descent, but rather of the german/teutonic race (De Kock 1994:37). The importance of genealogies in this context appears to embody a concern with the purity of the white race in South Africa. While this was by no means unique to either this context or this historical period,⁸⁴ in the 1930s concerns regarding racial purity do appear to have

⁸² See in this regard *Ras en rassevermening: die Boerevolk gesien van die standpunt van die Rasseleer* ('Race and Racial intermixture: the Boer people as seen from the perspective of Racial Theory') published in 1942; *Rasverbetering deur uitskakeling van minderwaardige individue* ('Racial betterment through omission of inferior individuals') published in 1933; and *Drie gedagtes oor rasbiologie veral met betrekking tot Suid-Afrika* ('Three thoughts on race biology with special reference to South Africa') published in 1938.

⁸³ See Chapter One for a detailed discussion of how Mendelian genetics was made manifest.

⁸⁴ Across the globe genealogies became a common tool for providing historical evidence of racial affinity. In Germany the role of genealogies would become infused with political motives during the 1920s and 1930s. The German *Zentralstelle für Deutsche Personen- und Familiengeschichte* (German central office for family history), established in 1903, became the port of call for the collection of "genealogical material that might contribute to the understanding of heredity, degeneration and regeneration" (Gausemeier 2005:180). This was especially the case under National Socialism, when the preoccupation with genealogies and aryan purity led to the tracing of familial descent as far back as the 17th century. 'Kinship books' were provided for every village "to raise the rural population's awareness of common racial descent" (Gausemeier 2005:190). These genealogies were similarly employed to "detect people of 'gypsy' descent" (Gausemeier 2005:190), and so acted as a scientific contributions to notions of self and other. As argued by Bernd Gausemeier (2005:11): "[t]otal genealogy was both to create a sense of racial aristocracy in all 'racially pure' germans and to defend the racial community against all threats to the 'hereditary health'".

sparked interest in a very particular area of research in the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University – that of racial mixture.

International studies of racial mixture often tapped into elements of biological Darwinism, social Darwinism, and Mendelian genetics to hypothesize the quality of humans produced by racial mixture as a degenerate type. Comte Georges Vacher de Lapouge, a social Darwinist who was influential in the eugenics movement, postulated in *Social Choices* (1896) that race-mixing was “a threat to Aryan genius” (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:307). De Lapouge was also a strong proponent for regulating human reproduction in this regard. But it was Eugen Fischer who contributed valuable ‘evidence’ of the effects of racial mixture through his study of the Rehoboth bastards of South West Africa (Namibia) in 1913. Indeed, Fischer’s *The Rehoboth Bastards and the Problem of Miscegenation among Humans* became a ground-breaking contribution to racial science. For many Afrikaans-speaking academics who postulated their own theories of race in the South African context, Fischer’s publication became the definitive text on the results of racial mixture.⁸⁵

While South Africa had criminalised sexual relations between whites and natives in 1927, white afrikaners of the 1930s (by now established as belonging to the ‘tall races of Europe’ (Van der Westhuyzen 1929)) faced a similar threat to their racial purity in the form of the coloured population. Constructed as both a biological and social threat, the problem of miscegenation (as related to whites and coloureds) occupied such an important space in national politics that a commission was launched to investigate the occurrence of mixed marriages in the latter half of the 1930s. The investigation was in essence “to examine whether [mixed] marriages were likely to be detrimental to the future welfare of the population” (Nature 1940:347-348) and thus related to the broader eugenic arguments regarding hybrid populations.

⁸⁵ While the predominant theories surrounding hybrid populations from the 19th century onwards understood miscegenation to produce only degenerate offspring (in other words, that racial intermixing as detrimental to one or both races), Fischer did identify a certain ‘hybrid vigour’, defined by Dubow as “the idea that interbreeding (among similar races) could actually improve genetic health” (Dubow 1995:272). Thus, while on the whole Fischer opposed racial intermixing, the outcomes of such unions were not necessarily always seen as unfavourable. Most proponents of eugenics across the world ignored this part of Fischer’s findings and rather focused on the perceived negative results that stemmed from racial mixture. Madison Grant similarly chose to focus on this element of racial mixture. By the 1920s he postulated that hybridisation “could only diminish the quality of the European races” and therefore argued for the criminalisation of “sexual relations between white anglo-americans and other groups” (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:323).

Titled, *Report of the Commission on Mixed Marriages in South Africa*, the results of this investigation was released in 1939. Although encountering problems with regards to the categorical definition of coloured (and thereby highlighting the elusiveness of the identification of this racial category), the Commission found that mixed marriages between whites and coloureds were occurring more frequently in the 1930s than ever before. It was explained as the possible result of the economic depression and the close proximity in which poor whites and coloureds lived (Nature 1940:358). Based on their findings, the Commission supported (and legitimised) the passing of laws that would prohibit marriages and 'illicit' intercourse across the colour line. In the South African context, the miscegenation debate of the 1930s thus indicated the beginnings of a legal, separate categorical definition of the coloured population.

As is argued by Dubow (2010:278), the coloured population proved to be especially 'destabilising' in this regard. They represented a socially disruptive or otherwise 'deviant' body (Urla & Terry 1995) that required clear categorisation for easy identification. As a result, in the 1930s local debates raged about the otherness and/or sameness of coloured South Africans in relation to white of South Africans. While this population's inclusion or exclusion in the white racial category was problematic, the place of these individuals in the social and political sphere similarly offered points of contention – a fact evidenced by Malan's failed attempt to remove coloureds from the voters' roll as well as during the inquiry into mixed marriages. The census takers of 1936 encountered a similar problem and reported that "it was impossible to arrive at an exact figure for coloured" because many tried to pass themselves off as white (Giliomee 1995:203). While there was a clear social and political drive to distinguish coloured from white, "no consensus existed about who the coloured were" (Giliomee 1995:204). It was an elusive category – one that required a clear definition.

In light of rising debates about the coloured population, their somatic mapping took on new significance. Similar to Georges Cuvier's post-mortem dissection of Sarah Baartman, the Zoology Department at Stellenbosch University attempted to "delve beneath the surface [and]

bring the interior to light” (Fausto-Sterling 1995:2) in an attempt to find and define the hidden coloured.⁸⁶

Science Prescribes the Coloured Type

Benjamin Dawids was 42 years of age, born of mixed descent to “European” and “Hottentot” parents in Stellenbosch. The Von Luschan table indicated that Benjamin’s skin colour ranged between numbers 9 and 18 for the various parts of his body. Fischer’s table indicated that his hair colour corresponded to number 4, while his eye colour corresponded to number 2 on Martin’s table. Further measurements detailed the shape of Benjamin’s head and the characteristics of his face and nose. The prognathy of the jaw measured 2 on a scale ranging from 0 to 5. His nose had a ‘narrow’ root, ‘medium’ and ‘straight’ bridge, a ‘downwardly directed’ tip, a ‘short’ and ‘narrow’ septum, and ‘obliquely oval’, ‘wide’ and ‘large’ openings. His face was ‘round’ and ‘moderately flat’. Further observations noted his ‘spindle-shaped’ eyes, ‘thin’ lips and ‘large’, ‘yellowish’ teeth; his ‘large’, ‘broad’ and ‘flat’ feet, and his ‘thick’ and ‘long’ fingers had bluish nails.⁸⁷ Benjamin had tattoos on his left upper and lower arm, and a scar adorned his right thigh.

On 22 October 1937 Benjamin Dawids was the first of 133 coloured males to be meticulously measured by staff members and students of the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University. The measurements and methods employed in this particular study were similarly used worldwide within the field of physical anthropology to determine racial characteristics and racial affinity during the early 20th century. For many scientists at the time, race was understood as a natural biological entity of which each of the human races held characteristics that “were essential and given” (Winant 2000:174). However, signs of a shift in the anthropological meanings of race had been appearing in both Europe and United States. In *We Europeans*, published in 1935, British anthropologists J. B. S. Haldane, Julian Huxley, Lancelot Hogben, and Herbert Jennings, amongst others, distanced themselves from race as a biological concept and denounced eugenics and racial hygiene as practiced in Nazi Germany (Crook 2002:374). This was reiterated the following year when the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) held a

⁸⁶ This is an adaptation of Anne Fausto-Sterling's (1995:2) description regarding Cuvier's attempts to “delve beneath the surface, bringing the interior to light [...] and define the hidden Hottentot” in his dissection of Sarah Baartman.

⁸⁷ The terminology employed to describe Benjamin's features is used as it appeared on his data sheet.

joint meeting “concluding that [race] had to be eliminated from scientific and public discourse because it had been thoroughly politicized” (Kuklick 2008:59).

The same shift had been occurring in the United States. In this regard Franz Boas had, for decades, worked tirelessly to discredit racial science (Crook 2002:374). In *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911) Boas positioned himself in opposition to social Darwinist theories propagated by Grant and Davenport at the time. While his theories remained peripheral to mainstream anthropology until the 1930s, they were finally drawn upon in opposition to the radical eugenics movement manifesting in Germany. But the shift towards an understanding of race as a social construction that was occurring in the United States and Europe, seemingly did not find an attentive audience in many afrikaner academic circles in the decades preceding apartheid. Throughout the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, South African anthropologists continued to build on the early work of Robert Broom, James Drury and Raymond Dart – thereby continuing in the search for racial types as reflected in physical traits.⁸⁸

Visible characteristics – generally referring to the complexion of the skin, the colour of the eyes, the colour and texture of the hair, the shape of the nose and ears, and general features of the face (Wilder & Wentworth 1918:61) – remained the primary sources for racial classification in South Africa. For instance, physical anthropologist Raymond Dart of Witwatersrand University (Wits) was called in as an expert on race during a court case in 1929 to declare that the defendant had “coloured blood in her veins” (cited in Kuljian 2016:56). At that time, the term coloured encompassed any form of racial mixture between european, asian, bushmen, or african. Dart was able to draw his conclusion based on the “‘tawny hue of her skin’ on her shoulders, the back of her arms and her hands” (Kuljian 2016:56). In a second court case, Dart concluded that he “could find no physical feature in [the defendant’s] constitution which could be considered diagnostic of a coloured person” (cited in Kuljian 2016:56). With the aid of Von Luschan’s skin colour table, Dart ensured the court that the defendant’s complexion was testimony to her european status (Kuljian 2016:56).

⁸⁸ Saul Dubow’s (2015:236) most recent work argues for the “resurgence of scientific racism in small but concentrated intellectual circles” during high apartheid. He thereby challenges dominant interpretations that postulate the disappearance of overtly biological notions of race after 1948.

The racial other remained a source of interest to the physical anthropologists of South Africa from early in the 20th century to the 1930s and beyond. In June 1936, Wits proceeded with their landmark Kalahari Bushmen Expedition. Dart accompanied it with the aim to document the “physical morphology” of bushmen as “the last surviving members of an ancient racial type” (Kuljian 2016:64).⁸⁹ While the interest of Dart and others was mainly evolutionary, at the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University the research focus was closely related to the political interests of afrikaners at the time. Indeed, the department launched a study of the non-european population of the Stellenbosch area in 1937. And a detailed data sheet printed on the front and back assisted with the collection of measurement and observations.

In total, the data sheet harnessed by the Zoology Department offered 37 measurements of the head, 44 measurements of the body, observations related to the colour of the skin, eyes and hair, and observations related to the characteristics of the head, face and nose. Reminiscent of a 19th century method developed by Alphonse Bertillon in the identification of criminals by individual characteristics, a section for “Special Observations” was left open on the Zoology Department’s data sheet for the researcher to complete at their own discretion. For Bertillon identification cards had to document “scars and peculiar marks that every individual more or less exhibits” coupled with a notation “of the color of the eye, hair, or beard, as well as the form and dimensions of the nose” (cited in Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]:259). Bertillon’s implementation of measurements, posed photographs, and “a close examination of anatomical details”, he believed, “would make it virtually impossible for a wrongdoer to hide from the incriminating traces of his own unique identity” (Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]:258). In the case of the 1937 study of coloured males, the data sheet similarly set out to expose the incriminating anatomical traces related to race.

⁸⁹ A total of 77 individuals labelled as bushmen were subjected to body measurements and plaster casts (Kuljian 2016:65). Just prior to the expedition, in 1935, a *Preliminary report on the anthropological researches carried out by Mr Drury of the South African Museum in South West Africa* was published. The report documented physical anthropologist James Drury’s work throughout southern Africa. From 1907 onwards Drury studied the racial other by making use of measurements, photography and the production of casts (S2A3 2017 [online]). Drury remains most famous for producing bushmen casts, with a preference for those who were deemed racially pure (S2A3 2017 [online]) – an approach that was suggested by Von Luschan upon his visit to South Africa in 1902 (Morris 2008:223).

Willie Abrahams was 40 years of age and, according to his data sheet, of “White” and “Hottentot” descent. Among the 133 subjects, Willie was the sole individual described as having a “very intelligent face” (as possibly related to his “long thin face”). The data sheet noted a ‘high’, ‘elliptical’, ‘narrow’, and ‘moderately flat’ face. He had ‘moderately protruding’ cheekbones and ‘spindle-shaped’, ‘moderately wide’ and ‘straight’ eye slits. His nose had a ‘narrow’ root, a ‘narrow’ and ‘straight’ bridge, a ‘forwardly directed’ tip, a ‘long’ and ‘broad’ septum, with ‘narrow’ and ‘longitudinal oval’ openings located above his ‘thin’ lips. Willie also had a gently protruding jaw. His features stood in contrast to those of Johannes Essau, a 27-year-old “Khoisan” man (as his data sheet indicated). While Willie and Johannes shared many features such as a ‘high’, ‘elliptical’ and ‘moderately flat’ face, and a ‘narrow’ nose root, the differences were seemingly pronounced to the observers and note-takers. Johannes had a ‘broad’ face, ‘narrow’ eyes, ‘strongly protruding’ cheekbones, a ‘flat’ nose with a ‘medium’ and ‘feebly concave[d]’ bridge. The tip of his nose was ‘upwardly directed’, and his nasal openings were ‘roundish’, ‘very wide’ and ‘large’ – located above his ‘thick’, ‘pad-shaped’ lips. While Willie Abrahams may have had an “intelligent face”, it was noted that Johannes Essau had a “ghorilla face [*sic*]” – a reference similar to those ‘ape-like’ features commonly remarked upon in the 19th century writings of Bertillon, Morton, and Agassiz.⁹⁰

Abram Abrahamse was 31 years old and classified as “Hottentot” on his data sheet. He had a ‘broad’, ‘straight’, and ‘flat’ forehead; a ‘high’, ‘round’, ‘very broad’, and ‘moderately flat’ face. He had ‘straight’, ‘moderate[ly]’ sized, ‘spindle-shaped’ eyes. His nose had a ‘medium’, ‘moderately high’ root; a ‘medium’ and ‘strongly concave[d]’, ‘angularly bent’ bridge, with a ‘downwardly directed’ nose tip; with ‘transversely oval’, ‘very wide’ and ‘large’ openings. He had a prognathic jaw. In the special observations section it was noted that Abram Abrahamse had a “very uncivilized face” – his concaved nose and his very wide and large nasal openings possibly becoming key characteristics to set him apart from the civilised white self.

Gert Bekker was simply referred to as “*n swak voorbeeld van 'n mens!*” (a bad example of a human being!). He was about 60 years of age (no one was quite sure) when he became a subject of investigation on 15 November 1937. It was stated on his data sheet that he was of “European”

⁹⁰ See Chapter One for more detail.

and “a bit of Hottentot” descent. What exactly it was that made Gert Bekker a 'bad example of a human being' is not quite clear. Was it his ‘broad’ and ‘straight’ forehead? His ‘moderately high’, ‘oval’, ‘moderately broad’, ‘moderately flat’ face? His ‘moderately protruding’ cheekbones? Was it his ‘forwardly directed’ nose tip, or his ‘transversely oval’, ‘wide’ and ‘large’ nasal openings? Was it his ‘rough’ and ‘moist’ skin, his dark brown eye colour (number 6 on Martin’s table), his dark brown hair colour (numbers 4 and 5 on Fischer’s table), coupled with his fairly light skin colour (number 13 on Von Luschan’s table)? Or, was it the fact that he was first and foremost of European descent (indicated by the triple underlining of “Eur” by his observer), yet now lived among Stellenbosch’s coloured population? His dark brown eyes and dark brown hair, coupled with a fairly light skin colour, may have indicated the biological interruptions of racial mixing.⁹¹ In the eyes of his white observers, these were all signs of socially disruptive features – of embodied deviance bearing the marks of something despicable.

In addition to the array of physical features (identified by a mark next to the correct designation or a number in the correct block) it was the special observations section that was most revealing and transparent in communicating the use of these data sheets. The ultimate aim was to establish the racial other as located in the coloured population: ‘uncivilised’ as opposed to civilised, ‘*onnosel*’ (stupid) as opposed to intelligent, the presence of tattoos and scars from ‘*messteke*’ (knife wounds) as visible signs of the violence located in their social standing, as opposed to the unblemished skin of the white middle class.

It was curiously notations related to cleanliness, the teeth of the subjects,⁹² and a considerable amount of comments related to their genital organs (with regards to shape, size, and particularly the covering of the glans⁹³) that featured throughout in the ‘Special Observations’ section. For instance, Michael Davids, Abraham Le Roux, Kowie Edams, Maart Arnols, Willem Adams, Pieter De Villiers and Andrew Lategan were all missing some or all of their teeth, while Dawid

⁹¹ The correlation of eye, hair and skin colour was later studied by Grobbelaar (1952) where it was postulated that a “definite correlation between eye and skin colour” and “a correlation between hair and eye colour” can be found in the races. I refer the reader to Chapter Two where this article by Grobbelaar is discussed.

⁹² In 1810 Johann Casper Lavater proclaimed the teeth to be an indicator of moral characteristics. In his *Essay in Physiognomy* he stated: “[l]ong teeth are certain signs of weakness and pusillanimity. White, clean, well-arranged teeth, visible as soon as the mouth opens, but not projecting, nor always entirely seen, I have never met with in adults except in good, acute, honest, candid, faithful men” (cited in Ewen & Ewen 2008[2006]92).

⁹³ Glans refers to the ‘head’ or ‘tip’ of the penis.

Dauids had noticeably “good and healthy teeth”. Similarly many of the subjects were noted to be “clean”. Michael Davids, Johannes Du Toit, John Martin, Daantjie De Vries, and Kowie Edams were observably “clean” individuals, while Gert Rippenaar was “not too clean!”.

These observations, coupled with designated sections for the ‘State of Nourishment’ and ‘State of Health’ on the data sheet, become somewhat reminiscent of age-old slave inspections and catalogues for slave auctions. In 1788 Alexander Falconbridge, a surgeon who accompanied several slave voyages between 1780 and 1787, published his own account of the slave trade:

When the negroes, whom the black traders have to dispose of, are sewn to the European purchasers, they first examine them relative to their age. They then minutely inspect their persons and inquire into the state of their health; if they are afflicted with any infirmity, or are deformed, or have bad eyes or teeth; if they are lame, or weak in the joints, or distorted in the back, or of a slender make, or are narrow in the chest; in short, if they have been, or are afflicted in any manner, so as to render them incapable of much labour; if any of the forgoing defects are discovered in them, they are rejected (Falconbridge 1788:17).

The examination of heads, teeth and hands (Hartman 1997:38), the stature of the subjects, the colour of their skin (a deep black or a ‘yellow cast’) (Thomas 1997:400), and the condition of the limbs (Bailey 2005:133) were commonly inspected during slave sales to determine the capacity of an individual for hard labour. Missing or rotten teeth were similarly disclosed in the description of slaves for sale as such features were commonly considered a sign of dental health, nutritional status or the state of health in general – with rotten or missing teeth speaking to poor health (Newson & Minchin 2007:129). A 19th century guide for slave owners even highlighted the importance of paying close attention to “the slave’s penis in order to avoid acquiring an individual in whom it was underdeveloped or misshapen and, therefore, bad for procreation” (Thomas 1997:433). In the words of Eric Taylor (2003:23), “[n]othing was forgotten” when it came to the slave trade’s meticulous, invasive and dehumanising inspections.

The data sheets compiled by the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University for their study of coloured males in 1937 reflected a similarly invasive procedure of close scrutiny and detailed measurement. The data sheets were employed to produce the general characteristics of their

coloured subjects, but the results of these meticulous inspections would have far-reaching and lasting effects for those measured (as will be illustrated in Chapters Five, Six and Seven). They revealed the power relations embedded in the process of data collection – a Foucauldian constitution of the subject, a dividing practice (Foucault 1982:777) in that it allowed self and other to take shape. In the words of Michel Foucault (1982:781):

This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects.

In 1939 the measurement of the coloured males of Stellenbosch materialised in *A preliminary account of the physical anthropology of the 'Cape Coloured People' (Males)*. The article focused on “the purely physical characteristics of the Coloured population” (Van Wyk 1939:61) and was published in the *Annals of the University of Stellenbosch*.⁹⁴ Here the typical characteristics to be found in the research subjects (and thereby extended to an entire racial category) included “a lighter complexion” (relative to the hottentot or bantu), brown eye-colour, woolly dark hair, and a flat nose with a broad nasal root, amongst other characteristics.

For G. F. Van Wyk (1939:5), the author for the publication, “European blood seemed to be obviously present in the Coloured People”. Drawing comparisons between the bodily height of the coloured subjects, the hottentots, the bushmen, the dutch (afrikaner) male students (as measured at Stellenbosch University), and the rehoboth basters (as measured by Eugen Fischer), there appeared an undeniable presence of european blood, seemingly revealed through the relative height of the subjects (inheriting the taller stature of the european). The shape and size of

⁹⁴ The article was coincidentally published in the same year that the Battle of Andringa Street occurred in Stellenbosch. This violent battle dragged on for three days between a group of white students and the local coloured population residing in *Die Vlakte* – a mixed race neighbourhood on the boundaries of the university campus (Giliomee & Hendrich 2005:208). This area was proclaimed a whites-only area in the 1960s and a part of it is now home to university buildings, including the Arts and Social Sciences building. The cause of the battle has been related to rising tensions related to the attempted removal of coloured people from the voters roll and the general disposition towards this local population in Stellenbosch. The overwhelming support for Germany among many Stellenbosch students and academics, and the resistance offered from the coloured population who seemingly sided with the British, has been cited as another source of tension and the cause for the Battle of Andringa street (Giliomee & Hendrich 2005).

the nose (which revealed traces of the narrower and higher nose of europeans) similarly appears to have indicated this correlation (Van Wyk 1939:50, 55).

Yet while the relative closeness of the coloured subject to the white european was identified, the study mostly provided the scientific underpinnings for a population that was to be considered as separate and different from whites. Drawing on international literature (here most prominently referring to Fischer's study of the rehoboth bastards) the position of the coloured as a hybrid population was made evident to the reader. Indeed, Fischer's publication *The Rehoboth Bastards and the Problem of Miscegenation among Humans* suggested mixed races were identifiable by "plainly inheritable differences" (Fischer 1931 [1921]:165). In order to illustrate the similarities and differences between individual hybrid types, Fischer routinely made use of photography by placing "mixed offspring next to their Hottentot or Dutch 'pure' parents" (Morris-Reich 2016:73).

Although not necessarily trying to postulate the existence of a type, Fischer emphasised the inheritance of particular traits from one parent or the other – thus theoretically and visually drawing on Mendel's scientific legacy. Yet despite this emphasis on visual evidence, Fischer's photographs were necessarily labelled with a designated racial classification ("European", "Hottentot", or "Mixture") in order to "afford priority to the true bloodlines over appearance" (cited in Morris-Reich 2016:74-75). In other words, while looks could be deceiving, a racial 'essence' was still deemed present.

To many proponents of eugenics across the globe, Fischer's work illustrated that "all European nations which have undergone the infiltration of inferior blood have had to pay for this sin by an appreciable decline in their intellectual and cultural standards" (cited in Hertz 1928:131). In 1930s Germany, Fischer's work was often cited by supporters of the Nazi party in an attempt to delegitimise the jewish population by claiming this was a 'weakened' hybrid population rather than a racially pure category of people. Indeed, anthropological features were drawn upon to validate the status of the jewish population as a "mongrelized people" (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:248), and thereby a deviant type. Nazi physicians attributed "higher rates of insanity, feeble-mindedness, hysteria, and suicide among Jews" to their degenerate hybrid racial status – suggesting this people consisted of "an amalgam of Negro and Oriental blood" (Proctor 1995:175). These findings contributed to notions of the embodied deviance of the jewish

population, and their supposed predisposition to diseases offered a warning about the dangers of racial mixing.

In South Africa, Fischer's work remained important in some academic circles, and was often cited in relation to the coloured question. At Stellenbosch University, his work was offered as part of the *Inleiding tot Menslike Erflikheidsleer* (Introduction to Human Heredity) module in Stellenbosch University's Department of Ethnology (later *Volkekunde*) from 1927 to 1930. It was also used at this institution as part of the third year seminar practical dealing with physical anthropology, racial hygiene and native administration in the same department from 1931 to 1936.⁹⁵ P. J. (Pieter) Coertze, lecturer in the *Volkekunde* Department at Stellenbosch in the 1930s and 1940s (and later Pretoria), proclaimed as late as 1963 that "any mixture between the superior European races and the lower indigenous races can only lead to degeneration" (Coertze 1963:158, own translation). Inspired by Fischer's work, Coertze and many others, including Eloff and Cronjé, focused on the perceived "negative outcomes of racial intermixture" (Venter 2009:124) and proclaimed hybrid populations to be comprised of "inferior human material" (Cronjé 1945:72-73)

While they may have been the product of racial mixture, coloureds were considered a unique hybrid racial category with measureable physical characteristics. This interpretation allowed for the recognition of this population as a separate racial group that could be subjected to the laws of the apartheid state. With the rise to power of the National Party, it was the coloured population who became the first targets for new legislation. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and the extension of the Immorality Act of 1950 to outlaw sexual relations between white and coloured people can be cited in this regard. Of course, this population was equally affected by the Population Registration Act of 1950 and the Group Areas Act of the same year. Under the apartheid government this population would once again be subjected to "the hair test", "the nail test", "the eyelid test", inspections of pigmentation of the skin on the scalp and on the genitals,

⁹⁵ *Menschliche Erblichkeitslehre* co-authored by Erwin Baur, Eugen Fischer, and Fritz Lenz was originally published in German in 1921. An English translation (*Human Heredity and Racial Hygiene*) followed and the book was acquired by the *Volkekunde* Department of Stellenbosch University. The copy is still currently available in the university library on the open shelves. The *Volkekunde* Department would become more involved in the coloured question during the 1940s and 1950s – particularly as related to the activities of the South African Bureau for Racial Affairs (SABRA), a Stellenbosch-based think-tank whose head office was located within the *Volkekunde* Department in the first decades of its existence.

and inspections in search of the Mongolian spot located on the lower back⁹⁶ – all to determine racial affinity (Posel 2001b:96) and reveal the ‘hidden’ coloured within.

The Aftermath of a Landmark Study

Within the broader political context of South Africa in the 1930s, the timing of the study of coloured inhabitants conducted by the Zoology Department becomes significant. In the absence of a clear-cut legal definition for the coloured population of South Africa (coupled with the intent to clearly distinguish between white and coloured) this 1937 study attempted to provide scientific evidence for biological differences to be identified and cemented. The scientific findings were not only employed to conceptualise and classify the coloured type, it was also employed to tell them ‘to stay far away’ – to both create and maintain racial distance.

Although seemingly accepted (and employed) as a separate racial category under the apartheid state from 1948 onwards, the growing interest in the coloured question did not disappear. With a troublesome legal definition of “not a white person or a native” (see Population Registration Act, No.30 of 1950), how could a final word on the matter have been spoken? Yet, subsequent studies to that conducted at Stellenbosch University in 1937 continued to argue for measureable biological differences to be found when comparing whites and coloureds.

In 1951, Dr J. A. Keen of UCT published *Craniometric Study of the Cape Coloured Population*. In this article, Keen (1951:40) found “the mean for the male Cape Coloured skull [to be] well below the European group, but above that of the male Bantu”. The results were based on the measurement of 141 adult male skulls obtained from “dissecting-room cadavers” in the Department of Anatomy at UCT. Regarding the coloured population as “a distinct ethnic group” (Keen 1951:29) as well as one that was “as homogeneous as two of the parent racial groups” (Keen 1951:50), Keen (1951:42) proclaimed the cranium to be “neither typically Bantu, nor typically Hottentot; [and] certainly not European”.⁹⁷ The study provided scientific reinforcement

⁹⁶ In 1941 Dr S. Matus of UCT reported in the *South African Medical Journal* that the Mongol spot, “bluish pigmentation spot that occurs in the sacral region of newborn infants”, occurs especially in infants born to the “yellow-brown races” (Matus 1941:121). Matus (1941:123) argued that this spot was found in the cape coloured population – yet another contribution to the scientific indication of racial designation in South Africa.

⁹⁷ Produced shortly after the introduction of the Population Registration Act, Keen’s 1952 study provided scientific reinforcement for the existence of coloureds as a separate racial category. The measured difference in skull size

for the existence of the coloured population as a separate racial category. The apparent homogeneity of the coloured population was also to be found in the results of another study stemming from the Zoology Department at Stellenbosch.

In 1959 J. S. van der Spuy, a post-graduate student in the department, compared the physique and growth of white and coloured boys between the ages of 13 and 17 by measuring 474 European and 500 coloured boys.⁹⁸ Taking heed of their hybrid status, Van der Spuy (1959:138) stated that through measurements and observations of physical characteristics he found the coloureds to be very homogeneous indeed. The racial status of the coloured people had within the course of a few decades thus graduated from a lack of consensus on exactly what the racial classification of this population was, to a designation that framed them as a homogeneous race based on their physical characteristics.

Conclusion

The 1937 study of coloured males conducted by individuals from the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University remained a landmark study – one that appeared on a reading list compiled as a comprehensive bibliography dealing with the coloured question in the 1950s. It was possible for this study to become a reference point for those engaging the coloured question both in academics and in the political realm. Through a scientific endeavour with a strong eugenic slant this hybrid population was constructed as the deviant other. Over the course of the next two decades a category that was once hard to distinguish from whites (as evident in the first investigations into the removal of the coloured from the voters roll in the 1930s as well as investigations into mixed marriages in the same decade), was proclaimed a “very homogeneous”

offered spoke to an existing debate regarding the intelligence of coloureds as related to whites and blacks. In this regard M. L. Fick (1929) argued for a racial hierarchy based on mental capabilities with the coloured occupying a middle position as their achievements were deemed higher than natives but lower than whites. Stellenbosch student Frederich Albertus Sadie similarly drew correlations between the presence of "European blood" and learning capability in *The Relation between the learning ability and the degree of European blood in SA Non-Europeans* (1942) – with a greater degree of European blood resulting in a greater learning ability. A. P. Blignaut, another Stellenbosch student, also found the learning ability of whites to be superior to coloureds who were in turn superior to natives.

⁹⁸ The study was suggested by Grobbelaar. It reiterated the position of the white Afrikaner as belonging to ‘the tall races’ and found the European boys to be taller than the coloured boys with significant statistical differences to be found between the two groups (Van der Spuy 1959:67). The white boys were also found to be larger in their physique (Van der Spuy 1959:135) and greater in their weight (Van der Spuy 1959:136).

category by 1959 (Van der Spuy 1959). It was partly done through continued scientific studies that reinforced not only the otherness of the coloured, but their distinct biological make-up and physical characteristics.

The sameness between the whites and coloureds of the 1930s was expressed in terms of “absolute difference” by the late 1950s. Similar to the experience of the European ethnographer who visited “the aboriginal people of Victoria” (Bracken 1997:8), white Afrikaner nationalists desired a coloured who “[could] be held at an absolute – ‘thorough’ – distance” (Bracken 1997:20). The segregationist policies that were to follow under apartheid leaned ever more on other means to define the coloured population beyond bodily measurement. Yet the scientific roots of difference – established through the use of instruments like Martin’s eye colour table, Fisher’s hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table – remained the underlying but often-forgotten origin of notions of difference related to this racial category.

The role of visual markers as communicators of a racial profile remained central to the methodology of physical anthropology at Stellenbosch University. However, by 1950 the objects used for the measurement of hair, eye and skin colour had started to take a backseat in favour of photographic equipment in the quest to capture racial characteristics. With a refined methodology Grobbelaar would set out to study race through the photographic lens. The objects slowly started to fade out of focus while the knowledge they embodied became ever more internalised within the sciences as well as by the populace.

CHAPTER 4

***The Korana: Capturing a Dying Race*⁹⁹**

To see is to know – World Fair, 1893

In the period following the re-emergence of Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Martin’s eye colour table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table in February 2013, the Stellenbosch University Museum granted me access to their storeroom. While the museum itself housed (and continues to house) an ‘Anthropology section’¹⁰⁰ within its walls, the focus of my visit was to search for further clues related to the historical use of what was *not* on display – like the objects returned to the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology.

The excesses of the *Volkekunde*/Anthropology collection were stored in drawers and on top of cabinets in the museum’s storeroom. And, although catalogued, the catalogue cards revealed no further information about how the eye, hair, and skin colour tables had been used nor who they had been used by. While searching for insight into these instruments, I began working my way through the storeroom drawers. It was here, filing through an innocuous stack of images, that I first encountered the photographs of Johannes Loss. Two A5 sized photographs reminiscent of a mug-shot: one photograph capturing the appearance of this, then unknown, individual’s head and shoulders from the front, the other one capturing them from the side. Like the objects, these photographs were without context. The only clue offered beyond the nameless face was the handwritten ‘C. S. Grobbelaar’ on the back of one of the photographs.

⁹⁹ Although more recent literature uses the spelling "Koranna" to refer to this designated population, in this chapter I will consistently use the historical spelling (korana) to refer to these subjects of study based on the literature engaged (see Robert Broom 1929; J. F. Maingard 1932, J.A. Engelbrecht 1936; and C. S. Grobbelaar 1956).

¹⁰⁰ The ‘Anthropology section’ is described on the University Museum’s website as containing “an irreplaceable African collection” that “offers a visual perspective of both unity and diversity in human society and culture” (Stellenbosch University Museum 2017 [online]). The collection on display includes items associated with “the Nguni, Sotho, Venda, Shona, Kavango and Bushmen/San people” as well as artefacts “that represent West African cultures” as well as the “Tiv of Nigeria” (Stellenbosch University Museum 2017 [online]).

Introduction

From 1947 to 1952 Dr C. S. (Coert) Grobbelaar travelled the country to conduct an anthropometric study of the korana – broadly considered by South African physical anthropologists as an ancient race on the brink of extinction. The study was launched shortly after the Zoology Department acquired “photographic equipment” for the first time (*Komitee vir Wetenskaplike Ondersoek* 1942:262). Photography became a central part of the methodology for studying the korana. While previous studies of human measurement stemming from the Zoology Department at Stellenbosch University echoed the importance of visual markers through a focus on skin, eye and hair colour, the study of the korana cemented this importance through the use of photography and film.

Historically, photography has been employed by physical anthropologist to illustrate difference and similarity – that which divides and that which unites. The perceived ability of the photograph to sum up its subject in a single image became a particularly potent tool in directly communicating ideas of racial difference as based on visible markers. As Elizabeth Edwards (2001:133) argues, the photograph has always functioned as a “somatic mapping” of its subject – one that not only represents reality but is also “active in the making of meanings” (Edwards 2001:39).

In this chapter I illustrate how photographs of the korana taken by Grobbelaar were employed to communicate the racial essence of this group. I argue that the addition of photography and film to Grobbelaar’s methodology was an attempt to render visible to its viewers the marked characteristics of an ‘ancient’ race. With the addition of blood sample analysis, Grobbelaar attempted to also locate racial traits through undisputable evidence – proof that lay beyond surface appearance. But Grobbelaar’s study of the korana encapsulated another important aspect of the work stemming from the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University, and the discipline of physical anthropology in general: Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Martin’s eye colour table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table as tools were slowly receding from active employment. Grobbelaar’s reliance on visual material (as opposed to his data sheets) appears indicative of the shift that was occurring. The addition of photography and film to Grobbelaar’s research methodology, and as aids to illustrate and enliven his results, invited his audience to see racial differences for themselves. Race knowledge had slowly been internalised. In the

communication of his results, the need for the objects to bolster his findings was seemingly becoming redundant.

The Korana: A Scientific Curiosity

Johannes Loss became the subject of scrutiny on 7 July 1950. It was in Keimoes that he was captured by the camera of Stellenbosch zoologist and physical anthropologist Grobbelaar. Upon further investigation it is revealed that Johannes Loss was not the only subject photographed in this way. He was simply one individual amongst an array of representations made of the korana during Grobbelaar's research.

Grobbelaar's publication on *The Physical Characteristics of the Korana* (1956) contains an array of photographs of his research subjects. James Hoogstander, Andries Meikorokwa, Hendrik van Neck, Hendrik Links, Solomon van Neck, Hendrik Buffelbout, Adam Pampier-Keidebees, Josop Michel, Old Hans Springbok, Tryn Blaauw, Marie van Neck, Siena Kriebus, and Piet Blaauw all adorn the pages of this publication – depicted in a similar manner through the use of two separate photographs, a front and profile view. The photographs all stemmed from Grobbelaar's interest in supposedly 'pure-blooded' koranas – a topic he actively researched from 1947 to 1952. During this time, Grobbelaar employed an array of methods to provide the most comprehensive study of the korana thus far. Through the use of anthropometric measurements, photography and film, coupled with blood tests, Grobbelaar set out to capture the racial essence of the korana. Their perceived 'primitive' status within a modernised world would offer another impetus for documenting the korana. Reminiscent of 'salvage anthropology' that had emerged at the turn of the 20th century, Grobbelaar rushed to record the physical features of this "fast-disappearing race" (*Eikestadnuus* 1950:1).

In the 1920s and 1930s, the korana became the subject of interest for local and international scientists. Colonial discourse had depicted the korana as "an uncivilized, morally degenerate and lazy people, with an innate desire to steal cattle" (Erasmus 2012:63). However, while they had been part of the southern African landscape for centuries, their origins were unknown. Early accounts simply described this group as one of the "typical Khoi-Khoi communities" (Leśniewski 2010:17), later as one of the hottentot groups, or simply grouped them under *oorlam* groups – defined as "a community which adopted several elements of European/colonial culture

and institutions” (Leśniewski 2010:14). As a result of their seemingly elusive racial typology, the korana became the source of scientific speculation, and a keen interest developed in their physical features and overall anatomy. Robert Broom distinguished the korana from other racial groups based on the dolichocephalic skulls (Broom 1929:507) and thereby postulated their existence as a separate, ancient racial type. Social anthropologist Isaac Schapera (1926), German zoologists Leonhard Schultze (1928) and philologist J. F. Maingard (1932) all conducted their own studies of the korana. J. A. Engelbrecht (1936) of Stellenbosch University’s Department of *Volkekunde* conducted a comprehensive ethnological study of the korana, publishing a book by the same name in 1936. Maingard was the only researcher who subjected the koranas to anthropometric measurements before Grobbelaar pursued an anthropometric study of this group of people between 1947 and 1952.

Grobbelaar equipped himself with the methods of Rudolf Martin, along with measuring instruments (that included Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table), and a camera as he travelled the more than ‘6000 miles’ (almost 10 000 kilometers) in search of ‘pure blooded’ koranas (Grobbelaar 1956:105,107). He would offer a new addition to studying the korana – namely photography, film and blood tests, in addition to measuring skin, hair, and eye colour. In his study, Grobbelaar specifically set out to “determine the evolutionary status” of this “fast-disappearing race” as it was reported on the front page of the local Stellenbosch newspaper, *Eikestadnuus*, in August of 1950.

This urgency to document ‘primitive’ races had been part of the anthropological landscape since the formation of this field of study in the 19th century, when a concern with evolutionary progress was met with “a corresponding urgency [among] anthropologists to collect what they imagined to be the last vestiges of evidence available on earlier forms of human life” (Poole 2005:164). The expansion of European powers during the 19th and 20th century not only brought about contact with diverse populations, but also their extermination (through conflict and war) and so-called modernisation/westernisation (through colonial contact and missionary work). Coupled with new knowledge of the extinction of species that came with mobility and expansion, what Gruber (1970:1291) encapsulates as “the ghost of the dodo”, the “awareness of the destructive impact of European civilization on native peoples and their cultures was both sudden and traumatic” (Gruber 1970: 1292). In the wake of Darwin’s (1859) ideas of evolution

and natural selection and Spencer's (1864) doctrine of the survival of the fittest, the idea of extinction was understood as an inevitable outcome for the lower or unfit races – thus informing the urge to document 'primitive' races. This was regarded as a worthy scientific endeavour for the historical record of the races of humankind (Gruber 1970:1289-1290).

The documentation of racial types was, however, also useful for the construction and support of scientific theories about humankind. Anthropologists across the globe emphasised the importance of salvaging a record of vanishing peoples. Alfred Court Haddon proclaimed in 1898: “[n]ow is the time to record. An infinitude has been irrevocably lost, a very great deal is now rapidly disappearing; thanks to colonization, trade, and missionary enterprise” (cited in Gruber 1970:1295). Thus, a “tradition of salvage” developed in the field of anthropology (Gruber 1970:1290) with the “vanishing savage” as a central theme (Gruber 1970:1294).

On the South African front, the indigenous populations had been dispossessed by Dutch and British settlement and colonialism as well as terrorised by *boer* commandos (waging a small-scale war against the bushmen and xhosas during a long process of land dispossession). This had brought on “constant friction, punctuated by a series of wars” (Brantlinger 2003:73) in which the Korana Wars of 1869 and 1878 are included. In addition, missionary work in southern Africa contributed to imperial expansion and westernisation of the indigenous populations (Brantlinger 2003:93).

Developing side by side to that of the ‘vanishing savage’ was another narrative: the inability of the perceived primitive races to survive modernity. The extinction of these races was inevitable (reminiscent of the survival of the fittest doctrine) and thus, any race deemed inferior was facing inevitable extinction. The *Life and Letters* of Charles Darwin revealed such a mind-set: “[l]ooking at the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world” (cited in Brantlinger 2003:167). Similarly Francis Galton postulated “the inevitable extinction of all races which were unable to meet the severe demands of the civilizing process” (Brantlinger 2003:194).

In mid-19th century South Africa, Robert Knox, surgeon and ethnologist, predicted that “the weaker dark races – the Hottentots and the Boesjmen [*sic*] – [were] nearing extinction; the stronger race of ‘the Kaffirs’ [referring to the native/bantu] may survive longer, but their fate

[was] also certain” (cited in Brantlinger 2003:42). With regards to the korana J. A. Engelbrecht, of Stellenbosch University’s *Volkekunde* Department, remarked in the introduction of his ethnography on this population in 1936:

Here in the full light of the twentieth century we even find individuals of tribes almost completely forgotten still clinging tenaciously to some of their age-old customs, wistfully looking back on a cherished past and expressing their regrets in a language which has seen no great change in all these hundreds of years. We can then only wonder how, in view of their troubled and variegated history, there come to be Hottentots who have survived the ordeal of civilization for so long (Engelbrecht 1936:ix).

The korana was a ‘dying race’, and in descriptions like these was the belief that this particular race was unfit to survive in its own right. With such understanding of their inevitable extinction, the korana was confirmed to be one of the lower races, although their exact classification was at the time still disputed.

When Grobbelaar set out to study the korana, he went in search of racial purity to establish notions of biological difference. The korana had to be located within the known racial confines of the accepted typology in southern Africa as either a bush, bantu or hottentot type. In his description of the korana it was clear that Grobbelaar believed there was a racial essence to be found.

Grobbelaar explained the word korana as denoting “the people that attack and rob other people” (Grobbelaar 1956:99). For him, “[t]he name for this tribe could not have been more appropriate [...] a name signifying the nature of their particular character” (Grobbelaar 1956:99). Their “aggressive nature and love of plunder” (Grobbelaar 1956:99) was seemingly connected to their biology, and could thus be similarly connected to their physical features. In the words of Grobbelaar (1956:99), “their particular character, their hostile nature and propensities for indolence and plunder were paralleled by the presence of a racial component in their make-up”. The racial essence of the korana seemingly spoke to an inherent link between physical as well as mental characteristics, coupled with a specific temperament.

The selection process of his subjects is described by Grobbelaar (1956:105) as follows:

It was only after I had satisfied myself completely, as far as was possible, that a particular individual was ‘pure’ blooded, that I decided to include him in my material. If there was an admixture of Bantu or of a trace of European blood it was, almost without exception, reflected in the nature and growth of beard, body hair and hair around the genitalia, apart from the facial features, and nature of hair on the scalp. In spite of all these precautions, I was always aware, as any anthropologist is, of the slender validity of the term ‘purity of race’.

Those selected would be subjected to “60 somatometric and cephalometric measurements” and “30 somatoscopic observations” (Grobbelaar 1956:105). A data sheet closely resembling the one used in the 1937 study of the coloured males of Stellenbosch, yet Grobbelaar appears to have limited the level of detail required in the data collection process.¹⁰¹ Starting with biographical information of the subject (name, date of birth, and place of birth), the recording of eye colour, skin colour of various areas on the body, hair colour and hair texture also featured. In this regard Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table were once again employed to gain insight into the partly unknown subject’s racial affiliation.

Further measurements and observations were made in relation to the subject’s genital organs, the texture of the skin, the forehead, the face, the back of the head, the nose, the jaw, the cheekbones, the lips, teeth and ears. Yet contrary to the meticulously completed data sheets of the 1937 study, the data sheets for Grobbelaar’s study of the korana often lacked this kind of thoroughness. Indeed, the 63 data sheets still available among Grobbelaar’s papers in the Special Collections section of Stellenbosch University’s library are scantily filled in. Some are completed in more detail than others, in which whole sections are left blank and see the omission of many measurements as well as observations.

These absences and lack of meticulously annotated data might suggest a greater reliance on visual evidence for the documentation of the physical characteristics of the korana – possibly considered a more persuasive form of evidence to illustrate racial difference. The use of

¹⁰¹ See Chapter Three for more detail on the 1937 study of coloured males.

photography and film offered the audience a chance to classify along with Grobbelaar; to see their characteristics for themselves.

Colour Film of the Korana

During the course of unravelling Grobbelaar's research, I found his traces scattered in many places. Fischer's hair colour and texture table along with Martin's eye colour table were handed over to me in the director's office of the Stellenbosch University Museum. His photographs were located in the storeroom of the University Museum, others in the Special Collections section amongst the rest of his papers in the J. S. Gericke Library of Stellenbosch University. Instruments used for measurement along with a small skull collection are housed in the Medical Morphology Museum of Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences located at the Tygerberg campus in the northern suburbs of Cape Town.¹⁰² His research remnants can even be found on UCT's campus, in the form of a four-minute film that has recently been transferred to disc and can be requested for viewing in the Special Collections section of this university's library.

I sat down on a Saturday morning in the quiet, unpopulated Special Collections section of UCT's library. The disc I was about to view was simply labelled *Korana Stapdans* (Korana's Step Dance). As the screen crackled and jumped into position I read the introductory information.

*Colour film of the Korana. Under the guidance of C. S. Grobbelaar, Zoological Institute,
University of Stellenbosch*

*With recognition to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research of the Union of South
Africa for financial support*

The Korana's Step Dance

Photographer: Frits Stelper, Upington

¹⁰² Stellenbosch University established their Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences in the 1950s with the first intake of students occurring in 1956. This faculty was moved to the newly established Tygerberg campus in 1975 after the completion of the teaching hospital by the same name. While Grobbelaar retired in 1956 he was accommodated by the Department of Anatomy for further studies in human measurement until 1963 after which he left Stellenbosch. More recently the contents of the dismantled Zoology Museum (that used to be part of the Zoology Department) were also moved to the Morphology Museum at Tygerberg.

Location: Next to the Orange River about 8 miles east of Upington

Date: 21 April 1951¹⁰³

The screen went black before the film started and then, for a brief moment, I was transported to 21 April, 1951 somewhere outside of Upington, close to the Orange River.

A single file of five individuals, a male figure, three females, followed by another male, approaches the camera at an angle over the orange sand and low bushes of the greater Upington area. Still in line, the group turns to their right and disappears off screen - all except for the male at the back of the line, who approaches the camera in an upright posture, keeping eye contact with his audience. It is quiet. The visuals are devoid of sound. The faces remain anonymous. The man stops, faces the camera; looks to his right, and then to his left – all done in quick succession while the viewer is exposed to the front and side of his face. He turns right and proceeds to walk off camera. A sudden stop followed by another look towards the camera. He looks away and back again, all in haste, possibly responding to instructions from behind the camera.

The film cuts and then continued immediately.

The camera slowly pans over a line of the same six individuals, now facing forward. The focus is on the head and the upper part of the torso.

The film cuts again.

A shot of the males and females doing a dance. The six individuals shuffle through the orange sand, in a somewhat chaotic fashion – sometimes grabbing a partner, mostly shuffling on their own; dancing in circles, then in lines.

¹⁰³ Original text:

*Kleurfilm van die Korana. Onder leiding van C.S. Grobbelaar, Soologiese Instituut, Universiteit van Stellenbosch
Met erkenning van geldelike steun deur die Wetenskaplike Nywerheids en Navorsingsraad van die Unie van Suid-
Afrika*

Die Korana se Stapdans

Fotograaf: Frits Stelper, Upington

Plek: Langs die Oranjerivier sowat 8 myl oos van Upington

Datum: 21 April 1951

This must be the *Stapdans* or ‘step dance’, to which the title of the film refers. It is a deceiving title for it becomes apparent that the footage largely focuses on the physical features of Grobbelaar’s subjects. The footage suddenly cuts again and I was confronted by individuals facing the camera, standing shoulder to shoulder with the camera focusing on each one of their faces.

The camera slowly pans over the lined-up individuals as each person turns their head slowly to the right until a profile of the head is revealed before they exit the screen to the left one by one. A new face has joined the ranks – a male, fully dressed in a white buttoned shirt and a brown jacket. When his turn comes he turns his head to the right but keeps eye contact with the camera. He is scrutinised by a close-up shot of his face. His uncertainty in following instructions becomes evident in the awkwardness of his constant eye contact with the camera – even at an impossible angle. For as long as his line of vision would allow, eye contact is kept, until he walks off camera, exiting the screen to the left like those before him. The last individual subjected to this process, an older male, laughs as he walks away and exits the screen. The camera follows him. He looks over his shoulder and laughs again. The absurdity of this process may have been more apparent to him than to Grobbelaar.

Behind the camera it would have been Grobbelaar himself who directed this display. The film footage of the korana reveals a constant attempt to capture the front and side of the research subjects’ heads and faces – both physiognomic and phrenological views as similarly seen in the daguerreotypes of Louis Agassiz in the 19th century (Wallis 1995) and later prescribed by Rudolf Martin.¹⁰⁴ Grobbelaar followed these prescriptions: the best photographs, in this case footage, “were of living persons, naked when possible [...] taken from front and sides, and preferably from the back as well” (Morris-Reich 2013:505).

The research subjects remain anonymous to the viewer throughout the film. But upon close inspection, assisted by Grobbelaar’s photographs in his publication on the physical

¹⁰⁴ Physiognomy refers to the pseudo-scientific study of human character through analysing the features of the face created by Johann Caspar Lavater in the 18th century (Ewen & Ewen 2006[2008]:85). Similarly, the pseudo-science of phrenology (perpetuated by Johann Gaspar Spurzheim and Franz Joseph Gall in the early 19th century) was understood to be “a tool for deciphering an individual's moral worth” (Ewen & Ewen 2006[2008]:143) by palpating the human head in order to read the shape of the skull.

characteristics of the korana (1956), I determine their identities: Piet Blaauw, Tryn Blaauw, Marie van Neck, Solomon van Neck, Martha Springbok and Piet Lukas. The unknown male who appeared later in the film dressed in his white shirt and brown jacket remains nameless.

Another sudden cut in the footage as the short film arrives at its final scene.

Five fully dressed Koranas walk down a dust road, away from the camera - the women still putting their headdresses on.

The screen goes black and the film ends.

Visual Representations of the Racial Other

The use of ethnographic film for anthropological study was an important addition to the documentation of ‘vanishing races’. This medium was thought to capture the living anthropological subject even more accurately than photographs. It allowed real-time recording of rituals, traditions, and the everyday use of artefacts. It similarly allowed for the eternal preservation of these beliefs and practices (as captured on film). In South Africa, the study of disappearing racial types, coupled with the importance of providing visual evidence, had been occurring since the start of the 20th century. For instance, in 1908 Rudolf Pöch, previously mentioned in this text in relation to his measurements of prisoners of war during World War I, employed film and other recording devices to document the bushmen of South Africa. Anthropologist Gustav Fritsch had previously used photographic techniques to document his research subjects in South West Africa (see Dietrich and Bank 2008). Raymond Dart of Wits published *The physical characters of the /?Auni-≠ Khomani Bushmen* in 1937.¹⁰⁵ Dart’s publication stemmed from the famous Wits expedition to Tweerivieren in 1936 to meticulously study an isolated group of bushmen in order to determine “the racial constitution of this ancient people” (Rassool & Hayes 2002:131).¹⁰⁶ For decades James Drury had produced a variety of

¹⁰⁵ On the international front such studies had been conducted as early as the late 19th century. See for instance J. G. Garson’s *Physical Characteristics of the Lapps* (1886), A. H. Keane’s *The Lapps: Their Origin, Ethnical Affinities, Physical and Mental Characteristics, Usages, Present Status, and Future Prospects* (1886), M. F. Ashley Montagu’s *The physical characters of the American Negro* (1944), and J. C. Trevor’s *The physical characters of the Sandawe* (1947)

¹⁰⁶ In many ways, the expedition to Tweerivieren mimicked the famous British expedition to the Torres Straits about 40 years earlier. The anthropological expedition to the Torres Strait Islands in 1898 is considered a landmark in the

‘pure’ Bushmen casts with similar motives in mind – “to record what was thought to be a ‘dying race’” (Morris & Tobias 1997:969).

Visual representations of racial types (including photography, film, casts, and live exhibitions) were used in conjunction with scientific measurements and became primary elements for illustrating and confirming difference. Documenting physical features in a photograph rather than a data sheet served to visualise difference in a clearly recognisable manner; for in these physical features “social evolution could be *seen* encoded” (MacDougall 2005:179, own emphasis). Indeed, Ciraj Rassool and Patricia Hayes (2002:139) argue that those who photographed the bushmen contributed to the effective portrayal of these people “as ‘authentically’ primitive” and thus helped to construct this racial type. Visual illustrations of racial difference were thus drawn upon to “identify and define the characteristic or typical features of race, class or social group” (Green 1984:4).

In addition to defining racial types, Alexander Butchart (1998:101) argues that photographs of african miners (often the subject for anthropometric studies in the first half of the 20th century) did not only aid to “construct elusive tribal differences”, but also “cemented a gulf between ‘civilized’ European and ‘barbarous’ African”. According to MacDougall (2005:215) such representations served to enforce “the colonizers’ sense of difference as well as their sense of power” (MacDougall 2005:215). Through meticulous description and scientific knowledge, appearance was translated to fact (Green 1986:6). By the time Grobbelaar studied the korana, the use of photography to enhance written data was thus nothing new to this scientific field.

For Agassiz (the first to employ daguerreotypes for the documentation of races)¹⁰⁷ the photograph was employed to illustrate a racial type – “an average example of a racial group, an abstraction, though not necessarily the ideal, that defined the general form or character of individuals within the group” (Wallis 1995:49). In anthropology, the use of photography dated back to as early as 1869 when the British government requested colonial governors to photograph “the races of the British Empire for the furtherment of scientific knowledge”

history of British anthropology. Initiated by Cambridge University, this expedition brought together notable anthropologists such as Alfred Cort Haddon, W. H. R. Rivers, and Charles Seligman, to document the culture of the islanders through the use of ethnographic film, recordings, photography, measurement and observation.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter One for more on Agassiz slave daguerreotypes.

(Edwards 2001:133).¹⁰⁸ A testimony to the wide-spread use of photography within the field of (physical) anthropology can be seen in the various studies conducted during the latter half of the 19th century that made use of photography to identify and reproduce the visual markers of racial difference.

By this time, the Ethnological Society of London, under the presidency of British anthropologist Thomas Henry Huxley, had requested a “photographic record of the races of the British Empire” (Maxwell 2008:29-30). Huxley was called on by the Colonial Office and he “developed guidelines for the anthropometrical photographing of ‘native’ subjects” (Maxwell 2008:29) – the result of which was to be “useful [for] anatomical comparisons” (Maxwell 2008:30). By suggesting subjects be “rigorously posed” so that their “full-face and profile views” were depicted (Hamilton 2001b:92), the photographs produced were regarded as objective ‘truth-tellers’.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Alphonse Bertillon originally named his own front and profile method of depiction a “speaking portrait” – attesting to the perceived ability of the photograph to communicate as evidence (Ewen & Ewen 2008 [2006]:256). These methods were deployed in all corners of the Empire.¹¹⁰

By 1880 a clear set of guidelines for the posing of subjects when taking photographs, fit for “anatomical comparisons required to racially classify and rank human subjects on an

¹⁰⁸ This request culminated in the publication of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology, for the Use of Travelers and Residents in Uncivilized Lands* published in 1874, driven by The Association for the Advancement of Science in Britain.

¹⁰⁹ In addition to this strict posing of the body, Deborah Poole (2005:163) argues that so-called ‘racial’ photographs were identifiable by their specific “uniform focal lengths, poses, and backdrops, [through which] anthropologists sought to edit out the distracting ‘noise’ of context, culture, and the human [features]”. While these attributes indicate photography as a flawed scientific method that needed profound technical intervention to make it usable as an anthropological tool, the scientific purpose and use of photography none-the-less flourished in both the 19th and 20th centuries.

¹¹⁰ In 1871 German-based *Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* (Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory) had initiated a project to collect “anthropological images from around the world” (Maxwell 2008:39). The first instalment appeared under the title *Anthropologisch-Ethnologisches Album in Photographien* (Album of Anthropological and Ethnological photographs) and contained 600 images “arranged according to geographical region” (Maxwell 2008:40) to depict racial types among which the South African hottentot was also featured. In total, 162 images were dedicated to the people of South Africa (Kazuyasu 2001:55) – quite a significant number in relation to the total of 600 images and the number of regions depicted. In this album, as elsewhere, the photographs adhered to the broad anthropological use of photographs at the time: they were “designed for racial comparison” (Kazuyasu 2001:56).

evolutionary scale” (Zamorano 2011:430), had thus been provided.¹¹¹ Through the publication of photographic albums, as well as the formal and informal sharing of these visual documents, photographs captured in the colonies “contributed to scientific debates about racial type and helped lend legitimacy to the concept itself” (Maxwell 2008:36). In early physical anthropology, scientific photography thus became “a central part of the methodology” (Evans 2002:227) – a fact that continued to be the case well into the 20th century. As Deborah Poole (2005:163) has argued, anthropological photographs were often viewed “as self-contained exemplars of idealized racial categories”. As an object that had “an unassailable air of authority” according to Walter Benjamin (1936), the photograph was thus recognised as an integral part to anthropometric studies and instrumental to racial science.

Yet, as Edwards (2001) suggests, the evidentiary nature of anthropological photographs was not merely rooted in the medium used. Instead, the framework of physical anthropology as a scientific study of the human body informed the images produced within this discipline. Accordingly, this existing framework of interpretation fostered “expectation of meaning” (Edwards 2001:184) – predetermined interpretations brought to the images by those who interact with visual as well as textual representations of the subjects depicted. Thus individual photographs become representative of a collective. Or, as Edwards (2001:8) argues, “[f]ragments come to stand for a whole, as an expression of an apparent essence”. In this sense photographs produced by and circulated in anthropological circles extended beyond a mere “somatic visual mapping” (Edwards 2001:133) of its subjects – they also became “active in the making of meanings” (Edwards 2001:39) of racial groupings.

Speaking to similar concerns, anthropologist John Marshall has stated that “what appears at any moment on the screen forms only a small part of the more extensive imaginative composition” (cited in MacDougall 2005:252). Thus coming to the conclusion that the “invisible content is

¹¹¹ Indeed, after 1880 the publication of albums documenting populations found in the colonies became more frequent. A host of albums stemming from colonial powers appeared in this period. In Germany the *Süd-See Typen. Anthropologisches Album des Museum Godeffroy* was published in 1881. The album contained 175 portrait pictures, almost all anthropometric, to illustrate the ‘typical’ features of the indigenous population found in the South Pacific (Kazuyasu 2001:52). In 1884 the carib, maroon, and creole populations were portrayed through anthropometric photography in *Les Habitants de Suriname*, published in 1884 (Kazuyasu 2001:52). The population of Papua New Guinea was similarly presented through frontal and profile photography in *Album von Papua-Typen. Neu Guinea and Bismarck Archipel* published in 1894, to illustrate a ‘racial type’ (Kazuyasu 2001:52).

most of the reality that surrounds the camera” (MacDougall 2005:253), Marshall suggests that viewers of even scientific images are largely informed by their own conscious and unconscious considerations. In the bleak space of profile photography, the subject sometimes naked, posed facing the camera or in full profile (a recipe of standardised anthropometric photography), there is an unseen presence beyond “a pre-existent truth of pure and un-adulterated facts” (Green 1984:8).¹¹² It is worth reiterating Raymond Corbey’s (1993:360) argument: the “eye is not innocent” but rather “expresses an underlying ideology”.

The widespread use of photography within anthropology provided a “racialized index” (Mirzoeff 2003:111) that was frequently drawn upon to aid in racial categorisation by illustrating racial types and thus racial difference. What thus started with Agassiz’s daguerreotypes of slaves can now be viewed as the beginning of “a coherent photographic archive” that was shared and circulated for the purposes of comparison – to identify differences and similarities in the photographed subjects (Wallis 1995:46).¹¹³

The continued use of a particular style of photography during the anthropological expeditions of the 20th century illustrate how “valued this technology as visual evidence of race” was (Zamorano 2011:427). In the words of Morris-Reich (2016:22), racial photography “pertain[ed] to the deeper, more permanent structure of what truly tie[d] (and divide[d]) individuals and communities” (Morris-Reich 2016:22). From the outset, the photograph harnessed by this science was to function to allow for comparative “biological analysis of human races” (Edwards 2001:138). In physical anthropology, this form of visual documentation became “a central part of the methodology” (Evans 2002:227) – as continued to be the case well into the 20th century.

¹¹² David Green (1984) and John Tagg (1988) have particularly focused on how power relations operated to both produce and perpetuate 19th century racial photography. Both suggest that rather than the medium itself, it is “the conscious and unconscious processes” that inform “practices and institutions” (Tagg 1988:4) and affect how photographs function to depict otherness. Indeed, photographs are understood by Green (1984:15) to be part of the “operations of power [and] patterns of domination and subordination” within the field of physical anthropology. Thus, as Tagg proclaims: “what is real is not just the material item but also the discursive system of which the image it bears is part” (Tagg 1988:4).

¹¹³ Alan Sekula (1986) would argue that these photographs contributed to a ‘shadow archive’ that would consciously or unconsciously allow the viewer to make comparisons or judgements. As he (1986:10) argues: “[w]e can speak then of a generalized, inclusive archive, a shadow archive that encompasses an entire social terrain while positioning individuals within that terrain”. This archive, Sekula (1986:10) continues, “contains both the traces of the visible bodies of heroes, leaders, moral exemplars, celebrities” as well as “those of the poor, the diseased, the insane, the criminal, the nonwhite, the female, and all other embodiments of the unworthy”.

In physical anthropology, it was the racial photograph (rather than the ‘ethnological photograph’ used in social or cultural anthropology)¹¹⁴ that was most commonly employed. Serving to illustrate specific inheritable traits of his subjects, Eugen Fischer employed this method of depiction to illustrate Mendelian genetics at work. Believing that particular traits could be traced back to the parent, photography offered a means to illustrate these visual characteristics for the purpose of comparison. By focusing on “the natural–physical aspects of the human body”, this kind of imagery was “used principally as a measuring device” for the purposes of reproducing reality (Morris-Reich 2013:489) – a consequence that saw prescriptions for this kinds of photography outlined in Martin’s *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie*. Located in the syllabus, and made use of by those who practiced physical anthropology at Stellenbosch University, Martin’s method for anthropometric photography become evident when looking at Grobbelaar’s own methodology.¹¹⁵

The photographs of the korana were an important addition to the investigation of their physical characteristics in Grobbelaar’s study. It provided visual proof for the describing text. As Grobbelaar offers:

Seen from the side, the profile line from the glabella runs almost vertically up to the moderately high forehead and passes as an even convex curve on to a slightly dome-shaped crown. Here the profile line becomes a rather flattened arch and, rising posteriorly it slopes down rather abruptly on the strongly convex, backwardly extended occiput. From the latter it runs obliquely forward to the nape of the neck. Frontal bosses [the top front part of the skull] were always distinct, but not always strongly differentiated. Parietal bosses [the side part of the skull], when present, were often obscured by a thick growth of hair on the head. The contour in

¹¹⁴ Elizabeth Edwards (2001) as well as Deborah Poole (2005) note that there is a distinction to be made between the visual trajectories within the sub-fields of anthropology. In social or cultural anthropology, the ‘ethnological photograph’ often depicted individuals or groups “in their ethnic dress against a neutral background” (Morris-Reich 2013:500), while the racial photograph would focus on the physical characteristics of the human body.

¹¹⁵ To recap, this method is reminiscent of Agassiz’s daguerreotypes – “standing, fully nude images showing front, side, and rear views” reflecting a physiognomic approach recording shape and posture (Wallis 1995:45). In Agassiz’s case, this was complemented by a more tightly focused shot, exclusively showing the head and torso. It reflected a phrenological approach – a focus on the head size and shape (Wallis 1995:45) – much like Bertillon’s mug-shot or Galton’s composite portraits.

norma verticalis is an ovoid obtuse pentagoid. This shape of the head is exactly that which one would associate with the type of skull with a low vaulted, ovoid brain-case and large flat face, [...] comparable with 'Hottentot' skulls (Grobbelaar 1956:113-114).

In his publication the depiction of Piet Blaauw (showing his face, neck and shoulders from the front and the side) is supplemented by a full-length, frontal view, nude photograph with the caption: "Piet Blaauw (± 60). Keimoes (No.38). (This is a very good example of an Australoid type)."

While photographs may have been perceived as capable of illustrating racial traits in Grobbelaar's study, their ability to communicate the hidden biological elements of the human body was given scientific support through the addition of bloodwork. In an attempt to locate the 'true' racial affiliation as revealed through blood type, Grobbelaar's investigation of the korana went beyond the surface of the skin. The visible differences illustrated through photographs and film had to be accompanied by the racial markers hidden within the very bodies of the korana. As was the case for Eugen Fischer's photographs of the rehoboth bastards, "true bloodlines" similarly shared a prominent position in addition to visual evidence.¹¹⁶

Out for Blood

The English language, like human languages in general, is rife with references to blood. These references most commonly speak to ancestry or genealogy (to have german blood in the family, or to have royal (blue) blood). If anything is denoted as being 'in your blood', it entails a natural inherited trait or talent – to be born *with* rather than *to* acquire. 'Blood is thicker than water' denotes close familial relations as primary relations, placed above all other relationships formed over the course of a lifetime. Blood brothers would similarly refer to this close relationship. The importance of 'pure' blood (of a single ancestral bloodline) has likewise played a part in the expression of racial purity – historically expressed as 'pure blood', as opposed to impure blood resulting from racial admixture. Indeed, in animal breeding the term 'thoroughbred' is similarly

¹¹⁶ I refer the reader back to Chapter Three for a discussion of Fischer's use of labelled photographs to "afford priority to the true bloodlines over appearance" (cited in Morris-Reich 2016:74-75).

expressed as pure blooded. To share the same blood has thus historically been a source of inclusion (sharing a close relationship) while the opposite has fostered exclusion (to create distance) – further cementing a sense of self and other, us and them.¹¹⁷

The importance of blood type as related to racial type or racial purity became particularly important after Ludwig Hirzfeld proposed a direct correlation between blood type and racial affinity in 1919. This was followed by Frigyes Verzár's classification of different races “corresponding to the four blood groups (AB, A, B, and O)” in 1925 (Turda 2007:369). The existence of ‘anthropological blood groups’ thus became a new and important addition to the study of racial difference.¹¹⁸ In 1936 Ruggles Gates employed blood tests to study the eskimo, concluding: “in the few cases which could be tested, the pure Eskimo type of face went with the O group, while Eskimos who plainly showed white or Indian admixture, the Indian being half-breed white, had the A group” (cited in Penniman 1951:254).

On the South African front, medical researchers had started to devote their time to the investigation of blood types by the 1920s. A host of studies on the blood groups of South African peoples emerged between 1920 and 1960 (Morris 2008:226). In keeping with anthropological tradition, it was first the european self that would become the subject for studies related to blood type, before similar studies were conducted on the racial other.

Pretoria pathologist Adrianus Pijper,¹¹⁹ a man who regarded this new link between blood groups and racial types as “the greatest advance made in anthropological methods since Retzius introduced the cephalic index in 1842” (Pijper 1930:22), concluded in 1929 “the distribution of the blood groups in the South African Dutch is of the Western European type” (Pijper

¹¹⁷ To illustrate, anthropologist Frederic Ward Putnam for instance spoke in the 19th century of african americans as a “degraded and degenerate race [...] and not of the same blood as we are” (Spencer 1997a:42). A similar logic was employed in 1930s Nazi Germany to distinguish ‘pure’ germans from their ‘impure’ jewish counterparts. In this regard the “long-headed European races” (nordic bloodline) was linked to blood type A (Polsky 2002:174). A simple blood test could thus definitively distinguish the self from the deviant other.

¹¹⁸ In 1928 Dr P. Battaerd of the Physiology Department at Stellenbosch University presented a lecture to the Scientific Society of Stellenbosch University (*Wetenskaplike Vereeniging van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch*) on *Antropologiese Bloedgroepe* (Anthropological blood groups) (*Stellenbosch Universiteit Jaarboek* 1929:197-198).

¹¹⁹ Pijper served as Professor of pathology at Pretoria University as well as director of the Institute for Pathology at the same University. He was also pathologist to a number of other institutions and hospitals – “the Pretoria General Hospital (1920-1951), the Pretoria Mental Hospital (1922-1951), and the Pretoria Municipal Health Department” can be counted among these (S2A3 2015 [online]).

1929:1161).¹²⁰ In the following years Pijper published *Blood-groups of the Bantu* in 1930 and *Blood-groups in Hottentots* in 1935 – a topic that Ronald Elsdon-Dew similarly pursued (see his *The blood-groups of the Hottentot*, 1935).¹²¹

The importance of blood group testing was located in its unchanging nature. In the words of Pijper, (1935:192), “[a]n individual’s blood group remains unchanged throughout his life, is unaffected by outward circumstances and is inherited along well-established lines in which A and B figure as dominants”. While the existence of particular physical and mental characteristics had been challenged in anthropology due to environmental influences, blood was a constant – an unchanging identifier. While not postulating the existence of inherent capabilities, racial difference was proven to exist through the affiliation with particular blood groups. For Pijper (1935:193) this scientific addition to the study of race could no longer be ignored and could be useful to address “unsolved problems” related to research on racial categories. In fact, serology (or the study of blood groups), was employed across the world to ‘disentangle’ diverse populations.¹²²

Amongst arguments of racial descent and affinity within the diverse non-european populations of South Africa, blood group analysis was perceived to shed new light on an old problem of racial classification. Thus, during the course of his research, and in addition to measurements and photography, Grobbelaar collected blood samples from his subjects. The collection was often done under trying circumstances: “many a time by candle light late at night, far away from the nearest town, often in a draughty, inhospitable little tin shanty” (Grobbelaar 1955:324). These

¹²⁰ In this regard the South African dutch were closely related to the french and the hollanders, with a correlation but larger deviation from germans. Pijper (1929:1162) concluded: “[i]t might be argued that with such ancestors, the incidence of the A-group amongst the South African dutch of the present time is somewhat low, and the incidence of the B-group somewhat high”.

¹²¹ Pijper (1935:193) tested Dart’s hypothesis that the bantu were of negro origin with an admixture of hamitic blood. Through blood group tests Pijper (1935:194) seemingly acquired enough evidence to argue the exact opposite: the bantu was of hamitic origin with an admixture of negro blood. He further postulated that the bushmen were a unique type (possessing O and A elements only), and the hottentot was a mixture of bushmen and a hamitic element (possessing A and B elements) (Pijper 1935:194). However, soon after Elsdon-Dew (1935:653) set out “to dispel the erroneous impression as to the origin of the Hottentot in the minds of those unfamiliar with the rationale of ethnological blood-grouping”. He similarly challenged Pijper’s method of blood analysis, suggesting that the form of measurement used (namely Hirzfeld’s Biochemical Index) was “valueless as a means of indicating the effect of mixture of races” (1935:651). According to Ruggles Gates “the high frequency of B in the Hottentots allie[d] them with other African peoples” (cited in Singer & Weiner 1963:169). This was in contrast to the low B percentage found in european populations (Broom 1941:251).

¹²² For an account of this science in Hungary and Romania during the interwar years see Turda (2007).

samples were sent to the Institute for Pathology in Pretoria, the professional home of both Pijper and Elsdon-Dew, and tested for blood type (and thus racial ancestry) between July 1948 and July 1949.

On 22 July 1948, a seemingly perplexed Pijper reported of tests carried out on the Korana:

It is still too early to say, but it is becoming interesting. We expected a mass of B and we are almost only getting A and O. It is very worthwhile to continue this testing, the results may, in their unexpectedness, acquire great meaning. It looks like they are more like the Bushmen. But, as I said, it is too early to give an opinion (Pijper 1948, own translation).¹²³

Despite these surprising preliminary results, it seems that additional tests produced the outcome initially expected. Unlike the preliminary reports by Pijper that documented an overwhelming occurrence of blood types A and O, a high incidence of type B was finally found amongst the korana. In line with these results Grobbelaar concluded: “there is serologically not a real fundamental difference between them [the korana] and Pyper’s [*sic*] Hottentots from South West Africa” as sampled in 1935 (Grobbelaar 1955:325).

By the conclusion of his study, Grobbelaar thus distinguished the korana from the hottentot, “however small that difference” (Grobbelaar 1956:123), as based on their racial make-up.¹²⁴ Hair and eye colour were found to be “practically constant” in the korana (Grobbelaar 1956:107). The hair was black, “as [commonly found] in Negroes” (Grobbelaar 1956:111), it was proclaimed. The subjects had “typical peppercorn” hair with thinly distributed tufts on the chin, upper lip, and genitalia (Grobbelaar 1956:112). The colour of the eyes predominantly correlated with number 3 on Martin’s eye colour table, with exceptions illustrating an even darker number 2, or slightly lighter number 4 (Grobbelaar 1956:112).

¹²³ The original version reads as follows: “*Dit is nog te vroeg om baie te sê, maar dit begin belangwekkend te word. Ons het 'n massa B verwag en ons kry amper net A en O. Dit is heel erg die moeite werd om aan te gaan, die resultate mag in hulle onverwagtheid, groot betekenis kry. Dit lyk asof hulle meer soos die Boesmanne [is]. Maar, soos gesê, dis te vroeg om 'n opinie te gee*” (Pijper 1948).

¹²⁴ It is worth noting that Grobbelaar referenced the work of Stellenbosch volkekundige J. A. Engelbrecht’s *The Korana* (1936) publication, Martin’s *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie* (1928 [1914]), Von Luschan’s *Racial affinities of the Hottentot* (1905) in which he uses external constructions of the ear to draw a distinction between the san and the khoikhoi, and Fischer’s *Die Rehobother Bastards* (1913).

The measured stature, cephalic index, facial index and nasal index were to be compared to those of hottentots (as collected by Leonard Schultze among the hottentots of South West Africa with the use of Martin's method and instruments) (Grobbelaar 1956:107). Unlike the hottentot, Grobbelaar (ibid.) found that the korana had a narrower face, as illustrated by the facial index, as well as a narrower nose, as illustrated by the nasal index. Grobbelaar also found the korana to be of "short to below medium stature" (Grobbelaar 1956:111) and the shape of the skull as "associate[d] with a low vaulted, ovoid brain-case and large flat face" (Grobbelaar 1956:114). Yet he conceded that "[t]he frequency of the various combinations [of characteristics] does not entitle one to single out a particular one as truly characteristic" (Grobbelaar 1956:111). However, with the addition of photography, a visual depiction of the research subjects could possibly aid in highlighting the resemblance of some characteristics and thereby illustrate a racial type.

Based on his findings Grobbelaar declared the korana to be a 'dying breed' whose purity had long been compromised by intermixing. While these results were not novel, Grobbelaar was the first to include exhaustive measurements as well as blood tests to support his conclusion. Through measurements, observations of physical features, and blood work, Grobbelaar was attempting to capture the racial essence of the korana. In 1956 he presented a public lecture at his academic home of Stellenbosch University titled *The physical anthropology of the Koranna (with colour film about the life of the Koranna)* (Stellenbosch Universiteit Jaarboek 1952:41). With the inclusion of photographs, Grobbelaar invited his audience to see the korana (as well as racial difference) for themselves.¹²⁵

Conclusion

Poole (2005:169) is of the opinion that photographs often "communicate the broader message lurking behind the surface rendering of the event, person, or practice they portrayed". Grobbelaar's photographs of the korana, including the depiction of Johannes Loss, now represent a past that speaks of the broader scientific as well as socio-political context of South Africa. Within the time period in which Grobbelaar's study of the korana was conducted (from 1947 to

¹²⁵ Grobbelaar published a similar series of articles based on his research, namely: *The Origin and Distribution of the Living Korana collected for a Somatological Study* (1955), *The distribution of the blood groups of the Koranas* (1955), and *The physical characteristics of the Korana* (1956).

1952) the National Party came to power and set in motion the implementation of apartheid in 1948. In 1950, the year that Johannes Loss came face to face with Grobbelaar's camera, the legal cornerstone of this new state was introduced in the form of the Population Registration Act.

The methods employed in science – particularly those of measurement and observation – were put to practical use in broader society. The knowledge of racial classification (as related to the identification of the 'markers' of difference to aid in such classification) was becoming embedded both inside and outside the scientific community. Indeed, while the layman did not necessarily come into direct contact with existing scientific knowledge produced to give evidence of inherent racial difference,¹²⁶ the apparent reality and certainty of bodily difference allowed individuals to identify and racially classify simply as a habit of daily life. As argued by Deborah Posel (2001b), for many South Africans, race had become common sense in the 1950s.

In the academic realm of studying racial diversity, Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan's skin colour table had slowly been laid to rest by scientists. While actively used in the 1920s to measure human characteristics and thus determine racial affiliation, the objects had begun to retreat to a methodological formality. They had seemingly started to lose their relevance. Although Grobbelaar's study of the korana between 1947 and 1952 employed the objects to include hair, skin and eye colour in the data collection sheets, the emphasis had shifted to the inclusion of visual evidence in the form of photography and film. Through the use of these imaging techniques, the audience was now invited to see for themselves. Visual material of this kind was not merely supportive of the information produced by the objects but had begun to replace the need for them entirely.

After the introduction of the Population Registration Act of 1950, the entire population of South Africa was similarly invited to 'see for themselves' on a daily basis – to identify self and other in their day-to-day experiences. In the process, the scientific instruments used to measure racial traits had shifted from active employment to a mere point of reference. The importance of hair, eye and skin colour as markers for racial classification had been established in the minds of scientists, politicians and the South African public. No longer was there a need to have these

¹²⁶ Rather, race knowledge was communicated to the populace through the political arena in apartheid South Africa.

objects at the ready for comparison; the science had been mastered and the results it rendered could be employed on a daily basis and, more importantly, in the absence of its scientific source.

PART II

The Objects Acquire Evidentiary Status: From Active Employment to Scientific Reference

Grobbelaar remained at Stellenbosch University until his formal retirement in 1956 after which he was accommodated by the institution's newly established Medical Faculty to pursue his interests in physical anthropology. While Grobbelaar later departed from Stellenbosch University in his professional capacity to spend the remainder of his life in the Free State, the objects he employed during his career lingered in their material form without further application and practical use as indexes for measuring racial difference. But, a potent presence of the ideas that had produced Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan's skin colour table (as well as the notions perpetuated by their use) lingered even when the objects were no longer actively employed. The scientific knowledge they had both supported and produced acquired evidentiary status – becoming a reference beyond the realms of zoology or physical anthropology – for all those engaging with the racial categories of South Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. As argued by Lorraine Daston (2000):

Cultural salience [makes] objects visible, but the techniques of scientific inquiry [make] them additionally solid, capacious, ordered, intricate, and deep enough to sustain research and theoretical explication (Daston 2000:7).

The studies that had been conducted by members of the Zoology Department at Stellenbosch University had fed into a scientific habitus of racial categorisation after 1948. In line with analyses drawing from the work of Louis Althusser, the following two chapters engage the question of how the ideas and practices that emerged within this department had “become sedimented through ritualized performances” (cited in Coole & Frost 2010:34). Michel De Certeau (1984:43) argues that “we never write on a blank page, but always on one that has already been written on”. Once ideas are instilled it often results in a taken-for-granted “non-reflexive habituality [imbuing] objects with [a] familiarity that makes artifacts, commodities, and practices seem so natural that they are not questioned” (cited in Coole & Frost 2010:34-35).

Objects are not “detached from the intellectual and social ‘commerce’ that organizes their definition and their displacements” (De Certeau 1984:43-44).

The following section thus seeks to illustrate how racial discourse (as partly informed by the knowledge produced through the eye, hair, and skin colour tables) became a fertile source for policy development. The work of Johannes Petrus van Schalkwyk (Hannes) Bruwer as head of the *Volkekunde* Department, and the Stellenbosch-based South African Bureau for Racial Affairs (SABRA) offered important contributions to engagements with race at Stellenbosch University. Bruwer’s own reference to the anthropological instruments (especially the usefulness he attributed to them in determining racial categories) illustrated the ideology that was strongly associated with the scientific results produced with their use.

Standing on the shoulders of giants, or crumbling under the fists of ideology, the knowledge produced in the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University between 1925 and 1955 became a point of departure for many social scientists engaging with the concept of race in their service to the apartheid state.

CHAPTER 5

A Scientific Habitus of Racial Engagement

The scholastic illusion operates with particular force – Pierre Bourdieu (2001:37)

In a 1958 text, Hannes Bruwer, then head of the *Volkekunde* Department at Stellenbosch University, cited Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Martin’s eye colour table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table as helpful instruments for establishing an individual’s race in *Race Studies (Ethnography)* – a high school textbook for the subject of Ethnology.¹²⁷ Here Bruwer defined race as follows with reference to the ‘measuring instruments’:

If we compare the physical traits of the Englishmen, Afrikaners, Frenchmen, Germans, etc., on the one hand, with those of the Bantu peoples on the other hand, there are noteworthy physical differences between the two groups compared. Because of these differences, we say that they belong to two different races. It should be clear, therefore, that the idea of race has to do only with physical characteristics or traits. Some of the latter can be readily observed at a glance; e.g. complexion, type of hair, facial features, etc. Some characteristics again can only be determined by the use of measuring instruments (Bruwer 1958b:10-11).

In this introductory chapter of this text Bruwer cited “the colour of the skin, the hair, the eyes, the shape and size of the head and face, the shape and size of the body” (Bruwer 1958b:12) as the most important physical features to determine race. The publication also contained photographs of Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Martin’s eye colour table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table as part of a methodology to “classify the main race groups of the world” (Bruwer 1958b:14-16).

¹²⁷ This textbook started with a chapter on ‘The Races of Mankind’ in which racial types and methods for classification were outlined. The rest of the book was dedicated to the ‘races’ of South Africa – each chapter providing an essentialist characterisation of the racial categories found within the reaches of the apartheid state.

The discussion that accompanied the photographs of these instruments displayed the typical language of early 20th century racial science – wavy, straight and woolly hair as related to the various racial groups: blond versus black hair; dark versus light skin; blue eyes as “practically confined to the Caucasian group”; narrow nostrils and a high bridge of the nose for caucasians versus the broad and flat nose with a low bridge of the negroids; a narrow versus broad face and the angle of the lower jaw; reference to the cephalic index and information on how this index can be calculated (see Bruwer 1958b:14-19).¹²⁸

Introduction

While the ideas of physical anthropologists discussed in previous chapters were becoming taken for granted scientific fact (as found in the works of many social scientists at Stellenbosch University and beyond), the mention of Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture tables, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table in the literature of *volkekunde* alludes to a shared scientific habitus informed by biological notions of race.¹²⁹ Indeed, the conclusions reached by the various studies can be understood to have informed the fabric from which further social engagement with racial categories occurred – both in the decades preceding and following the 1948 election. Yet these objects were not necessarily overtly mentioned in the narratives of social scientists at Stellenbosch University. It was rather scientific notions and assumptions about race and racial categorisation that can be read as sub-text in their engagements with the racial other.

The remaining ‘presence’ of the objects was thus no longer so much a physical presence as a symbolic one. Through their practical use, the objects had contributed to a racial ideology that

¹²⁸ A very similar discussion of racial classification with reference to the tables appeared in the textbook used in *volkekunde* at Afrikaans-language universities across South Africa, namely *Inleiding tot Algemene Volkekunde (Introduction to General Volkekunde)*, published in 1959 with P. J. Coertze, Bruwer’s PhD supervisor, as editor (Coertze 1959:25-30). Bruwer contributed a chapter, “Art as an element of culture”, to the first two editions of the book. He was unable to contribute to the third and final addition due to his untimely death in 1967. At Pretoria University P. J. Coertze, and later his son R. D. Coertze, used the textbook together with visual aids. Colour slides of Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, slides illustrating head measurements of an anthropometric nature, and colour slides outlining the five races of mankind (closely related to Deniker and Carleton S. Coon’s classification of races), including photographs of representatives of these races, were left in a storeroom of the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Pretoria, where I viewed them in 2016.

¹²⁹ This approach stands partly in opposition to the arguments posed by Keith Breckenridge (2014) and Deborah Posel (2001) both of whom see racial classification under apartheid as largely a bureaucratic endeavour rather than one which drew inspiration from scientific debates around race as a biological category.

remained present in the minds of those who engaged with issues related to racial categorisation in the apartheid state. Even at a time when the instruments themselves were no longer employed for the study of human measurement, racial classification mandated by the Population Registration Act of 1950 as well as the cases brought before the Review Board often relied on the ‘visible markers of race’ (including the colour of the skin, eyes, and hair) (South African Institute of Race Relations 1958:32).

Following the arguments of Alan Morris (2012) and Christa Kuljian (2016), this chapter traces the relevance of Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture tables, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table to the social sciences where they rear their heads in the 1950s through the work of Bruwer. This period marks a time in which the objects shifted from active tools employed for measurement to tools drawn upon for their historical credence. As Morris (2012:S153) has posited, it was the literature and knowledge produced by physical anthropologists pre-World War II that “provided a fertile growth medium in which the apartheid ideology could flourish” (Morris 2012:S153). Kuljian recently provided a similar argument in relation to physical anthropology at Wits during the pre-apartheid and apartheid period. Saul Dubow has likewise made this argument with regards to social anthropology, stating that while this discipline had limited instrumental effects on state policy, “its contributions to the development of an ideology of segregation was significant” (Dubow 1987:81). In this chapter I thus illustrate how notions of race as a biological construct had, by the 1950s, become a taken for granted aspect of the engagements with the racial other by social scientists at Stellenbosch University.

With a focus on the work of Bruwer and his colleagues at SABRA, this chapter follows the ‘presence’ of the objects particularly in engagements with the coloured category – a category that increasingly became the subject of scrutiny and the target of apartheid legislation after 1950. In this chapter the narratives that emerged from Stellenbosch in relation to the coloured population, miscegenation, and the removal of coloured voices from the voters roll, are employed to argue for the existence of a scientific habitus based on race as a biological entity imbued with inherent capabilities. By making use of Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977:79) notion of habitus as a starting point, I illustrate in this chapter that race awareness was deeply entrenched in scientific discourse – to the point that the identification of racial difference became seemingly removed from its origins

of anthropological measurement. Instead (and particularly in the case of Stellenbosch University) Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture tables, and Von Luschan's skin colour table became iconic of the lasting power of ideas fixated on racial classification. Although globally discarded (or rather coming to the end of their scientific use-life),¹³⁰ at Stellenbosch University the objects acquired a shelf-life beyond their expiry date.

The Rigour of Race: A Scientific Habitus and the Apartheid State

Drawing on the writings of Ian Hacking, Amos Morris-Reich (2013:497) has postulated the "looping effect" of science" as it relates to racial classification. Morris-Reich (2016:9) suggests that scientific categories have the ability to "force distinctions on what they describe" by essentially transposing existing notions back onto supposedly 'new' discoveries. In addition, regardless of the constructed or arbitrariness of these classificatory systems, they are inevitably related to very real effects in society. Closely related is Bourdieu's notion of the habitus. For Bourdieu (1990:5), the habitus is "the myriad of 'small perceptions' of everyday life" that occurs repetitively in the "social universe" – small perceptions that shape the unconscious and essentially creates "a commonsense world" (Bourdieu 1977:80).

Within the framework of an accepted commonsense world an individual's actions are perceived as "'sensible' and 'reasonable'" (Bourdieu 1977:80). In revisiting his theory of the habitus as it relates to the scientific field, Bourdieu (2001:37) argues that the "scholastic illusion operates with particular force" – that rather than 'truth' per se, it is the academic rigour of a theory that allows it to be accepted as fact.¹³¹ A similar framework of thinking is applied here for the 'scientific' support that was offered, and harnessed, for the existence of race as a biological category in many localities, including South Africa. Within the social sciences ideas of race-as-

¹³⁰ A distinction is made between the notion of 'use-life' and 'biography' when theoretically engaging objects. Andrew Jones (2002:84) defined this approach as tying material objects to a finite use-life – objects are created, they are used for a finite time-period, then "they become worn and are discarded". In the case of this study, even though the objects were at some stage no longer used 'scientifically' (no longer fulfilling their original purpose and thus coming to the end of their predetermined 'use-life'), I am by no means arguing that the objects became completely useless at end of their 'scientific lifetime'.

¹³¹ Bourdieu (2001:38) argued that "[i]f there is one area where it can be assumed that agents act in accordance with conscious, calculated intentions, following consciously devised methods and programmes, it is indeed in the domain of science".

biology were allowed to linger long after this understanding of race was questioned in other parts of the world.

After decades of biological and social engagement by academics there was seemingly little need to reiterate any ‘scientific evidence’ supportive of now taken-for-granted notions of racial difference. In the 1950s the scientific habitus of apartheid-thinking was thus already in existence and the production of new scientific knowledge to inform policy was hardly required.

On the eve of the 1948 elections, the National Party was clear about its intentions: its policy “[was] geared towards the maintenance and protection of the white population of the country as a pure white race” (cited in *Die Burger*, 29 March 1948, own translation). A 1949 pamphlet similarly outlined the Party’s stance towards the native, coloured, and indian populations present in South Africa:

On the other hand there is the policy of separation (apartheid) [...] based on the Christian principles of justice and reasonableness. Its aim is the maintenance and protection of the European population of the country as a pure white race, the maintenance and protection of the indigenous racial groups as separate communities, with prospects of developing into self-supporting communities within their own areas, and the stimulation of national pride, self-respect and mutual respect among the various races of the country. We can act in only one of two directions. Either we must follow the course of equality, which must eventually mean national suicide for the white race, or we must take the course of separation (apartheid) through which the character and the future of every race will be protected and safeguarded with full opportunities for development and self-maintenance in their own areas [...] The party therefore undertakes to protect the white race properly and effectively against any policy, doctrine or attack which might undermine or threaten its continued existence (SAHO 2017 [online]).

The pamphlet very clearly spoke of existing racial categories and the perceived purity of those categories – particularly as they were believed to affect white South Africans. These ideas had manifested over the course of the previous decades in academic literature. And it was

particularly the problematic and elusive nature of the coloured – the interim category between black and white – that drove many of these debates.

Unexpectedly, the National Party and its supporters would have to face a global turn of events when it came to how race was understood. While the party's carefully constructed plan for racial segregation was finally set in motion in 1948, a committee of academics appointed by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was beginning to craft a response to the racially motivated atrocities of World War II. Occurring almost simultaneously with the implementation of apartheid would be the development and release of the UNESCO Statement on Race in 1950. The UNESCO Statement set out to 'explain race away' by attempting to revoke its categorical status, most famously through its proclamation that “‘race is not so much a biological phenomenon as a social myth’” (UNESCO 1952:101).¹³²

While the global release of this statement could not have been foreseen, the signs of a move in this direction were certainly present before its issuing. It was already in 1947 that the United Nations publicly criticised South African race policy. Regardless, the National Party pushed forward to implement apartheid a year later. The government implemented The Mixed Marriages Act in 1949 (that had been applicable to regulate marriages between whites and blacks, but now extended to regulate the relationship between whites and coloureds), followed by the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act (both introduced in 1950). According to Ian Goldin (1987:79-80) it was particularly the Population Registration Act that provided a legal basis for “the forceful extraction of the Coloured components [from] the White population”. A further move towards the disenfranchisement of the coloured category was the introduction of the Separate Representation of Voters' Bill in 1951. Jointly extracting the racial other from the inner echelons of whiteness, these laws ensured the self-preservation of this particular *pure* racial entity – namely the white race.

¹³² This particular proclamation was somewhat contradictory to the preceding statements in the same document defining race as biological, group-related, and manifested in physical differences that were heritable. This was supported by stating that “[i]n matters of race, the only characteristics which anthropologists can effectively use as a basis for classifications are physical and physiological” (UNESCO 1952:102). The statement seemingly only contributed to a general confusion about the existence of physical characteristics, based on biology and heredity as related to race.

In 1952, UNESCO released an amendment to its earlier statement on race, this time taking into account contributions from geneticists and physical anthropologists. Based on the first statement, the 1952 version clarified that “[s]cientists are generally agreed that all men living today belong to a single species, *Homo sapiens*, and are derived from a common stock” (UNESCO 1952:11). While serving to squash any remnants of polygenic thought, the statement further offered a number of curveballs to the apartheid state, especially when they denounced the existence of pure races (ibid.). The statement read:

In regard to race mixture, the evidence points to the fact that human hybridization has been going on for an indefinite but considerable time. Indeed, one of the processes of race formation and race extinction or absorption is by means of hybridization between races [as] there is no reliable evidence that disadvantageous effects are produced thereby (UNESCO 1952:14).

In one fell swoop, UNESCO had dismantled notions of racial purity and racial superiority on a global level. Moreover, it had spoken almost directly to the first years of apartheid rule and legislation by claiming that “no biological justification exists for prohibiting intermarriage between persons of different races” (UNESCO 1952:14) while simultaneously insisting upon racial equality. However, complicating matters was the following statement:

The concept of race is unanimously regarded by anthropologists as a classificatory device providing a zoological frame within which the various groups of mankind may be arranged and by means of which studies of evolutionary processes can be facilitated (UNESCO 1952:11).

Although the statement challenged two important elements of the apartheid state and the implementation of separate development (namely self-preservation based on notions of racial purity and racial inequality), it did not necessarily challenge the role of race as a classificatory tool.

In spite of its contradictions, the UNESCO Statement stood in direct opposition to the policies of the newly established apartheid state. The National Party pamphlets, as released in March 1948 and in 1949, were representative of a moment of certainty among the makers of party policy and their belief in the justifications provided for separate development. For a party that was open and

outspoken about racial purity as the driving force for separate development, or rather ‘total apartheid’, the implication of this global change in the race narrative posed quite a challenge to the further development of the apartheid state.

With the rug seemingly pulled out from under it, the early to mid-1950s came to be an interesting moment to engage with the rigorous notion of race in the South African context. The development of apartheid-thinking and its possible implementation had transpired over a number of decades; yet with the issuing of the UNESCO Statement, the National Party and its supporters were forced to navigate a space between these newly released notions of race with the further development and successful implementation of the apartheid state. However, despite being faced with the global tide turning against the ruling notions of biologically determined races, such beliefs appear to have remained dominant among the supporters of the South African government. Thus, to argue that race disappeared from the apartheid narrative, or was merely cloaked in terminology such as ethnicity and culture after the release of the UNESCO Statement, would be a grave mistake. Instead what is found is a defensive rhetoric and an often stubborn insistence on ever narrower and more clearly defined conceptualizations of race – particularly with regards to the coloured category.

It was in the midst of these local and global developments that Bruwer, then a PhD student at Pretoria University, joined the *Volkekunde* Department at Stellenbosch University as a lecturer in 1951. His own formulations of race in the aftermath of the UNESCO Statement showed anything but an immediate acceptance of the global paradigm change. In 1958 Bruwer provided a conceptualisation of race that was deeply imbued with turn-of-the-century notions of race:

The word ‘race’, then, has a biological meaning [...] We may, therefore, define a race as follows: A race is a group or division of mankind having in common certain recognizable and inherited physical characteristics by which those individuals belonging to it can be distinguished from those belonging to other races, whose members will have their own peculiar and common physical characteristics” (Bruwer 1958b:10-11).

Bruwer had completed his MA in 1948 under the supervision of Werner Eiselen (founder of the Ethnology (later renamed *Volkekunde*) Department at Stellenbosch University in 1926), and was

in the process of completing his PhD under the supervision of P. J. (Pieter) Coertze (also formerly a student of and lecturer at Stellenbosch University). Coertze received his training in the *Volkekunde* (then Ethnology) Department of Stellenbosch University in the late 1920s and early 1930s. At the time, the department was under the leadership of the young Eiselen, who also happened to be Coertze's predecessor at Pretoria University.

Contrary to David Hammond-Tooke (1997) and Saul Dubow (2014), Andrew Bank (2015a:2) has recently argued that Eiselen's formative years at Stellenbosch University revealed him to be "thoroughly committed to biological ideas of racial difference and their application to different racial groups in South Africa". In fact, while Eiselen was previously conceived as favouring culture rather than race as an explanation or basis for difference, Bank (2015a:4) has argued that the young Eiselen stressed the physical and mental differences supposedly identifiable between races. These ideas informed Eiselen's teaching and remained evident in the syllabus of the 1920s and 1930s through the reading material related to human heredity (Bank 2015a:5).¹³³

Eiselen's Ethnology Department (later renamed *Volkekunde*) at Stellenbosch University was, like the Zoology Department, deeply informed by the work of German theorists.¹³⁴ According to Bank (2015a:2) the formative years of *volkekunde* at Stellenbosch University "were decisive in the making of *volkekunde* as a deeply racially inflected field of study". Eiselen's student Coertze continued to teach in the *Volkekunde* Department at Stellenbosch University upon completing his postgraduate studies and became increasingly involved with the political questions of the time. Hammond-Tooke (1997:133) has postulated that Coertze's *volkekunde* rhetoric became "almost antagonistic" and "one of pollution-miscegenation" – with race as a central and integral component (Hammond-Tooke 1997:133). Given Bank's (2015) recent contributions this was surely an outgrowth of Eiselen's teachings at Stellenbosch. Coertze's contributions to notions of racial difference also came at a time characterised by an increasingly hostile political environment that manifested itself in local (Stellenbosch) party politics between whites and coloureds.

¹³³ Here Bank (2015a:6) specifically cites Eugen Fischer's text *Menschliche Erblichkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene: Menschliche Auslese und Rassenhygiene (Eugenik) (Human Heredity and Racial Hygiene)* of 1921, co-authored with Erwin Baur and Fritz Lenz.

¹³⁴ In the case of *volkekunde* Bank (2015b:167) particularly refers to theoretical underpinnings featuring the "German linguistics of Carl Meinhof and German *völkerkunde* (ethnology)".

This was particularly the case for the 1939 elections when it was claimed that the coloured population, who continued to have a vote in the Cape Province after unification in 1910,¹³⁵ wielded enough electoral power to hand a victory to the *Verenigde Party* (the official opposition of the National Party). That same year, the remainder of the world was also entering a period of turmoil with the start World War II – an event that revealed German sympathisers as present at Stellenbosch University.¹³⁶

In November 1943 Coertze published the article ‘Grondstellinge oor die Kleurlingvraagstuk vanuit die Afrikaner standpunt’ (Fundamental Principles of the Coloured Problem from the Afrikaner point of view) in *Wapenskou*.¹³⁷ In this particular article, Coertze addressed the coloured question head-on and proclaimed:

According to their racial origin, the coloured forms a separate community which cannot be included among the whites [...] If the white race wants to maintain itself as a pure white community, it would be in the interest of the white race to separate the coloured from him [*sic*] in both body and life (Coertze 1943:5, own translation).¹³⁸

Soon after, Coertze and his colleagues in Bantu Languages (F. J. Language and B. I. C. van Eeden) published *Die Oplossing van die Naturellevraagstuk in Suid-Afrika. Wenke ooreenkomstig die Afrikanerstandpunt van Apartheid* (The Solution of the Native Problem in

¹³⁵ South Africa was declared a Union in 1910 – eight years after the British and the *boers* (by now known as the afrikaners) had signed a peace treaty to bring an end to the South African (Anglo-Boer) War.

¹³⁶ Drawing on personal experience, Ernst van Heerden recounted the anti-British sentiments that manifested during World War II as pro-German among many students and academics on Stellenbosch campus. Van Heerden (1989:29) revealed how students “shamelessly listened to German radio transmissions” (own translation) during the war, and the fact that those lecturers who might not have been in support of German troops certainly kept it to themselves. Van Heerden (1989:30) concluded: “I think one can, without exaggeration, say that Stellenbosch was a place of pro-German sentiments at the time” (own translation). The establishment of organizations such as the *Ossewabrandwag*, an organization that proudly harboured pro-German sentiments, had a membership that included notable academics (including Coertze and P. J. Schoeman of the *Volkekunde* Department).

¹³⁷ Coertze was not the only Stellenbosch academic who addressed the position of the coloured population in *Wapenskou* at this time. In April 1945 N. J. J. (Nic) Olivier of the Department of Native Administration published *Rasseverhoudinge in Suid-Afrika: Die Kleurling* (Race Relations in South Africa: The Coloured) that propagated segregation in all aspects of society. This was followed by ‘*n Handves vir Kleurlinge*’ (A Charter for Coloureds) written by Erika Theron in June 1945 – an article containing a similar argument for racial segregation between white and coloured.

¹³⁸ This particular extract was also cited by Geoffrey Cronjé in ‘*n Tuiste vir die Nageslag* (A Home for the Posterity) to support his argument for complete segregation based on racial categories (see Cronjé 1945:163).

South Africa. Suggestions Concerning the Afrikaner Standpoint on Apartheid) (1943) in which they propagated total apartheid as a solution to South Africa's race questions.¹³⁹ The booklet was produced with the support of the *Ossewabrandwag* (Oxwagon Sentinel)¹⁴⁰ – a nationalist organisation with pro-German sentiments – and propagated total apartheid to ensure the preservation of whites in South Africa. The threat of miscegenation to the existence of a pure white race, the political threat of a black majority, and the economic competition posed by non-european races were all highlighted (Coertze, Language & Van Eeden 1943:4-5).

Racial contact, it was argued, would eventually lead to the total bastardisation (*verbastering*) of the white race. Segregation, or total apartheid, was presented as the final solution “to keep the *vaderland* [fatherland] undivided and unpolluted for generations to come” (Coertze, Language & Van Eeden 1943:45, own translation).¹⁴¹ In this document, the *boerenasie* (*boer* people) was credited with the establishment and development of South Africa. In conjunction with this, the superiority of whites was presented as a scientific fact without reference to any scientific findings – a sign that results rendered by scientific endeavours to establish racial difference was becoming internalised. These 'facts' thus presented afrikaners as suitable leaders and gave them the right and responsibility to develop and apply a racial policy for a broader South Africa (Coertze, Language and van Eeden 1943:4-5).

Coertze's publications and political involvement were representative of a conservative nationalist group of academics who contributed to a further categorical distancing between the white and coloured population in South Africa during the 1940s. With regards to his racial views, Coertze may have found a more suitable home at the University of Pretoria, where he was appointed as head of the *Volkekunde* Department in 1950 (after spending a brief period at the then University of Orange Free State). His views closely resonated with that of sociologist Geoffrey Cronjé – then dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Pretoria. By this time, Cronjé had been a

¹³⁹ Versions of this pamphlet were first published as a series of articles in *Wapenskou* in 1942 and 1943.

¹⁴⁰ Founded in 1939, this organisation was home to many fierce proponents of afrikaner nationalism who became German sympathisers during World War II.

¹⁴¹ Original text: “Die gevaar van bloedvermenging sal dan totaal uit die weg geruim [...] om die vaderland [...] onverdeeld en onbesoedeld vir die komende geslagte te hou” (Coertze, Language and Van Eeden 1943:45).

prolific contributor to segregationist debates leading up to the 1948 election.¹⁴² In his work, Cronjé argued for the natural occurrence of racial difference as found in both “the biological and psychological sense” (Cronjé 1945:8, own translation) – citing measured differences in intelligence between whites and coloureds, and coloureds and natives respectively.¹⁴³ After being trained by both Coertze and Eiselen, Bruwer’s entrance into academia thus also came at a time that marked the growing engagement with South Africa’s racial questions within a developing apartheid state.

At Stellenbosch University, it was particularly social scientists who increasingly became involved with the native and coloured questions within both the Stellenbosch as well as Cape provincial context. SABRA was established in Stellenbosch in 1948 “to strive for the separate development of the various racial groups in South Africa, to propagate it and to promote it, and to protect and secure the interests of these groups” (SABRA 1948, own translation).¹⁴⁴ The head office of the organisation was located on campus and housed in the same building as the *Volkekunde* Department. Bruwer had joined SABRA on arrival in Stellenbosch, immediately becoming a member of the executive committee. His eagerness to contribute to racial affairs and the important debates of the time is deduced from his prolific publishing record, and more so, his contributions to SABRA’s journal *Tydskrif vir Rasse Aangeleenthede (Journal for Racial Affairs)*.

¹⁴² See *’n Tuiste vir die nageslag (A Home for the Posterity)* (1945), *Regverdige Rasse-Apartheid (A Just Racial Apartheid)* (1947) authored with W. M. Nicol and E. P. Groenewald, and *Voogdyskap en Apartheid (Guardianship and Apartheid)* (1948).

¹⁴³ Here Cronjé referenced M. L. Fick (1929; 1939), C. T. Loram (1917), G. R. Dent (1937), and J. A. Janse van Rensburg (1938) to support his claims for white superiority. At the 1955 annual SABRA conference J. L. Sadie cited the same authors to restate common notions of a racial hierarchy constructed by known intelligence tests – all related to the future of the coloured population in the broader structure of apartheid.

¹⁴⁴ For Stanley Uys, a political correspondent for the *Sunday Times* in the late 1950s, SABRA represented “the fountainheads of Nationalist thought” (Uys 1958). Its members included the rector of Stellenbosch University, H. B. Thom (History professor and Rector from 1954 until 1969 at Stellenbosch University), the Secretary of Native Affairs, W. W. M. Eiselen; the Minister of the Interior, Eben Dönges; the Minister of Education, Arts and Science; the Minister of Health (and later Minister of Native Affairs), M. D. C. De Wet Nel; and the Governor-General of the Union (1950-1959) E. G. Jansen, to name a few. In National Party politics SABRA leaders became the pool of experts to be drawn from whenever academic or scientific justification was needed in support of separate development.

It was shortly after the release of the revised UNESCO Statement in 1952, that Bruwer questioned this “great turnaround of scientists” (Bruwer 1952:32) in SABRA’s journal. With reference to the 1952 UNESCO Statement Bruwer wrote:

Granted, scientific findings may change in light of new data, but when must one assume that the highest and absolute truth has triumphed? And why this sudden madness of communicating the dignity of all types of Homo sapiens and the almost childish methods and publications that UNESCO force upon us? This newfound equality is a means to cloak existing societal arrangements in conscious racial views that will not result in order, but in chaos (Bruwer 1952:32, own translation).¹⁴⁵

While Bruwer admitted that “new findings and conclusions of science as based on increased knowledge, must carry [the] highest respect”, he seemingly viewed the UNESCO Statement as a scientific fad rather than a reflection of some lasting objective truth.¹⁴⁶

Hot on the heels of the second UNESCO Statement, Bruwer published ‘*Grondbeginsels i.v.m. Fisiese en Kulturele Verskille*’ (‘Fundamentals in connection with Physical and Cultural Differences’) in SABRA’s *Journal for Racial Affairs*. While not referencing the UNESCO Statement directly, Bruwer (1953:36) highlighted the dangers of science when based on unsubstantiated facts and supported by absolute statements. In this article, Bruwer explained that the existence of a variety of physical types, with noticeable physical differences, was a universal phenomenon – here possibly alluding to the fact that so many scientific studies of the first half of the 20th century had presented evidence of biological and inherent difference to be found among the different racial groups. Here Bruwer conceptualised race not as purely based on observable difference, but rather as a collection of “particular characteristics that are specific to the

¹⁴⁵ Original text: “*En waarom die waansinnige waardigheid van alle tipes van Homo Sapiens en die byna kindertuinagtige metodes en publikasies van Unesco om dit by ons in te peper? Ongelukkig word die trompetgekleter van hierdie nuutontdekte gelykwaardigheid vandag juis ‘n middel om ordelike gemeenskapreëlins te klee in ‘n beslag van bewuste rassebeskouinge, waaruit nie orde nie, maar chaos sal ontstaan*” (Bruwer 1952:32).

¹⁴⁶ Coertze, Bruwer’s PhD supervisor, responded with similar resistance to the UNESCO Statement: “Behold, a new evangelism: a remarkable conjoining of biological and humanistic religion!” (cited in Dubow 2015:258).

particular [racial] type and identifiable in each individual of that type” (Bruwer 1953:37, own translation).

According to Bruwer race was biological and, following this, it was also hereditary. As he argued:

A race must therefore be regarded as a regional type of a population group of which every individual who belongs to it, reveals the average somatic traits that are characteristic of its specific type, such as first inherited from its typical parents and secondly transferred to its typical offspring (Bruwer 1953:37, own translation).¹⁴⁷

Bruwer provided a similar view of race in 1958. In *Race Studies (Ethnography)* he explained:

We must also bear in mind the differences within a race that exists from individual to individual, for few people are exactly alike. Whenever, however, members of a group of people have on the average the same physical appearance, we say they belong to the same race (Bruwer 1958b:10-11).

The rhetoric of aggregate attributes was ever-present in the conceptualisation of race offered by Bruwer. While one particular racial characteristic was not sufficient to tie the individual to the group, cumulative characteristics would suffice to identify the racial category to which the individual belonged. Drawing on anthropology’s scientific ancestry (including Karl Pearson who combined statistics with the study of visible characteristics in search of an ‘ideal type’), the long established scientific habitus of race appears to have reared a head in Bruwer’s work. Thus, even in the physical absence of Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture colour table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table, the racial categories perpetuated by these objects continued to operate.

Bruwer’s conceptualisation of race stemmed from both his training and the dominant notions of race as found at Afrikaans-medium universities at the time. In the 1940s at Pretoria University,

¹⁴⁷ Original text: “‘n Ras moet derhalwe beskou word as ‘n partikuliere tipe of mensegroep waarvan elke individu wat daaronder tuishoort, die gemiddelde somatiese trekke openbaar wat kenmerkend is van sy bepaalde tipe, soos eerstens oorgeërf is van sy tipiese ouers en tweedens oordraagbaar is op sy tipiese kroos.”

during the time of Bruwer's training at this university, sociologist Cronjé employed a similar notion of race to argue for the superiority of whites, as did geneticist Gerrie Eloff at the University of the Orange Free State (today the University of Free State). Eloff, who defined racial difference in terms of physiological features ("skin colour, hair colour and texture, eye colour, body size and shape of nose, blood group" (cited in Venter 2009:24)) as well as psychological differences, explained race as follows in a 1942 publication:

In biology we do not speak of laws or absolute phenomena, but trends and averages. If the average of a group of individuals displays a certain number of characteristics to a larger extent than another, then there is no reason why those traits should not be regarded as racial characteristics (cited in Cronjé 1945, own translation).

In his later writings Coertze, Bruwer's PhD supervisor, also postulated the use of racial aggregates to identify racial types. In 1963, in a volume edited by Cronjé, Coertze (1963:166, own translation) explained:

When we claim that members of a race are genetically the same, we do not mean all members possess the same genes and are identical in their outward appearance [...] With a uniform gene structure, we simply mean that the genes that are unique to a certain race, have a certain distribution around a certain standard of equal deviations in both directions.

In this publication, Coertze (1963:158) similarly proclaimed the superiority of the white European race, concluding: "[t]he Western European is the highest race, the only race to have reached the status of a civilization" (own translation). Similarly Cronjé (1947:107) claimed, the *boerevolk* or *boerenasie* (terms employed by Eloff and Coertze respectively) was determined to be of Western European descent (rather than pure Nordic descent). This group also showed a higher intelligence, greater learning ability and higher level of development than their non-European (and some European) counterparts according to Cronjé (1945:14-18) – a claim made with reference to cranial capacity (see Cronjé 1947:112). Western Europeans were furthermore deemed the "anchor of Western civilization and Christian religion in the South" (Cronjé

1947:107, own translation). Conclusions like these stemmed from physical anthropology as practiced in the early decades of the century.

For Cronjé apartheid was thus about the “self-preservation of the *Boerevolk* as a race” and the “continued existence of the purity of the white race” (Cronjé 1945:47, own translation). A concern with the dangers of miscegenation, the purity of the *boerevolk* (as a superior grouping of humans), and the preservation of this group, remained key elements of Eloff’s writing. Both naked and shameless, to reference J. M. Coetzee (1991), the scientific racism found prior to 1945 continued to operate in post-World War II South Africa.

The influence of eugenic ideas is revealed (at times in subtle and at others in overt ways) in Bruwer’s work. In an address to the *Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereniging* (the Afrikaner Christian Women's Movement more commonly known as the ACVV) of Stellenbosch in 1957, Bruwer proclaimed: “the continued existence of a *volk*, the conservation of its identity, and the purity of its blood, is ultimately in the hands of the women” (*Eikestadnuus* 1957:1-2, own translation). The role of the *afrikanermoeders* (afrikaner mothers) as “protectors of the purity of the *Boerenasie*” also featured in Cronjé’s (1945) work. He dedicated ‘*n Tuiste vir die Nageslag* (A Home for the Posterity) to the *afrikanermoeder*. This was part of a broader nationalist narrative that conceptualised this figure as the guardian of a “physically and psychologically healthy [nation]” (Kruger 1991:207-212).

The influence of nationalist academic thought was similarly revealed in Bruwer’s framing of the relationship between white and bantu in terms of western progress and african backwardness. What surfaced in his writings was a colonial view of Africa as the ‘dark continent’, with the development of its inhabitants becoming the responsibility of the colonisers. In his early writings, Bruwer (1955:28) claimed: “[p]eople with high ideals and irreproachable motives gave their lives to save this continent from its ignorance, internal violence and backwardness” (own translation). On another occasion, he proclaimed that the “Afrikaner assisted the Bantu communities on the road to civilization” (Bruwer 1959a). This reimagining of the ‘white man’s

burden' appears to have been ever-present in Bruwer's narrative – a possible remnant of his missionary roots.¹⁴⁸

During his visit to the United States in 1959, Bruwer presented the South African case for separate development to an American audience of about 110 people. On this occasion, Bruwer “showed some slides to indicate the primitive nature of Bantu and Bushmen tribes” (Bruwer 1959b). He claimed that the “levels of culture [varied] from extremely primitive to some which [were] well-articulated and well-evolved”, and made reference to the difference in “mental content” of the bantus when compared to whites. Portraying the bantus as somewhat simple-minded, Bruwer claimed: “The Bantu does not understand any abstract idea. They do not believe in anything they cannot see. Truth to them is what is visible to the eyes” (Bruwer 1959b). The claim appears to have been made in the absence of any scientific support.

It was a picture of a population that desperately needed the guidance of ‘civilised’ whites on the way to becoming developed and civilised themselves – a common colonial view that legitimated white rule. Bruwer was convinced that the “continued existence of a white population [was] a guarantee of Western civilization and Christianity in Africa” (Bruwer 1955:2, own translation). These arguments also fit particularly well with the concept of separate development under the guardianship of whites in the greater scheme of apartheid.

Similar ideas were present in Cronjé's last publication before the advent of apartheid. In *Voogdyskap en apartheid* (Guardianship and Apartheid)¹⁴⁹ Cronjé re-established the existence of a racial hierarchy in support of the development of an apartheid state and proclaimed: “[t]he whites, as guardians, have the task of educating the non-whites, who are less developed, towards

¹⁴⁸ After obtaining a teaching certificate in Wellington in the early 1930s, where he possibly came into contact with Eiselen for the first time, Bruwer devoted himself to native education and missionary work in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). During this time he served as head of the College of the Dutch Reformed Church in this area. He was later appointed by the government of Northern Rhodesia as Secretary of Education (with regards to native education), and served on the Advisory Committee for Native Education there. After he was offered a position as Senior Adult Education Officer, he chose instead to pursue a career in academic life by enrolling for an MA in *volkekunde* at the University of Pretoria.

¹⁴⁹ The particular copy of *Voogdyskap en Apartheid* (Guardianship and Apartheid) consulted was found in the J. S. Gericke library of Stellenbosch University and once belonged to F.J. Language of the *Volkekunde* Department at Stellenbosch University. Language was also co-author of *The Solution of the Native Problem in South Africa. Suggestions Concerning the Afrikaner Standpoint on Apartheid* (1943) with P.J. Coertze and B.I.C. van Eeden, both of the *Volkekunde* Department of Stellenbosch. See page 130 of this document.

self-reliance so they can finally get along without the protection and guidance of the whites” (Cronjé 1947:137-138, own translation). A similar narrative was also adopted by SABRA to support the Separate Representation of Voters’ Bill in the first half of the 1950s.

SABRA and the Coloured Vote

To regulate ‘a something’ first requires an act of labelling – as Heidegger argued “the word alone gives being to the thing” (cited in Bracken 1997:30).¹⁵⁰ While the racial category 'coloured' was explored in South Africa during the 1930s and 1940s, it was under apartheid that the population group associated with this name became legally accepted as different from both the white and black races. Crain Soudien (2006:56) argues that in South Africa racial differentiation involved the empirical recognition of a human category “[which] then [became], as in racial science, systematically classifiable and, like any zoological species, available as an object of knowledge for inspection and analysis”. But while there existed some scientific certainty among the afrikaner elite that coloured people were indeed a distinct race – seen for instance in the studies conducted at Stellenbosch University in 1937¹⁵¹ – it was the attempts to politically disenfranchise this portion of the population that the coloured race became casually expressed and the existence of this category reiterated as common knowledge. Once ‘the coloured’ was accepted as ‘absolute fact’ (to use the terminology provided by Albert Memmi (1965)), those who ruled were “free to exploit it for their own benefit” (Bracken 1997:231).

The Separate Representation of Voters Bill came to be quite significant in the political construction of coloureds as a separate racial other. The introduction of the Bill in 1951 spoke to the growing concern with a large coloured population in the Cape Province, and more specifically the Western Cape area. Similar to the claims made by Cronjé in 1945, afrikaner politicians argued that coloureds who were on the voters’ roll had sufficient numbers to swing election outcomes in particular districts. Coloureds, who were generally opposed to the policies

¹⁵⁰ Ian Hacking (1999:183) refers to “labeling theory”, which provides a similar approach to the construction of people and communities, while Foucault (1978) refers to the “constitution of subjects”. Heidegger’s act of labelling bears a close connection to Foucault’s proposed intersections of power and knowledge in that the creation of the Foucauldian subject is deeply imbedded in the discourse of the dominant. In this case European historiography offers a key example of the power of European colonists to name, to label, and to regulate the other.

¹⁵¹ See Chapter Three for detail.

of the National Party, were thereby labelled as a dangerous electorate. The threat of the coloured population as wielding electoral power in the Cape became evident to the National Party who governed with a narrow political margin. The solution for Cronjé (1945:77-78) was the removal of the coloured vote from electoral divisions in the Cape Province. As was the case in 1936 with the removal of natives from the voters roll, the rationale offered for the removal of coloured voters was to protect and secure the position of a white minority whose power was threatened by the numbers of the ‘uncivilised’.

In his account of landmark court cases during apartheid, Ian Loveland (1999:260) argues that the contents of this Bill, and the accompanying change in the constitution in particular, “appeared to add an acute, symbolic force to the apartheid tide”. The introduction of the Bill evoked mass demonstrations and an organised strike in April 1951 (Loveland 1999:269-270) and thus required legal public engagement with the issue at hand. The events that unfolded in the wake of demonstrations included the establishing of the *Commission to Enquire into the Subject Matter of Separate Representation of Voters’ Act Validation and Amendment Bill of 1953*. Here stakeholders and ‘experts’ were invited to contribute their opinion either in support of, or in opposition to, the passing of the Bill – prompting the involvement of government appointed committees and organizations. SABRA submitted its own memorandum in 1953 to the Commission and was invited to provide verbal testimony during cross-examination in late 1953 and again in early 1954.

SABRA’s verbal testimony played out in front of a Parliamentary Commission from 2 to 3 December 1953, and again from 11 to 12 January 1954. Represented by Stellenbosch academics Professor G. B. A. Gerdener (Theology), Professor N. J. J. (Nic) Olivier (Native Administration), Dr Erika Theron (Social Work), Dr P. A. Theron (Industrial Psychology) and Professor J. A. Wiid (History), SABRA representatives stated their case. While the Bill was opposed by many organisations representative of the coloured community, these representatives of SABRA argued vehemently for coloureds to be represented by white spokespersons in parliament (SABRA Testimony 1954).

The SABRA memorandum for submission to the Commission of Enquiry had been drafted by its executive committee and submitted in 1953 (SABRA 1953:223) – marking the first formal engagement by SABRA with the coloured population as a separate racial grouping in the broader

framework of apartheid. In the memorandum it was argued that separate representation should not be seen as an isolated issue, but rather as part of the grander scheme of separate development – thus one important building block that was to set the tone for the rest of apartheid implementation with regards to the coloured population otherwise referred to as the Cape Coloured. It described the South African landscape as consisting of “a heterogeneous amalgamation of groups of different racial origins, different lifestyles, different levels of development, different languages, etc” (SABRA 1953:26). The position of whites was conceptualised as a minority group that “felt threatened”; a group that had to “take measures to avoid its eventual disappearance as a separate group”; and a group that realised the importance of their continued existence as “the carrier of western civilization and Christianity” (SABRA 1953:26). It was thus a group that had to be protected.

The appropriate course of action, according to SABRA, was the introduction of a separate voters' roll for whites and coloureds, i.e. group representation in Parliament with white representatives for coloured voters (SABRA 1953:32). The proposal to remove coloureds from the common voters roll played into the general direction for South Africa as proposed by SABRA, namely complete separate development of the coloured population in all spheres of life. During verbal testimony, SABRA's 'experts' drew on historical justifications offered for the disenfranchisement of African Americans in the late 19th century United States by framing the coloured as a group who could not “think for themselves” and thus required the guidance of whites. SABRA's stance on the matter was not representative of, nor did it reflect, the position of the majority of the coloureds on the matter (SABRA 1953:26).

Surfacing both in the memorandum and again in the verbal testimony, the assumed role of whites as leaders and guardians of coloureds was aired by Professor Gerdener (chair of SABRA) during the cross-examination. When asked about the possibility of a referendum – an opportunity for the coloured population to provide their opinion about separate representation – Gerdener's response was telling: “I doubt that a referendum will be of any value. The people have not yet learned to think for themselves [...] We want to teach them to think for themselves” (SABRA Testimony 1954:134, own translation). These narratives reflected a clear stance on the coloured population as one that was less 'able', less developed, and in need of white guardianship and control. In this regard SABRA supported the Separate Representation of Voters' Act because it “ensured that

the interests of the Coloureds [would] be *effectively* managed” (SABRA 1953:37, own translation and emphasis).

While Bruwer was not part of the group of SABRA representatives who provided verbal testimony, he did later voice a similar opinion with regards to the separate representation of the coloured population:

Whatever one’s opinion may be about the principle involved, this system is of infinitely more practical value to the Brown people. For the first time in the history of South Africa the voice of the Brown people can be heard in Parliament, albeit still through White representatives (Bruwer 1960:56).

In the broader context of the implementation of apartheid, the importance of separate representation was also to confirm the status of the coloured population as “a separate group” (SABRA Testimony 1954:120). The envisioned Separate Representation of Voters’ Act was conceptualised by the young Olivier (vice chair of SABRA, chair of the Department of Native Administration at Stellenbosch, and avid contributor to debates related to the native population) who took the lead and became the voice of SABRA for the duration of the testimony.

Olivier himself ascribed to the nationalist view of the coloured population as a particular racial category in the broader South African societal structure. Called as a Stellenbosch academic and SABRA member to give verbal testimony, Olivier stated: “[t]he Coloured should be made aware of the fact that he [*sic*] is recognized as a Coloured group and that recognition is given by the State by giving him [*sic*] representatives in Parliament” (SABRA Testimony 1954:133, own translation).

Similar to Olivier, Theron (also a member of SABRA and academic at Stellenbosch University) had made her position on coloureds clear in *Wapenskou* during the 1940s. In April 1945, Olivier had argued that separate residential areas would provide the coloured population with an opportunity to form “a social unit”, by which “they would learn to seek affiliation with their own people instead of whites” (1945:20, own translation). Theron similarly voiced her concern about the integration of the coloured population with white society. Fears of miscegenation remained central to her narrative. And the situation at the time, Theron argued, would lead to the disappearance of the white population (Theron 1945:13). Indeed, Theron had even suggested that

the Mixed Marriages Act of 1927 be extended to whites and coloureds four years before this amendment was passed. She had also recommended the establishment of ‘model towns’ outside of the cities where coloureds would gradually be moved (Theron 1945:14). Such notions were present within SABRA and to a large extent informed the memorandum submitted by this organisation in support of removing the coloureds from the common voters roll (and ultimately in pursuing a policy of complete racial segregation with regards to whites and coloureds in the mid-1950s).

The possibility of realising the envisioned apartheid state structure rested on the demarcation of fixed racial categories as outlined in the Population Registration Act of 1950. Yet, during cross-examination it transpired that clear demarcations did not exist and the definition of the coloured population was especially fleeting. While on a day-to-day basis racial classification occurred seemingly effortlessly in broader society, attempts to formalise criteria for classification indicated that “the rules involved were arbitrary, elusive, complex and ambiguous” (Erasmus & Ellison 2008:452). Soudien (2006:56) has argued that “the apartheid ideological underpinnings of race [were] by no means pristine and fully formed but emerge[d] in a complex dialectic with other ideological ideas”. In relation to the coloured race in particular, Aletta Norval (1996) and Steffen Jensen (2008) have independently made use of similar approach – with Jensen (2008:28) arguing that “the institutionalization of knowledge about the coloureds was an inconsistent and often unintended process”.

In South Africa, the further development of apartheid after its initial implementation and the generation of knowledge about populations (in this case coloureds) also involved navigating a global environment that was turning against overt racism in the aftermath of the UNESCO Statement. Seemingly undeterred by these global developments, Olivier proclaimed during his early testimony in front of the Parliamentary Commission: “there is a massive difference in culture, level of civilization, attitudes and institutions between white and native, and coloured and native” (SABRA Testimony 1954:118). The memorandum had also made a clear distinction between coloureds and natives as separate categories. Seeing no need to elaborate, SABRA argued that the differences were “obvious” as related to culture, language, psychology, and race – with race defined as “biological, permanent and unchangeable” (SABRA 1953:30-31). These assumptions reveal a taken-for-granted knowledge as a result of a scientific habitus at work.

The different races including the whites of South Africa were similarly viewed as “a distinct biological group, namely the White racial group” (SABRA Testimony 1954:117-118). In fact, during his testimony Wiid praised the whites of South Africa (unlike those of Brazil) for “performing one of the most wonderful things in history” – that is, “not develop[ing] into a black race, but remain[ing] a white race” (SABRA Testimony 1954:238, own translation).¹⁵² This “White racial group” was heralded by the SABRA representatives as one that was situated at the top of the racial hierarchy seemingly based on the level of civilisation that had been reached. This was confirmed by Olivier himself during testimony when the question was posed to him: “Do you regard yourselves as being the patrons of Western civilization?” It is unclear whether ‘yourself’ referred to the members of SABRA, whites or males. Nevertheless the answer was short. It required no explanation. “Yes”, replied Olivier (SABRA Testimony 1954:118).

Without providing any form of evidence beyond already deeply embedded assumptions coupled with physical appearance, Olivier continued to argue for the existence of at least three separate races that had to be segregated for their own preservation. During his testimony in January 1954 Olivier conceptualised the difference between white and black in South Africa with reference to the UNESCO Statement:

However, that racial differences do exist, nobody would deny; and that the Bantu and the Europeans in South Africa belong to two distinct racial types, with distinct and unalterable racial characteristics, is a fact so evident that no one would attempt to deny it. These biological differences, seen from the European point of view, include the following: the black or almost black colour of the skin; the woolly hair; the differences in facial features (Olivier 1954:24-25).

The testimony reveals crude racial language to argue the case for the existence of biologically different racial categories in South Africa as based on the same kinds of physical characteristics historically determined by instruments of measurement and comparison – including Martin’s eye

¹⁵² In June 1945 Wiid offered a positive response to Hitler’s foreign and domestic policies and praised Hitler for defeating communism and improving the economic position of German farmers (Wiid 1945:16-21,38). Less than a decade before publishing his appraisal of Hitler, Wiid had been part of a group of five professors (namely H. F. Verwoerd, C. G. S. De Villiers, C. G. W. Schumann, and J. Basson) who boycotted the arrival of the *Stuttgart*, the last ship of refugee German jews allowed to port at Cape Town (Verwoerd 1937).

colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan's skin colour table. And yet even the reference to physical anthropology as a scientific field was glaringly absent, replaced instead by an almost casual proclamation of how obvious biological difference is.

Throughout his testimony Olivier's definition of the coloured category was similarly absent – a conspicuous omission that seemed to reveal the taken-for-granted nature of this population as a distinct race. After decades of biological and social engagement by academics, there seemed to have been little need to reiterate any 'evidence' for the distinctiveness of this people: coloureds occupied "a unique position in the population structure of South Africa" – separate from both the natives and the whites (SABRA Testimony 1954:118). Much like the definition provided in the Population Registration Act of 1950, coloureds were defined as neither white nor native, yet uniquely different and separate from both. The uniqueness of this category was also promoted in order to create a 'racial consciousness' or 'racial awareness' among members of the coloured population.

Despite the definitional ambiguity, the separateness of the coloured race largely materialised through apartheid legislation (especially the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Separate Amenities Act of 1953). Intellectual and political efforts hereby encapsulated the construction of a category that may not have been seen as cohesive or coherent by its own designated members prior to the categorisation that occurred through academics and politicians alike.

By the end of their testimony SABRA had provided their justifications for the removal of the coloured population from the voters' roll based on the existence of separate, biological categories and the superiority of the white population. With this same 'evidence', the members of SABRA had also justified their position in support of separate development.¹⁵³ However, there was one more issue that remained absent from the discussion. As their cross-examination came to a close, it was clear that the Parliamentary Commission was troubled by one important fact. I provide the complete excerpt of the final set of questions (SABRA Testimony 1954:253):

¹⁵³ SABRA representatives had hereby reiterated many of the conclusions reached in a 1952 publication *Integration or Separate Development?* Loaded with racially charged language SABRA called for the continued safeguarding of whites (as beacons of civilization) in South Africa. It was argued that integration was "a grave threat to racial harmony and to the security and survival of the European population" (1952:10).

Senator Duthie: “Do you agree with me that the tendency right through the world is towards a liberal outlook on things?”

Professor Wiid: “Yes, I believe that is the tendency at present”.

Senator Duthie: “And our tendency apparently as far as the Coloureds is concerned, is against that?”

Professor Wiid: “It all depends. Yes.”

Olivier [interjects]: “We have discussed this issue at length. The situation in South Africa is unique in the world. I think that we have indicated this in our memorandum, it is impossible for us to be led by what is happening in the rest of the world in this regard.”

In the context of 1954, SABRA’s testimony was against the global political tide of the time. The UNESCO Statement seemingly had little bearing on the workings of SABRA and the apartheid state. SABRA intellectuals were not navigating the contents of the UNESCO Statement in the midst of propagating a policy of separate development. They simply rejected it.

A Steadfast Belief in Biological Racial Categories

Bruwer was groomed by important figures of which Eiselen and Coertze (as his respective MA and PhD supervisors at the University of Pretoria) were especially influential. With a PhD study that was partly funded by SABRA, Bruwer soon became embroiled with National Party politics and racialised *volkekunde*. His years linked to the University of Pretoria, first as MA and then as PhD student, had exposed him to a particular narrative of the racial other in relation to the place of the white afrikaner in South Africa. At Stellenbosch University, Bruwer was further exposed to nationalist thought by his colleagues and members of SABRA. After the release of the UNESCO Statement, issues of racial purity and the safe-guarding of the white population remained a central concern in Bruwer’s writing. Bruwer’s steadfast belief in racial preservation based on biological factors remained part of his academic rhetoric.

In ‘Theories Based on the Concept of Race’ (Bruwer 1958a), the role of racial aggregates to determine a person’s racial descent was again reiterated by Bruwer. He claimed that “physical

traits [were] inherited according to regular laws through the operation of precise mechanisms [...] A particular arrangement of physical traits represent[ed] a specific combination resulting in a particular somatic type” (Bruwer 1958a:123-124). In this sense, Bruwer argued for the usefulness of heredity to trace racial characteristics as biological manifestations carried forward from one generation to the next. To support his argument he cited a number of German anthropologists whose discussions of race were often based on eugenic principles.¹⁵⁴ For Bruwer, a man who never faltered in his support of separate development, “the best indications of the physical differences that exist[ed] between races seem[ed] to be the colour of the skin and to a lesser extent the type of hair” (Bruwer 1958b:19) – two key features of racial classification under the apartheid state.

Bruwer was not opposed to racial classification as applied through the Population Registration Act; his only concern was related to the determination of race by government officials who sometimes identified individuals incorrectly by placing them in the ‘wrong’ racial category. As a result, while he never questioned the *act* of racial classification, it was the thoroughness of the research pertaining to individual classification that concerned him (Bruwer 1965).

With regards to racial categories, for Bruwer there was a truth to be found, the nature or the essence of a category was there to be discovered. The UNESCO Statement seemingly did little to unsettle either the racial ideologies of individuals such as Bruwer or the efforts of National Party supporters to promote and justify separate development by means of a racialised language. Indeed, Bruwer’s racial ideology, along with his colleagues at SABRA, drew so heavily on eugenic notions of inherent racial difference, that his thinking about race arguably embodied Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Martin’s eye colour table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table. It is namely in their ability to measure and confirm race as a biological entity (rather than social construct) that these objects would have been recognised as useful to Bruwer’s own essentialist ideas.

¹⁵⁴ Bruwer here refers specifically to Saller's *Die Rassenfrage* (The Race Question) (1931), Egon von Eickstedt's *Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit* (Racial Science and the Racial History of Mankind) (1934), Eugen Fischer's chapter in *Human Heredity* (1921), and Hans Weinert's *Englische Vorstöße für die menschliche Abstammungslehre* (English Advances for Human Evolutionary Theory) (1928).

On a governmental level, the scientific debates of preceding decades culminated in the enforcement of the Population Registration Act, that placed government officials in charge of classifying individuals “by looking at fingernails, hair, the shape of noses, other members of the family and, more ominous still, accepting the word of anonymous informers that a person or a family was or was not White” (Venter 1973:118). Biological notions of race and the rhetoric of self-preservation (particularly of the white race) thus continued to accompany discussions in not only scientific spheres, but social and political ones as well. Indeed, biological understandings of race as based on visual physical markers continued to inform the daily categorisation and differentiation that played out in South Africa.

While the untrained nature of apartheid officials may be indicative of a decided *lack* of biological reference points for interpreting and classifying race – having to make on-the-spot judgments as argued by Deborah Posel (2001b) – a scientific understanding of race *did* surface during cases brought to the Race Classification Review Board (established in 1954). Although these cases are often characterised by a “lack of explicit references to science” (Erasmus & Ellison 2008:451), in the instances where scientific interpretations of race *were* referenced, it did so through observations related to the colour of the skin (Erasmus & Ellison 2008:451).

The South African Institute of Race Relations spoke with some alarm about the crudeness of classification in their 1958 Fact Paper, stating how an individual's “complexion, eyes, hair, features and bone structure are examined” for classificatory purposes (South African Institute of Race Relations 1958:32). Thus, while Dubow (2010) has indicated that the apartheid government deemed science fallible and thus unable to provide clear categorical classification, biological understandings of race were constantly present – even when not overtly uttered.

Conclusion

Pierre Bourdieu (1977:80) argued that “[t]he habitus is precisely this immanent law laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing, which is the precondition not only for the co-ordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordination”. Through the example of Hannes Bruwer, as both Stellenbosch academic and National Party supporter, this chapter illustrated that a general conservative and somewhat outdated conceptualisation of race remained present in debates and

discussions (and also in Bruwer's work), even after the release of the UNESCO Statement in 1950.

Trained by two former Stellenbosch *volkekundiges* at the University of Pretoria, and later becoming head of the *Volkekunde* Department of Stellenbosch University, Bruwer is one important example of an afrikaner social scientist firmly holding on to the biological conceptions of race during the 1950s. The contributions of SABRA to justify racial categorisation and separate development during the 1950s also attest to this. By highlighting race as rooted in biology, a clear scale of rights was created – one based on notions of a racial hierarchy. Through the systematic stripping of rights from coloured people, the state, with the support of SABRA scholars, was able to implement detrimental policies based on 'expert opinion' and 'scientific evidence'. While SABRA's testimony illustrate that segregationist arguments were based on the existence of a biological distinction between whites and coloureds, such claims were presented as taken-for-granted facts.

Thus hardly deterred by the UNESCO Statement on Race, Bruwer (for one) persisted in his assumptions about race as an unquestioned, observable, biological category – a belief that sparked his interest in Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan's skin colour table. This collection of objects, coupled with a human skull would eventually find their way to the Ethnology Museum of the *Volkekunde* Department in the late 1960s, after Coert Grobelaar's departure from Stellenbosch University. While the objects may not have been overtly used for human measurement in the social sciences during the 1950s, the ideas and assumptions they represented informed academic discourse with regards to racial categorisation as well as afrikaner self-preservation during this time. As a result, these objects appear to have worked symbolically – material markers of a scientific habitus they had helped to forge.

It was seemingly, by the 1950s, no longer necessary to scientifically prove racial difference through 'scientific' investigations; these instruments of comparison had already done their work by giving evidence to the existence of race as a biological and measurable category. A scientific habitus had been successfully constructed. And, for many, biological difference was an accepted fact – or "conventional wisdom" as Soudien (2006:52) would argue. It needed no further proof. Taken-for-granted discussions of racial difference, as based on biological notions of race, did not

only manifest in distinguishing between whites and coloureds. They also manifested in concerns about relationships between coloureds and natives as the materialisation of racial theory in apartheid policy gained momentum in the 1950s.

CHAPTER 6

A Project of Ruination: A Racial Category Materialises

Ruins are not just found, they are made – Ann Laura Stoler (2013:20)

The implication of constructing human categories, Jean-Paul Sartre would argue, is the imprisonment of those that are constructed to belong to a particular category. Sartre describes the effects of such imprisonment within broader society as “a perpetual fear that he [*sic*] might escape from it, that he might break away and suddenly elude his condition” (cited in Hacking 1999:167). Although the coloured category in South Africa had been of government interest, especially from the 1930s onwards, it was after 1948 that the government truly “began to manipulate coloured identity” in a significant way (Goldin 1987:26).

In the 1950s the apartheid state became increasingly concerned with the presence of natives in urban areas – a concern that materialised in the creation of homelands and the implementation of the *dompas* (as stipulated in the Pass Laws Act of 1952) to regulate the movement of the african population. ‘Native influx’ into the Cape Province, a province that experienced a tremendous growth in its black african population between 1930 and 1950, was particularly of concern. Stellenbosch was similarly experiencing the presence of a growing number of black africans in their midst. On the local level, this context sparked a growing engagement in the 1950s with the coloured question and native influx. One response came in the form of the establishment of die *Wes-Kaaplandse Navorsingsprojek* (WKNP, Western Cape Research Project) at Stellenbosch University, an interdisciplinary committee set out to study the position of the coloured and native populations in this region. Amongst other concerns, this project attempted to contribute to the conceptualisation the cape coloured population as a distinct racial category who should be given labour preference over black african workers.

The conceptualisation of the coloured offered by the 1937 study at Stellenbosch University would form the basis of subsequent engagements by Stellenbosch researchers with racial categories in relation to potential state policy. Pierre Bourdieu (1977:82) employs his notion of

“durable dispositions” to refer to “a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles”, or “the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism discerns in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis”. The engagements of academics at Stellenbosch University marked the durability of a biological or scientific notion of race dictated partly by the racial theories of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was a means of thinking about race that had survived beyond the UNESCO Statement (1950) and remained mostly undeterred even when the problematics of neat racial categorisation surfaced through the Review Board shortly after South Africa’s implementation of the 1950 Population Registration Act. But even in its ill-defined condition, the coloured category was deployed through state policy against itself (here drawing from Christopher Bracken’s (1997) analysis of the North American Potlatch), deployed against the very people who had been categorised as such within the legal framework of apartheid.

Introduction

Ian Goldin (1987:166) is of the opinion that the National Party illustrated “an unprecedented drive to reconstitute racial categories in South Africa” and was similarly “committed to a restructuring of Coloured identity” after coming to power in 1948. This chapter explores the attempts of SABRA and the WKNP to constitute the coloured category after 1948. The importance of the coloured population of South Africa became a curious point of intersection and a powerful example of the construction of categories by academics and scientists across South Africa.

The engagement with the coloured category in the 1950s became closely intertwined with the perceived threat of ‘native influx’ into the Cape Province. Similar to the arguments provided by the Poor White Commission, it was concluded that natives should be removed from the cities to avoid competition in the labour market and to lessen social contact in city slums (Willoughby-Herard 2015:27). And similar to the concerns of those engaging the poor white question, the

threat of miscegenation became central to solving native influx in the Cape Province – home to a large coloured population and a growing african one.¹⁵⁵

The focus on racial mixture between coloureds and black africans is interpreted in this chapter as a threat to the apartheid system that relied on clearly defined racial categories. Influenced by knowledge produced by physical anthropologists and literature on racial hybridity, the creation of a ‘new race’ (a hybrid stemming from black african and coloured mixture) was a possible outcome that had to be avoided at all costs. This debate largely played out in relation to the removal of black africans from the Cape Province and the protection of an ‘indigenous’ population, namely the cape coloured. For the implementation of newly introduced apartheid acts and the formulation of policies that would lessen the presence of natives in the Cape Province, clear definitions of the categories in question had to be formulated. Attempts to refine a definition of who ‘the coloured’ was thus continued during the 1950s when the bio-legal construction of this racial category required clear differentiation from black africans.

The continued drive towards conceptualising the coloured category, and the subsequent implementation of state policy in regulating this category is considered in this chapter as a ‘project of ruination’ (Stoler 2008). This term, introduced by Ann Stoler (2008:194), refers to “a corrosive process that weighs on the future and shapes the present”. The notion of ‘ruination’ implies “a political project that lays waste to certain people, relations, and things that accumulate in specific places” (2013:11). The systematic disenfranchisement of the coloured population during apartheid (as discussed in the previous chapter) and the continued materialisation of this category within the legal frameworks of the state, would shape the lives of these individuals and would ultimately weigh on their future. In this chapter it is thus argued that, despite the persistently indeterminable nature of the coloured category, social, scientific, and legislative endeavours continued to lay waste to the rights and lives of this group of people in South Africa.

In the context of the WKNP and SABRA, the ‘scientific knowledge’ harnessed to engage the racial other stemmed from long-established theories and studies (the existing habitus proved to

¹⁵⁵ Stellenbosch Municipality reported an increase of from 230 african individuals in 1936, to 780 in 1944, and finally 1750 in 1954 (*Eikestadnuus* 1954a:1). This almost 300% increase mirrored the influx experienced by the Cape Province during the same period of time.

be rigorous). Here the study of the male coloured population of Stellenbosch, conducted by the Zoology Department in 1937, once again entered the picture in an attempt to solidify the coloured category and cement contemporary disenfranchisement along racial lines. Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan's skin colour table thus materialised not in physical form but in the results they had rendered – results that surfaced in a subtle yet profound manner in the demarcation of racial categories in the 1950s.

A Classificatory System Under Threat

Over the course of the 1950s a narrative structured around a racial category indigenous to the Cape (the coloured) and an 'intruder-element' (the native) evolved in both the political as well as academic realms of Stellenbosch and the Cape area at large. By the mid-1950s, the Western Cape's black african population had grown by 300 per cent since 1936 according to the Minister of the Interior, Eben Dönges (1955:2). The national 'problem' of the influx of natives was also manifesting in Stellenbosch where statistics similarly indicated an almost eight-fold increase of this particular population in the same time period (*Eikestadnuus* 1954b:1).¹⁵⁶

In the Stellenbosch context, the responsibility of the governing elite towards the white and coloured populations of this town took prominence over the accommodation of 'intruder-elements' (*Eikestadnuus* 1953:1). Here it was argued by academics, including Bruwer, that an increase in the Stellenbosch native population would occur *at the expense of* the local coloured population (*Eikestadnuus* 1954a:1). Clear definitions of what the coloured population stood to lose were not offered, but by following the debates that unfolded it seems that the biological integrity of this demarcated racial group was one of the biggest concerns to proponents of an apartheid state that relied on neatly identified and wholly separate racial categories.

The concern was seemingly serious enough for the Stellenbosch town council to investigate racial contact between natives and coloureds, social and biological mixture, and the attitude of coloureds towards natives in this town in and amongst other themes (*Eikestadnuus* 1955a:1-2). This concern was also highlighted years earlier, in the 1937 *Report of the Commission of Inquiry*

¹⁵⁶ The immense growth in the presence of natives in the Western Cape between 1936 and 1955 was explained partly by a booming construction industry in need of unskilled labour coupled with a supposed preference for native (rather than coloured labour) among local employers (Goldin 1987:66-67).

regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union (commonly known as the Wilcocks Commission report). Much like the Carnegie report on poor whites had done (with regards to whites and coloureds), this later report brought to light the close proximity of coloureds and natives in the informal settlements.

Concerns over close proximity were often structured around a narrative of the detrimental effects of racial contact and the threat of miscegenation. The close contact between these separate racial categories, it was argued, would result in the “moral decline and economic impoverishment” of the coloured community (Goldin 1987:88). It sparked a narrative of the native as a threat to the preservation of the Cape coloured. Often referring to the native as an “unhygienic” element and intruder, the language used in such discussions drew on ideas of dirt and pollution.¹⁵⁷ It was within this framework of thought that the justification for the complete removal of the native from the Cape Province was made manifest.

It was particularly at SABRA’s annual conference of 1955, dedicated to *The Coloured in South African Society*, that the threat of racial mixture in relation to coloured and African populations took centre stage. Erika Theron (1955:37), now well-known for her social work among the coloured population of the Western Cape, insisted that coloured neighbourhoods were deteriorating because of the influx of ‘natives’. The Secretary of Native Affairs, W. W. M. Eiselen, produced a similar narrative of “undesirable and unsanitary conditions” that manifested within mixed neighbourhoods. Contrary to his SABRA colleagues, Eiselen offered a reverse interpretation, arguing that natives “[were] exposed to dangers and temptations that [did] not exist in the reserves” (Eiselen 1955:113, own translation).¹⁵⁸ This interpretation resembled arguments presented by the Poor White Commission in the 1930s for the removal of black africans from urban areas, arguing that “black people’s urban industrial employment destroyed African culture” (Willoughby-Herard 2015:27). Dönges, on the other hand, proclaimed protection for the coloured population “against native encroachment and bad influences” (Dönges 1955:5, own translation). At this point, it becomes hard to discern who was being protected from whom.

¹⁵⁷ For more on the language of dirt and pollution, see Mary Douglas’s seminal text *Purity and Danger* (1966).

¹⁵⁸ Eiselen (1955:114) similarly pointed to “the many squatter camps in the Cape Peninsula where bastardization occur[ed]” (own translation).

The impact of social contact was only one element of concern. For many participants, it was the threat of racial mixture that formed the biggest concern. While Theron (1955:37) was troubled by the supposed deterioration of coloureds upon the entrance of natives, “the problem of miscegenation” (own translation) overshadowed any other concern. Through a language closely related to the miscegenation debate that was sparked by George Findlay’s publication in 1936, as well as Fischer’s work on racial hybridity, Theron argued:

It means that the coloured will increasingly show more signs of interbreeding/bastardisation [*verbastering*] with the native in the not too distant future. This may eventually lead to the disappearance of the coloured as a separate group and the emergence of a new generation of bastards [*bastergeslag*], of which the effects will only be asserting itself after a generation or two (Theron 1955:42, own translation).

Theron drew attention to the different levels of civilisation and an existing racial hierarchy when she suggested that coloureds also claimed to be deeply opposed to mixture with natives. According to Theron coloureds “[felt] as if Africa ha[d] grabbed hold of them, pulling them back, [and thereby compromised] the level of civilization they strived for” (SABRA Testimony 1954:125).

Dönges similarly expressed his concern with regards to the problem (or dangers) of miscegenation that occurred between native men and coloured women and “the problems that [arose] due to the creation of this new mixed race” (Dönges 1955:2, own translation). The idea of a ‘new race’ was seemingly embodied by the mere existence of the coloured population in South Africa – an idea that rested selectively on the conclusions offered by Fischer (1913) based on his study of the rehoboth basters.

Fears of the creation of a new race were particularly of concern during the cross-testimony offered by Nic Olivier to the *Commission of Inquiry into the Separate Representation of Voters’ Bill* in 1953 and 1954. On this occasion, when Olivier was asked to clarify how distinctions are made between coloured and native, he responded: “[i]t is hard to distinguish. The pure blood native posed no problem in such a distinction”, but when mixture occurred “it caused great difficulty” (SABRA Testimony 1954:230, own translation). Olivier further proclaimed:

mixing of this nature [between coloured and native], *verbastering* [bastardisation] of this nature, leads to all sorts of social and psychological problems that is not conducive to the creation of a healthy family life and a happy society (SABRA Testimony 1954:136).

The conversation on racial difference often included a mixture of statements – some with references to scientific publications, others without. While Theron (1955:46) had implied there to be a difference of civilisation between black africans and coloureds, she similarly proclaimed the latter to be “on a much lower cultural level than whites” and interpreted this population as “simple in their beliefs and very superstitious” (own translation). Professor J. L. Sadie, of the Department of Economics, referenced a number of studies stemming from the Psychology Department of Stellenbosch University, to argue for “a degree of inferiority of mental abilities” found in the native and the coloured population (Sadie 1955:79, own translation). Here he made reference to two MA studies completed at Stellenbosch University. Sadie cited *Die Leerbekwaamheid van die Graaff-Reinetse Kleurling in vergelyking met dié van die Blanke en Naturel* (The Learning Capability of the Graaff-Reinet Coloured compared with that of the Europeans and Native) by A. P. Blignault, in which it was concluded that whites were superior to coloureds, who were in turn superior to natives when comparing intelligence tests. In addition he made reference to *The Relation between the learning ability and the degree of European blood in SA Non-Europeans* (1942), completed by Frederich Albertus Sadie for his MA degree, in which it was concluded “the more European blood the non-European has, the greater his learning ability” (cited in Sadie 1955:78).¹⁵⁹ While this thesis has since been declared missing from the J. S. Gericke Library of Stellenbosch University (and the contents of the methods and support for the argument thus remains a mystery), the notion of european blood as a positive addition to any offspring correlated with the racial theories postulated by Fischer (1913) and many other eugenicists of the early 20th century.

¹⁵⁹ He also cited the findings of M. L. Fick (1929), who argued that “the achievements of Coloured pupils were higher than that of natives, but lower than that of Whites” (Sadie 1955:78, own translation). Fick’s findings were seemingly held in high regard and often referred to in work about the differences between bantu and european populations. Eiselen wrote the foreword to Fick’s 1939 publication, *The Educability of the South African Native*. He also cited Fick’s findings in his own work to propagate the importance of these findings for South African educators who needed to take into account that “Native children [were] 4 to 5 years inferior to European children” (cited in Bank 2015a:7).

At the SABRA conference of 1955 dedicated to the coloured question, the complete systematic removal of the native from the Western Cape and from coloured areas was offered as a solution to counter miscegenation between these two racial categories. Hosted in Stellenbosch, the conference featured discussions around the possibility of introducing legislation to curb miscegenation between these groups – legislation that would follow existing models segregating whites and non-whites (Theron 1955:42). The removal of the ‘native-element’ was considered to provide the opportunity for the coloured population to pursue their status of distinctiveness – to create a sense of identification within this population, thereby allowing them to develop as a distinct group with a sense of *nasietrots* (‘nation-pride’) (SABRA 1955:128). A resolution was thus passed by SABRA to develop the coloured as a separate racial group in all spheres of society with a pending inquiry into the coloured population’s disposition towards “legislation to prevent miscegenation between coloureds and natives” (SABRA 1955:128, own translation).

Later that year the discussions that manifested at SABRA’s annual conference were presented at the Coloured Conference, held from 4 to 7 October 1955 at *Klaasjagerskraal*. Here the Commissioner of Coloured Affairs, Dr I. D. Du Plessis, communicated the fears that manifested at the SABRA conference with regards to close contact and racial mixture between coloureds and natives to representatives of the coloured population. It was announced that the way forward for this population group was the removal of all coloureds from native locations, with an emphasis on the importance of racially segregated neighbourhoods (*Kleurlingsake* 1955). The introduction of the 1957 Act to Amend the Group Areas Act of 1950 would eventually implement the main ideas propagated at both the SABRA conference and the conference at *Klaasjagerskraal* that took place in 1955. The preservation of clear-cut racial categories as implemented by the apartheid state remained an important underlying feature of engagements with the racial other – even when the differences between them were becoming blurred.

The concern with a clear racial differentiation to be achieved between white, coloured and native respectively, broadly spoke of a flawed and threatened system – one based on the fallacy of neat racial categories. The creation of a new race as a result of coloured and native mixture was seemingly feared by many members of SABRA. Earlier, in 1953, physical anthropologist Philip Tobias proclaimed: “where miscegenation [had] created a large hybrid population as in the Coloured folk of South Africa, a relative stability does tend to emerge; for a new race is being

born” (cited in Kuljian 2016:107). According to Christa Kuljian (2016:107), Tobias’s paper “gave credence to the South African government’s decision to develop a racial classification called ‘Coloured’” (Kuljian 2016:107). It similarly revealed the possibility of a new hybrid category developing – one that would be problematic for the existing system of racial classification under the apartheid state. The concern with coloured and native mixture was thus appears to have been located in the challenge it posed to neat racial categorisation. As a result, it also threatened an apartheid system that rested on this ability to classify according to race. This concern thus broadly reflected growing fears about a supposedly ordered system of racial categorisation under threat.

In the minds of the proponents of apartheid in both politics and academia, miscegenation did not only result in supposed notions of racial degeneration, it also fundamentally challenged an important classificatory system. Similar to contact between whites and coloureds, contact between the native and coloured populations was constructed around notions of pollution and degeneration. At the same time the classificatory element of possible offspring was constructed as extremely problematic. Within this framework, it became clear that racial mixture greatly problematised already uncertain legal definitions and the formal separation of coloureds and natives in everyday society.

Du Plessis, then Commissioner for Coloured Affairs, conceded in 1955 at the annual SABRA conference: “[o]f the four main racial groups in the Union today, i.e. the European, the Coloured, the Bantu and the Asiatic, the Coloured group, springing as it does from a mixture of races, is naturally the most difficult to define or classify” (Du Plessis 1955:15). And yet Du Plessis remained convinced that “[t]he great majority of the Coloured people form[ed] a fairly homogeneous and readily distinguishable racial group, and there [were] clear signs of their desire to remain a separate racial group” (Du Plessis 1955:15-16).

The Western Cape Research Project (WKNP): A Racial Category Solidifies

The discussions of SABRA members and Stellenbosch academics during the 1950s occurred against a backdrop of growing numbers of black africans flowing into Stellenbosch. By the beginning of the 1950s the Stellenbosch town council started to address this national problem that had now become a local one as well. Mimicking national approaches to the african

population, engagements with this issue in the local Stellenbosch area saw these incomers ideally returned and confined to the reserves.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, the Stellenbosch town council had elected a committee for the investigation of native influx in the local area as early as February 1951.¹⁶¹ Over the next few years the town council remained active in studying the local african population and kept abreast of national policy developments. In May 1954 Eiselen was personally interviewed by members of the council with regards to the suggested extension of Kayamandi (a segregated residential area designated for africans). On this occasion, Eiselen made it very clear that the fixed policy of the Department of Native Affairs was that native families should not be allowed to settle in the Western Cape.¹⁶²

By December 1954, the town council had established a commission of inquiry with regards to native administration. Theron, deputy mayor at the time, was appointed vice-chair of this commission that was to provide a thorough investigation of native affairs in Stellenbosch.¹⁶³ The research and policy suggestions of the town council aimed to be in accordance with national legislation – i.e. reduce the number of resident natives in the Cape Province. The council produced a report in 1955 and suggested, among other things, that the native population of the Stellenbosch area should be decreased, work permits should be instated, no women and children should be allowed to accompany new male arrivals, and a quota of 1700 natives should be

¹⁶⁰ In May 1949 the government released Notice 1032 “prevent[ing] African work-seekers from remaining in the Cape Peninsula for more than 14 days a year” (Goldin 1987:87). A host of legislation was subsequently introduced. This included the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 which revoked South African citizenship of black africans in order to confine them to the reserves. It was followed by the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951 providing for the forced removal of illegal squatters (including many black african work-seekers who settled in the urban areas) (SAHO 2016 [online]). The Native Law Amendment Act followed in 1952 adding to the now stricter controls that were applied across the country to all natives living in urban areas. This was followed by the Natives Act of 1952 that introduced the reference book (*dompas*) – becoming the key item through which the black african presence in urban areas was regulated by criminalising the presence of this population in the absence of a pass book (SAHO 2016 [online]). The Western Cape became a main point of focus in this regard where influx controls were even more strictly applied to pursue an official strategy of labour preference for the coloured population.

¹⁶¹ The committee was set to investigate, amongst other things, the influx of natives, the desirability of labour bureaus, the removal of unemployed natives, and proposed legislation for dealing with the natives (*Eikestadnuus* 1951:4).

¹⁶² Eiselen’s views on migrant labour in the Cape Province found expression in the infamous ‘Eiselen-line’ – an imaginary boundary line in the historical Cape Province that acted as a border for the strict regulation of native migrant labourers into this area. In correspondence with members of the Western Cape Research Project (WKNP) in 1955, Eiselen mentioned this line as the guiding principle for dealing with native influx.

¹⁶³ Some of the themes identified for further investigation by the committee were: the desirability to determine a limitation of the native population; the relationship between natives and the settled coloured population; the possible appropriation of native labour in terms of productivity and effectiveness; the future demand for native labour – taking into account seasonal labour in the area (*Eikestadnuus* 1954b:1).

applied (Divisional Council Stellenbosch 1955).¹⁶⁴ The local town council was seemingly adamant to employ apartheid legislation as these decisions coincided with the creation of an ad hoc committee of local councilmen to investigate the possibility of implementing the Group Areas Act in Stellenbosch. Racial classification and the subsequent regulation of the population within the structures of the apartheid state thus began to gain momentum in Stellenbosch.

It was at the SABRA conference of 1955 that Dönges announced a new research project to be undertaken by Stellenbosch University. Here he declared that:

[the proposed study] will be performed by a group of experts which will approach the matter in a scientific way [...] the findings and recommendations of this team of experts will be of great importance with regards to the coloured community (Dönges 1955:2).

In the course of 1955, amid growing concerns surrounding native influx and categorical clarity of racial difference, Stellenbosch University established an interdisciplinary research committee to initiate an ambitious socio-economic study of the Western Cape. The WKNP commenced on 27 April 1955 under the leadership of Professor C. G. W. Schumann of the Economics Department. This interdisciplinary endeavour was launched to provide an encompassing study of the Western Cape area with a focus on the cape coloured and the native populations of this area. The appointed steering committee consisted of a number of notable Stellenbosch academics.¹⁶⁵ Theron, Olivier, and Sadie – individuals who all took a strong stance against miscegenation and highlighted the problematics of a resulting new race – were appointed to the committee. Bruwer, head of the *Volkekunde* Department at Stellenbosch University, took a leading role in the research development of the WKNP.

¹⁶⁴ Throughout the 1950s the native population was carefully monitored by the Stellenbosch Council (4/STB Divisional Council Stellenbosch). Reports on Kayamandi, the local settlement for black africans, overpopulation, and possible removal or displacement were produced until the early 1960s (report dated for the period of 1 September 1960 to 31 August 1961).

¹⁶⁵ The following lecturers represented their departments on the committee: Prof C. G. W. Schumann (Business Economics), and director of the project; Prof J. L. Sadie (Economics and Demography); Prof P. Serton, Prof A. Nel, and Dr D. J. Conradie (Geography); Prof P. E. De Waal (Agriculture); Prof N. J. J. Olivier (Native Administration); Prof P. S. Du Toit (Education); Prof E. Theron and Prof S. P. Cilliers (Sociology and Social Work); and Prof J. P. Bruwer (*Volkekunde*) (Cilliers 1964:4). Cilliers was also appointed lead researcher and compiled the eventual report in book form (as published in 1964);

Bruwer was of the opinion that “scientific knowledge [was] a basic prerequisite for healthy policy [...] and objective and scientific planning by experts form[ed] the cornerstone of policy formulation and development” (Bruwer 1963, own translation). While appointed to provide his expert opinion on issues related to race, Bruwer was additionally tasked with developing a comprehensive research scheme for the project.¹⁶⁶

On 27 April 1955, the WKNP officially commenced its work. In attendance were various stakeholders including the National Council for Social Research (represented by R. W. Wilcocks) who funded the project from 1955 to 1958, and representatives from the Division for Coloured Affairs, the Department of Native Affairs, and the Department of Home Affairs (*Eikestadnuus* 1955b:1). The official commencement of the project followed in the wake of a definitive statement by Eiselen: “[b]riefly and concisely put, our Native policy regarding the Western Province aims at the ultimate elimination of Natives from this region” (cited in Goldin 1987:88). This was coupled with the aim of then Minister of Native Affairs, Hendrik Verwoerd, to proclaim a coloured labour preference policy. These two envisioned interrelated aspects of the policy required clear definitions of the racial categories involved – definitions that would aid in legally formulated distinctions between these two racial groups. Thus before research could be undertaken, it was deemed “essential” to establish the “ethnic demarcation” of the coloured population (Bruwer 1956, own translation). Yet while it was imperative to first and foremost differentiate between coloured and native in order to ensure the ‘correct’ individuals were (re)moved, uncertainties did not prevent the project from getting under way.

¹⁶⁶ His unfaltering belief in separate development and his committed support of the National Party possibly made Bruwer a fitting candidate to take a leading role in the proposed research. Bruwer became more critical of the National Party after serving as Commissioner-General for the Native Peoples of South West Africa. While leaving academics to take up a government job in 1964, it took less than a year for Bruwer to resign his position in response to a growing frustration with a government that apparently did not take heed of his advice and did as they pleased. Bruwer became more outspoken against the government during this time and eventually returned to academics, taking up a position at the University of Port Elizabeth. However, in private correspondence with Verwoerd and other state officials Bruwer was still vying for a government job and remained a willing servant to the state. His offer was never taken up. Bruwer died in a plane crash en route to East London in 1967.

By 3 June 1956 Bruwer introduced the “somatological study” providing the physical characteristics of the male coloured population as deduced in the 1937 study conducted by the Zoology Department of Stellenbosch University.¹⁶⁷ Bruwer reported to the committee that:

a somatic survey of the Coloureds [did] not justify the estimated expenditure of £500. Therefore the Department of *Volkekunde* [would] not launch a comprehensive investigation in this regard, but could rather get valuable information from studies conducted by the Department of Zoology (Bruwer 1956, own translation).

The publishing of *A preliminary account of the physical anthropology of the “Cape Coloured People” (Males)* in 1939 thus acquired new relevance in 1956. This study provided a basic definition of the category that would be on the receiving end of racialised state policy almost two decades after the meticulous measurement of coloured bodies had been conducted. The definition of their unit of analysis (the coloured category) was thus invoked and reimagined in a new context.¹⁶⁸

In the eventual 1964 publication, *Wes-Kaapland: ‘n Sosio-Ekonomiese Studie* (Western Cape: a Socio-Economic Study) stemming from the WKNP project, Bruwer similarly cited the work of physical anthropologists (including Robert Broom, Raymond Dart, Matthew Drennan, and Philip Tobias) to conceptualise racial type. Social scientists like Bruwer thus continued to draw on the ‘scientific’ findings within the field of anthropology to validate their own biological justifications for racial segregation (Morris 2012; Kuljian 2016). In the WKNP’s 1964 publication a well-known narrative continued to be pursued: that the coloureds were “a new and distinctive population” as the result of “contact between people from Africa, Europe and Asia” (Bruwer 1964:101). Bruwer further argued:

the Bantu-Coloured contact in the Western Cape can be the beginning of the disappearance of a group of people that are biologically and culturally skewed

¹⁶⁷ For more detail see Chapter Three.

¹⁶⁸ The continued reference made to the study conducted by the Zoology Department in the 1930s is indicative of how remnants of scientific notions of race continued to operate in second half of the 20th century – notably after the UNESCO Statement of 1950.

towards the white population to make way for a new group leaning towards the Bantu in the race-biological sense (Bruwer 1964:105, own translation).

Thus Bruwer's findings supported Eiselen's belief that a separation of coloured and native peoples needed to be implemented in the Cape.

At the time, Stellenbosch University academics were closely involved with local politics and policy development. And through the WKNP their involvement soon expanded into the realm of local and national policy. The government remained interested in this project in the latter half of the 1950s. On 22 June 1959 Du Plessis wrote to both the Deputy Minister of Labour and the Secretary of Labour to communicate the continued policy of the Division for Coloured Affairs to promote the interest of the coloured population against native competition. In this regard the WKNP was cited as an important project – one that appears to have been shaped by the inputs of the Division for Coloured Affairs. Having requested a sub-investigation into the viability of replacing native workers with a coloured labour force (*Komitee insake Arbeid in Wes-Kaapland*, 1959), the Division for Coloured Affairs was also privy to the results before these were compiled and published in an edited volume (as seen in the correspondence of this Division) (ibid).

On 15 November 1960, the discourses of the past decade were made manifest by Dönges who reiterated the coloured labour preference policy in more definitive terms in a press release:

job reservation is simply a precaution against inter-racial competition [...] and is therefore regarded as a positive measure to promote the orderly coexistence of the different races (Dönges 1960, own translation).

In the resulting edited volume of the WKNP, published in 1964 with Stellenbosch sociologist S. P. Cilliers as editor, the research was presented as a socio-economic study with a “focus on the physical potential of the Western Cape and an emphasis on population – and racial studies” (Cilliers 1964:3, own translation). The close ties with government departments was reasserted the year after the edited volume was published, when a province-wide conference (or rather “Symposium regarding Coloured Labour”) was organised by Stellenbosch University and the *Streek Wes-Kaapland van die Nasionale Ontwikkelings- en Bestuursrigting* (Direction for National Development and Management of the Western Cape Region).

The one-day conference of 22 June 1965, entitled *Die Mobilisasie van Kragte vir die Ontwikkeling van Wes-Kaapland* (The Mobilisation of Forces for the Development of the Western Cape), communicated many of the ideas, developed by the WKNP, as well as others over the course of the previous decade, to local committees in charge of the implementation of the coloured labour preference policy. Cilliers presented the report of the WKNP on behalf of the committee members to representatives of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, the Divisional Inspector of Labour, and the Director of Coloured Labour who were all in attendance (*Komitee insake Arbeid in Wes-Kaapland* 1966).

Separate but Equal

By the end of the 1950s, the Division for Coloured Affairs had been converted from a mere sub-department of the Department for Home Affairs into a full state department dedicated to the coloured population.¹⁶⁹ The establishment of the Department for Coloured Affairs was thus a major step towards establishing the coloured population as a separate racial category or people that could be guided by the principles of ‘separate but equal development’.

As argued by Ian Goldin (1987:171): “[t]he segregation and isolation of people defined as Coloureds, Nationalists explained, was necessary in order to foster the development of a distinct Coloured identity”. While this population had been successfully constructed as a separate racial category, it had been done in the absence of clear-cut parameters. The vague definitions that had transpired over the course of a few decades, and more particularly in the 1950s with the description of this category in the Population Registration Act, spoke of conceptual failure – a failure that stemmed from the attempt to apply rigid racial categories to a complex social reality. Yet this seems to have done little to deter the acceptance of 'coloured' as a racial category within the legal framework of the apartheid state.

¹⁶⁹ The development of the coloured category as a self-sufficient unit, as opposed to a unit developing under the guardianship of whites in the same territory, was a debate present within the ranks of SABRA and government officials. In this regard the Niemand Commission had presented a report to parliament in 1962. The commission found that “the Coloured still needs, and wants, the guiding hand of whites”. According to the report the commission had failed to find one coloured person who was convinced that “their own people were capable of administering local governing bodies” (Department of Community Development 1964:182, own translation). Their findings were taken into account for the Group Areas Amendment Act of 1962 where, amongst other things, provision was made for the training of coloureds to eventually take full responsibility for local government in their respective areas (Department of Community Development 1964:183).

By the 1960s, a slight change in narrative had occurred in speaking about the coloured population. Those academics who had been engaging with the definition of this category no longer referred to *creating* an identity or *nasietrots*, but focused instead on *protecting* said identity. The lack of social cohesion among those said to belong to this category, as identified by Cronjé (1945:140), does not appear to have inspired a questioning of the existence of the coloured category itself. Instead, discussion surrounding this population group in the Cape revealed a broad acceptance of coloureds as a biologically separate race – fit to receive targeted policies as proposed by the South African state.

Many have argued that loose or malleable definitions worked in favour of the apartheid government – thereby imbuing conceptual failure with strategic intent. Saul Dubow (2010:183) argues that “the more flexible language of cultural difference and ethnic nationalism were in many ways better suited to nationalist needs”. Indeed, the lack of concrete legal description worked in the government’s favour since it resulted in “a multiplicity of meanings assigned to the concept of race” even in the presence of legislated definitions (Erasmus & Ellison 2008:452). However, in light of continued attempts to define the coloured category more accurately – as seen in the concerted efforts of SABRA and the WKNP – the failure to definitively classify this racial group appears to have signified an absolute failure to successfully execute one of the most important parts of the grand apartheid plan.

Indeed, attempts to provide more clear-cut definitions of the racial categories continued well into the 1950s after the Population Registration Act (and all subsequent acts) had been implemented. In 1957 the government appointed an inter-departmental committee “to produce a basic definition of the races, which would be a ‘master definition’ applicable to all laws requiring racial definition” (Dönges 1959). After a 30-month investigation Dönges announced in Parliament that the committee had failed, “it could not find a basic legal definition” for the coloured race (ibid).

The failure to find a basic legal definition for racial classification however, did not call into question the existence of various human races and inherent racial difference, but rather spurred more investigations into the matter. For many academics and politicians, coloureds were still believed to contain a racial essence and their racial profile could therefore be determined through racial characteristics, social standing, and family history. The vehement clinging to such notions

is evident in the publication produced by the WKNP, where Cilliers himself questioned the conceptualisation of the coloured population within South African legislation, positing that the Population Registration Act of 1950 provided a “very vague definition” (Cilliers 1964:109). Considerations of how this definition could have been improved was absent in Cilliers’ work, but in his own publication on this group of people (published a year before the WKNP edited volume) he did regard the coloured population to be a “distinct biological entity” and further stated that the category was distinguishable from others “mainly on the basis of colour and/or other racial features” (Cilliers 1963:13).

Yet the vague definition continually provided does not appear to have discredited the existence of the category as one supposedly found in nature. Cilliers was of the opinion that proper research “on the background and development of the Coloured could aid in determining the real nature of this population” (Cilliers 1964:109).¹⁷⁰ Bruwer held similar views. Well aware of the paradoxes offered by the Population Registration Act, he proclaimed: “[t]he fact that there exist various races in South Africa cannot be laid at the doorstep of the Act” (Bruwer 1964:76). Like, Cilliers, Bruwer was an advocate of the existence of measureable, biological entities (otherwise known as racial categories) despite the possible shortcomings of the Population Registration Act to define them. In his opinion, it was in the translation of scientific measurement to the legal structures of apartheid that this shortfall was located, and not in the reasoning itself

Engagements with the coloured population thus marked an ongoing process with long-lasting effects. It can be regarded as a project that produced political and social ‘debris’ (ruins) – a term explained by Stoler (2008:192-193) as referring to “the longevity of structures of dominance, and the uneven pace with which people can extricate themselves” from this order. A ‘project of ruination’ requires “resources and planning [that] dictates how people are supposed to live” (Stoler 2008:202); it produces lasting effects – “endur[ing] beyond the formal exclusions that

¹⁷⁰ In 1967 the Population Registration Act was amended with a focus on genealogical evidence for racial classification. This act stipulated a:

person must be classified as Coloured if both his parents were so classified, or if one was classified as White and the other as Coloured or African. If a person claiming to be White cannot prove that both his parents were so classified, the competent authorities are directed to take into account his habits, education, speech, and deportment; and to establish whether he is generally accepted as White, where he resides, works, and mixes socially with other members of the public (Watson 1970:vii).

legislate against equal opportunity, commensurate dignities, and equal rights” (Stoler 2013:8); and can often be “defined by racialised relations of allocations and appropriations” (Stoler 2008:193). It is ruinous in its effects (Stoler 2013:2), in that “ruins are not just found, they are *made*” (Stoler 2013:20).

Conclusion

The acceptance and employment of racial categories in official policy thus marked the beginning stages of a ‘project of ruination’ (Stoler 2008) that would have lasting consequences for the subjects it produced. The coloured category had been created only to become the target of government racial policy.¹⁷¹ Despite the uncertainty surrounding the racial category ‘coloured’, this population group continued to be deemed biologically separate and scientifically determinable. The use of human measurement to designate racial categories materialised in the scientific data it produced in written form – data that informed investigations like those of the WKNP (as illustrated by the reference to the 1937 study of coloured males of Stellenbosch during a meeting of the WKNP). Through the WKNP the results of human measurement further materialised within the legal framework of apartheid South Africa.

The engagements of the 1950s by social scientists thus built on the knowledge produced by physical anthropologists in the decades prior. Often cited as scientific evidence, such data had real and visceral effects in everyday life. Legal definition or no legal definition, the racial categories of the apartheid state were accepted as real, and experienced as real. Designated racial categories had exuded effects and repercussions in practice and life – effects that (particularly in relation to the coloured population) saw the normalisation of subordination (Jensen 2008:21-22). Within the next decade the Western Cape would set in motion an attempt to curb the permanent settlement of black africans in its urban areas and implement the forced removals of tens of thousands of people – especially those classified as coloured. And the Stellenbosch Municipality followed suit.

¹⁷¹ Black africans faced a similar fate of course. Those present in the Cape Province faced increasing regulation and a steadfast commitment on the side of the government to rid the province of ‘the native element’ and this category was increasingly relegated to the reserves.

PART III

Disappearing Objects, Lingering Presence

Robert Gordon was a post-graduate student and technical assistant in the *Volkekunde* Department at Stellenbosch University between 1970 and 1974. It is during this time that he first came across Fischer's hair colour and texture table in this department's Ethnology Museum (Gordon 2013). No paper trail exists for exactly how Martin's eye colour table, Von Luschan's skin colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and an anatomically prepared human skull were obtained by this museum. But in this space the objects acquired a new status. They were no longer actively employed as scientific instruments, but rather became *museum objects*.

Time clings to objects displayed in a museum. Informed by their past use and present state, objects resonate with the significance bestowed upon them by their particular cultural context. Indeed, context "becomes part of an object-information package" that comprises the interconnecting pieces of information of its past (Dudley 2010:3). A jacket worn by a soldier who fought at Waterloo will always retain its relationship with the battle itself (Pearce 1990:134). In the museum, objects are thus not seen for what they are, but rather for what they mean (Knell 2012:326). It is thus through their exchange that objects "acquire a range of shifting values and meanings, all of which can tell us much about the social, historical, economic disciplinary and/or political contexts of the objects" (Dudley 2012:97).

At Stellenbosch University, Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, Von Luschan's skin colour table and the skull travelled from the Zoology Department to the *Volkekunde* Department. The instruments had been used and referenced by a number of individuals during the course of their life, but a shift occurred in the use of the collection of objects: from active employment between 1925 and 1955, to a mere point of reference in the engagements of social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s. In the Ethnology Museum they acquired a new status as an institutional remnant with a story to tell: they served as material evidence of an era of scientific measurement. While no longer required by contemporary anthropologists to prove measurable racial differences, they remained a point of reference for a lived reality outside of the museum's walls.

The objects had contributed to the scientific underpinnings for racial categories – a notion of race that was widely accepted in the daily dealings of apartheid South Africa by the 1960s. Thus, while the objects were slowly disappearing out of sight, they had also become “ever present and inescapable” (Knell 2012:326). In the museum these instruments became laden with both tangible and intangible aspects – their past uses, their history, and their lingering effects in society (Knell 2012:326). Confined to the museum and no longer actively employed to produce scientific results, the objects had “dissolve[d] into meaning” (Dudley 2010:3).

Across the street from this museum, an area occupied by coloured residents was being cleared to make room for the new buildings of Stellenbosch University. Inhabitants of this area, known as *Die Vlakte*, were namely in the process of being relegated to the outskirts of town during the mid-1960s. All the while Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan’s skin colour table looked on from their shelf in the Ethnology Museum.

CHAPTER 7

Apartheid South Africa and the Exhibitionary Complex: The Populace as Both Classifier and Classified

[I]deally, they sought also to allow the people to know and thence to regulate themselves; to become, in seeing themselves from the side of power, both the subjects and the objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by power – Tony Bennett (1988:76)

The C. L. Marais library is built on the original College Square, behind the *Ou Hoofgebou* (Old Main Building) of Stellenbosch University, facing Crozier road. Up until the mid to late 1960s this road divided the old College Square from a residential area across the entrance to the C. L. Marais building – a location now filled with the built structures of the university. Constructed in 1899 the building served as the campus library, first for Victoria College and then Stellenbosch University from 1918 onwards. But over the years this building would house more than just books.

While partially maintaining its original function to this day, the space has been utilised for administrative purposes, housed academic departments, and was once the home of the *Volkekunde*/Ethnology Museum. Located on the upper level in an open rectangular space close to the landing of the old wooden stairs, the central position of the museum ensured entry to any of the adjoining offices. More recently, this building has been the home of the Socio-Economic Rights and Administrative Justice (SERAJ) research project – an extension of the Faculty of Law.

As I pass by the building on a summer's day in 2016, the double doors – usually closed with restricted access – are wide open and a moving truck is parked outside. The space will seemingly once again be repurposed.

I enter through the large doors only to find that the entire space had been evacuated by its former occupants. Up an old wooden staircase and through old wooden doorways I peruse the empty

rooms. There is nothing to discover. I am left to search for the presence of history. Upstairs, the rectangular open space is empty. No traces of a museum can be found here. I am left to imagine what this space used to look like; left to imagine the individuals who visited the space, who inspected the objects in the collection, and who inhabited the adjoining offices.

It was in the mid-1960s that Von Luschan's skin colour table, Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and an anatomically prepared human skull found a new home here, in the former Ethnology Museum of Stellenbosch University. During the objects' lifetime they had witnessed and played a fundamental part in the measurement of humans as related to long-established racial categories. During their active employment, these scientific instruments had been complicit in producing primary data ascribing racial difference – data utilised as evidence in the development of race-based policies under the apartheid state. By the 1960s, these objects of comparison and measurement had become disused – but not useless. Their new place within the museum saw these inactive instruments rendered historical artefacts: a confirmation of their evidentiary status and their (now past) significance to science. But the visceral effects of the studies they served and the policies they informed remained.

Introduction

By the 1960s, Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan's skin colour table were entering a new phase of their life in Stellenbosch University's Ethnology Museum. While still harnessed (to a small degree) for educational purposes by the university's *Volkekunde* Department, these objects became less scientific tools for measurement than artefacts of a history of physical anthropology. But in what can only be referred to as twisted poetic coincidence, the objects that had been complicit in creating the very categories now wielded by the apartheid state were located in C. L. Marias Library, across the road from an area known as *Die Vlakte* – an area that became the infamous site of forced removals in Stellenbosch after being proclaimed a 'whites only' area in 1964.

Due to the close proximity between *Die Vlakte* and the instruments within the Ethnology Museum, this chapter seeks to engage these objects in a broader analysis of their relation to racial categorisation in Stellenbosch during the decades of high apartheid and forced removals. Treating them as “things to think with” (Preziosi 2003:3), the following discussion attempts to

bridge the gap between a scientific history (as represented by the ethnological artefacts) and their material consequences for the coloured residents of Stellenbosch.

By engaging Tony Bennett's (1988; 1995) notion of the exhibitionary complex, I engage how the racial discourses and power relations present within the museum space were similarly perpetuated outside the walls of this institution. In relating the development of the museum space and the display of objects to forms of governance (Bennett 1988, 1995) as well as the very notions of modernity and social reality outside of the museum (Preziosi 2003), this chapter seeks to illuminate how the Ethnology Museum may become a site to investigate "the relationships among self, object, nation, and modernity" (Kriegel 2006:687). In engaging this chapter, I thus urge the reader to locate Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and Von Luschan's skin colour table in the long-lasting effects manifesting outside the museum – in apartheid South Africa and more specifically in Stellenbosch.

The Modern Museum and Material Culture

The roots of the modern museum are to be found in the aftermath of the 1789 French revolution where the private collections of the monarchs and aristocrats were gathered and displayed in spaces accessible to the public. These collections that existed prior to the museum in the form of private collections, 'curiosity cabinets' and 'treasure houses' (and thus largely confined for the viewing pleasures of the elite) were transformed towards the end of the 18th century into "neatly-ordered taxonomies of objects accessible for study" (Rader & Cain 2008:165).

Historically museums have "exist[ed] above all for the collection, preservation, and conservation of the fragments and relics of the past" (Preziosi & Farago 2004:13). In the words of Kiersten Latham (2012:59): "[m]aterials are collected on purpose, for a purpose, to preserve some evidence of past lifeways, people, events or activities". Thus, she continues, "[t]he very reason the museum collects objects is because they are evidential" (Latham 2012:59). Donald Preziosi offers a similar interpretation of the museum object. For him "[o]bjects and artifacts [are] selected for their documentary value" (Preziosi 2004:75). That which is preserved within the museum is also assumed to "document the *facts* of history" (Preziosi & Farago 2004:13, original emphasis). In the museum space "objects are involved in communication and information

transfer” (Latham 2012:60). The inclusion of any object in the museum collection thus transforms it into a document:

that is preserved or recorded (cataloged, stored, cared for) toward the ends of representing, reconstituting, or of proving a physical or intellectual phenomenon (Latham 2012:59).

The display of a particular object on a museum shelf or in a cabinet may thus come to stand for “dominant theoretical models” or for “entire disciplines” (Miller 2003 [1994]:14).

It was already in 1868 that Thomas Henry Huxley placed tremendous emphasis on “the value of teaching from objects” stemming from the philosophical approach of John Heinrich Pestalozzi to “teach always by things rather than words” (cited in Bennett 2004:31). The usefulness of material objects as communicators of knowledge had thus been central to the museum since the 19th century. But the importance of objects has been particularly poignant in relation to the ethnological museum – a space dedicated to the categorical depiction of ‘ethnic groups’.

Indeed, it is not merely the objects themselves that are categorised, ordered and put on display in the ethnology museum. Within this space, artefacts become representative of whole cultures – those who made them, and made use of them. According to Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (2004:5) museums often “personify objects as the representations of their makers, simultaneously objectifying the people who made them”. Akin to a Foucauldian constitution of subjects, Preziosi (2003:3) argues that collections are used to “fabricate and factualize the individual and collective realities”. In the act of ordering, classifying, and displaying museum objects, the peoples associated with them become classified and categorised along with their museum/object counterparts (Conn 1998:79).¹⁷²

Considered “at the center of anthropological understanding” (Conn 1998:79), objects in the ethnology museum become representative of whole cultures as the careful selection and use of artefacts construct a narrative to “make sense of history” (Preziosi 2004:75). As an institution

¹⁷² The power of constituting subjects in the Foucauldian sense lies essentially in the internalisation of the constituted category by the subject to identify with society at large. Power is thus located in the *ability* to constitute subjects (Foucault 1982).

with a central objective of shaping knowledge, museums traditionally employ their collections to “put together visual cultural narratives which produce views of the past and thus of the present” (Hooper-Greenhill 2007:2).

Central to the construction of these visual narratives are typology and chronology – elements harnessed within the museum to provide structure and thus legibility. Stemming from early museum displays of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the logic of natural history is conflated with the display of ethnological collections. This particularly became common practice in the period following the publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* that employed “Darwinian principles” through the illustration of progress and adaptation (Bennett 1997:169, 183). Similarly drawing on the classificatory systems of Carl Linnaeus and Comte de Buffon (Hirst 2004:382), such displays indicate a close connection between typology and chronology that materialise in the arrangement of objects “from simplest to most complex” (Conn 1998:90). Thus, Steven Conn (1998:89) argues that those in charge of museum displays “brought to their understanding of human culture models refashioned from the natural sciences”.

A ‘progressive’ display of various cultures thus related to human development and formed a central part of how people were represented in the museum space. As Bennett (1997:184) writes:

The key to the typological method consisted in the doctrine of survivals according to which the artefacts, customs and ways of life of presently existing colonized black peoples were treated as the remnants of forms of social life in periods prior to those for which material evidence had survived in the archaeological record. Such customs and artefacts, it was argued, provided a means of making human prehistory visible [...] They represented a time of the past which, having conveniently stood still, could illuminate those ‘primitive’ phases of human development [...]

A focus on the linkage between structure and chronology (while deeply influenced by ruling notions of evolution and progress) was central to the ordering of museum objects (Preziosi 2004:75). The ‘gradualness of progress’ (Bennett 1995; 2004) thus similarly became inherent in the logic of display and was applied in museums across the globe. In the ethnology museum displays of the late 19th and early 20th centuries this logic was adopted through offering

“systematic arrangements” (Conn 1998:79) of natural history that were representative of a “visual language, through which the objects could speak” (Conn 1998:79). In the museum all aspects of society and the natural world was to be made “visible, legible, rationally ordered, charted, staged, and, above all, intertranslatable” (Preziosi 2004:73).

The structured displays offered to the visiting public, coupled with the evidentiary role of material objects (or its assumed factuality), contributed to the museum’s thriving pedagogical function. It was already in the late 19th century that the “public educational functions and responsibilities” of the museum were recognised (Bennett 1997:172). In an era of the professionalisation of museums a close connection thus developed between the museum as institution and the educational system (Bennett 1997:172). This close connection remained an integral part of the museum where displays were expected to communicate “basic scientific information to the public” (Rader & Cain 2008:155). The museum was to ultimately function as an educational institution – a “function of the museum that has been recognized as long as there have been public museums” (Hein 1998:3). For instance in 1906 the annual report of the Horniman Museum and Library emphasized their aim to educate the masses by constructing a space where the public “may be able to obtain information, and widen their outlook, by inspection of properly labelled specimens exhibited in related series” (cited in Bennett 2004:167). In 1969, more than half a century later, the American Association of Museums similarly described the purpose of the museum as twofold: to advance and distribute knowledge while offering a sense of “pleasure and delight” (cited in Hein 1998:8).

In addition to its pedagogical purpose, Bennett (1997) thus argues for the ‘ideological effect’ of the modern museum. In the context of the new French Republic (the birthplace of the modern museum) museums became instruments for exposing “both the decadence and tyranny of the old forms of control, the *ancient regime*, and the democracy and public utility of the new, the Republic” (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:168). The museum was thus originally “constituted to share what had been private and expose what had been concealed” (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:176). It similarly served to educate and empower the populace for “the collective good of the state rather than for the benefit of individual knowledge” (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:174). Museum practice thus originally served a political purpose alongside its intended educational function: to transform the population “into a useful resource for the state” (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:182).

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, museums played a pivotal role in shaping a western understanding of colonised peoples. In his discussion of the museum representation of the “non-Western Orient” Timothy Mitchell (2004[1988]:442) postulates that displays of non-european peoples were defined by three features: as essentialised, as ‘other’, and as deficient when compared to the european self. By harnessing typology along with the Darwinian principles of chronology, an ethnological display served as “a powerful and seductive rhetorical apparatus, a fictive construct (a narrative of events) that mask[ed] ideology under the guise of ‘natural time’” (Preziosi & Farago 2004:14). Colonial conquests had greatly contributed to these representations both in terms of the developing political discourse and in terms of material contributions in the form of objects collected across the globe – objects seemingly representative of whole cultures. It thus entailed the collection and preservation of objects and cultures by documenting those cultures that were bound to vanish in the face of western modernity (Hein 1998:11).

Ethnological displays did not only offer a display of cultural difference, but also of western superiority as compared to the colonial other encountered through imperial and commercial expansion (Conn 1998:90). Drawing from the work of Stuart Hall (1977), Bennett postulates the ‘ideological effect’ of such displays as “legitimizing the existing social order by convincing all social agents of the inherent rightness of the social places they occupy” (cited in Bennett 1997:176). In this regard the museum has historically functioned as both “pedagogical and political in nature” with the sole purpose of “making the visible legible” (Preziosi & Farago 2004:5). Museums may thus be understood as the producer of political reality – places of display that “constitute as much as they represent *public* understanding of science” (Bouquet 2001:10, own emphasis).¹⁷³

As the communicators of cultural narratives, objects within ethnology museums are not trivial things, but rather the source of “social reproduction and ideological dominance” (Miller 1998:3).

¹⁷³ This display of otherness is discussed by Timothy Mitchell (2004[1988]) in his analysis of the museum representation of the non-western orient in the European museum in a manner even unfamiliar to those portrayed. Here the visiting orients were confronted by a representation of themselves wholly unfamiliar to themselves (Mitchell 2004[1988]:442). In this regard Mitchell (2004[1988]:454) argues that “[t]he reality was a place whose life was not lived”. These arguments are firmly rooted in the approaches offered after the material turn of the 1980s that urged the recognition that our physical as well as social worlds “were as much constituted by materiality as the other way around” (Miller 1998:3).

Selected and displayed in an attempt to narrate human history, museum objects illuminate the very discourses that make them legible. It is for this reason that Fabrice Grognet (2004:178) argues for the importance of “an understanding of the ethnological discourse accompanying [the display of objects]”. The museum offers a glimpse into political interests and social structures that shaped the logic of both selection and display – revealing an “inside/outside quality of museums” (Kriegel 2006:696).

Robert Goldwater (2004:133) reminds us that the ethnological displays of these museums were closely linked not only to local ethnological theory, but also the political, social and economic conditions of the various countries in which they are located. But while the local context that informs museum display requires consideration (Goldwater 2004:133), there appear traditions of display universally harnessed in ethnology museums – in particular, to put the other on show.

Evidence on Display

At Stellenbosch University the growing collection of ethnological and archaeological objects was housed in the Ethnology Museum – an extension of the *Volkekunde* Department already set up in basic form by W. W. M. Eiselen in the 1920s. By the late 1950s the museum occupied two rooms in the C. L. Marais building, then also home to the *Volkekunde* Department. Book cases and glass display cases lined the central space of the second floor along with a second room dedicated to the existing collection: thousands of objects grouped according to the 15 *volke* (nations or peoples) they represented.

In 1976 the Ethnology Museum was briefly featured in *Guide to the Museums of Southern Africa* in which the collections pertaining to “several Bantu and Khoisan peoples of South Africa” along with the nguni and wambo collections were highlighted as notable features of this museum (Fransen 1976:97). The collection was further grouped and displayed to illustrate “the culture phases of the human population of Southern Africa with an emphasis on South Africa” (Bruwer 1961). Hannes Bruwer, head of the *Volkekunde* Department at the time, illustrated a vested interest in both growing and exhibiting the collection for educational purposes. The centrality of the ‘scientific value’ of the collection was highlighted by Bruwer when he appealed to Stellenbosch University to provide funding for the renovation and expansion of the museum.

Bruwer (1961) argued that the museum space at the time was “practically useless for scientific teaching related to the discipline of *volkekunde*”. The limited space, it was said, embodied a storeroom rather than a museum exhibition – and as a result was detrimental to the intended manner in which these items should be grouped and exhibited. In support of the creation of a larger space, Bruwer (1961) argued that, in the present museum space, “the scientific value of the collection was being neutralized”. Its intended purpose of representing the “culture phases of the human populations of Southern Africa” through objects (Bruwer 1961) had seemingly been silenced.

It was only towards the end of the 1960s that renovations ensued in the C. L. Marais building to tend to some of the concerns raised by Bruwer in relation to the Ethnology Museum. By the time renovations were completed in 1976 Bruwer had long left Stellenbosch and Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Martin’s eye colour table, Von Luschan’s skin colour table, and the anatomically prepared human skull had found a new home in this now renovated space. The acquisition of these objects by the Ethnology Museum of Stellenbosch University in the 1960s spoke to their evidentiary status (Latham 2012:59); as, in the words of Preziosi (2004:77), museums “shape things [...] into evidentiary material, into things that do different work now than they did in other contexts”.

In the Ethnology Museum the objects were employed from the late 1960s until 1984 during a single introductory first year lecture to “explain the anatomy of the skull and skull index and to illustrate biological diversity” (Steyn & Botha 2013, own translation). This introductory lecture related to the various sub-fields of anthropology – physical anthropology, archaeology and social or cultural anthropology. However, the rest of undergraduate and post-graduate teaching related exclusively to social anthropology (presented as *Volkekunde*). Thus the museum remained “an integral part of the department’s teaching function” and served as “a classroom or laboratory for daily use” related to tutorials, slideshows, and the screening of *volkekundige* films” (Schüler 1984). The objects themselves appear to have played a minimal role. And yet the continued presence of Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Martin’s eye colour table, Von Luschan’s skin colour table, and the skull speak to a similar continuation of the ideas that created them and that they had in turn perpetuated.

While museums have always been in the business of “reproduce[ing] other cultures for the visual consumption of their visitors”, Henrietta Riegel (1996:83) argues that these reproductions of the other “do not exist in a sanctified space removed from political processes”. Instead of mere isolated things, objects may be understood “in their relationship to [humans]” (Foucault 1970:313). Constructions of otherness through material objects – collected and exhibited as encapsulating representations of peoples – thus offers “a model for experiencing life outside [of the museum] walls” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991:410).

Inside/Outside the Museum: A Logic of Categorisation Transferred

In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault (2002[1970]:338) argues that within the human sciences “man functions as an *object* made visible by those sciences while also doubling as the *subject* of the knowledges they make available”. Preziosi (2003) has related the development of the modern museum as a public institution of knowledge to notions of modernity. Operating as a “civilizing instrument” (Kriegel 2006:683), the 18th and 19th century museum was employed for “explicitly political uses in order to (re)educate a newly democratized citizenry” (Preziosi 2004:75). Offering what Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992:174) describes as a “new form of population management”, the museum assisted in constructing “a general politics of truth” (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:193) – one that served to structure not only knowledge and behaviour within its walls but outside of them as well.

As a highly regulated space, the modern museum of the 18th and 19th centuries offered a model of surveillance that Bennett argues served to discipline bodies both inside and outside of this space. While largely influenced by Foucauldian notions of power through surveillance, Bennett (1988; 1995) proposes the exhibitionary complex as a combination of the principles of the panopticon with those of the panorama: citizens made visible both to others and to themselves.¹⁷⁴ The space of the museum is one that not only exhibited objects but also became a place in which visitors had to act in an orderly manner under the scrutinising eyes of their fellow museumgoers.

¹⁷⁴ Paul Rabinow (2003[1983]:355) regards the organisation of space as “the points at which discourses are transformed in, through and on the basis of power”. Paul Hirst (2004:384) has similarly illustrated “how discourses enter into construction and how in consequence buildings or planned environments become *statements*”, while Michel Foucault (1975) speaks of spatial relations as “the material crystallization of all the rules” (cited in Mills 2003:50).

The exhibitionary complex thus refers to the mutual surveillance of all who entered the museum space and thus serves to “render the forces and principles of order visible to the populace” (Bennett 1995:62). Rather than being in the hands of the state, the power to survey, to order, and to classify is granted to citizens in an everyday capacity – as every individual is constantly both subjected to power while exerting their power on others (Bennett 1988:57).

By learning the patterns of behaviour required by the museum, such visitation thereby offered the ultimate form of self-regulation as extended to outside of this space as well as inside it. In daily life, the crowd “regulate[d] itself through interiorizing the ideal and ordered view of itself as seen from the controlling vision of power – a sight accessible to all” (Bennett 1995:69). Functioning as a “disciplinary apparatus”, museums may thus be understood to “shape both knowledge and bodies” (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:189).¹⁷⁵

Mitchell (2004[1988]:443) makes an argument for what he refers to as the world-as-exhibition – “the world itself being ordered up as an endless exhibition” offering a replication of the “unprecedented effect of order and certainty” as found in the museum. In this regard Mitchell’s (2004[1988]:448) world-as-exhibition does not mean “an exhibition of the world” but rather refers to a “world organized and grasped as though it were an exhibition”. The world-as-exhibition thus speaks to the museum logic (organisation through classification) applied to the outside world. For Mitchell (2004[1988]:445) this entails the transference of ‘objectness’ (or “rendering things up as object”) from the museum space to the outside world where curiosity and observation allows for identification and categorisation. It offers an ordered world, a world free from ambiguity, and it is within this order that one finds its “political decidedness” (Mitchell 2004[1988]:454). There is an air of certainty that accompanies neatly organised representations and it is an air of certainty that similarly transfers to a lived reality once the museum logic is applied.

¹⁷⁵ Unlike the Foucauldian notion of power based on the Panopticon, Bennett’s exhibitionary complex renders power permanently on display. The ideal was to “allow the people to know and thence to regulate themselves; to become, in seeing themselves from the side of power” (Bennett 1988:76). In this space the populace was thus rendered visible to itself (Bennett 1988:81). Thus, in the museum space, Bennett (1988:76) argues, the populace became “both the subjects and the objects of knowledge”, knowing power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by power, interiorizing its gaze as a principle of self-surveillance and, hence, self-regulation”. Bennett’s (1995) exhibitionary complex offers more than mere Foucauldian surveillance in that it produces “a more complex and nuanced set of relations” (Bennett 1995:61).

The museum display may thus be understood to inspire a particular gaze that could be “turned to the streets” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991:410). The application of the museum logic outside the museum renders everything “an exhibit of itself” (Riegel 1996:84). In this regard the world could be experienced as an extension of the exhibit – a world classified and ordered as “a system of definition and control” (Riegel 1996:84-85). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991:410) refers to this as the ‘museum effect’ – the moment the museum gaze (one that encompasses a logic of typology, classification and categorisation) “bleed[s] into the ubiquity of the common-sense world”. Through the museum effect, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991:410) argues, “calibrations of difference become finer”. The museum experience thus provides the “power to name, define, classify and re-present” (Riegel 1996:85) – the transference of the museum logic to a lived reality. It provides “a model for looking” and has the propensity to transform the streets “into a series of ethnographic Others to be viewed and examined as exhibits” (Riegel 1996:86).

The logic of the ethnology museum may thus be understood as offering a form of both education and discipline that is two-fold: on the one hand guiding the behaviour of citizens (both inside and outside its walls) while simultaneously shaping a way of looking at society at large through an expository lens. As Pierre Bourdieu (1984:482) argues with regards to the power struggle between social groups: “[t]he classifying subjects who classify the properties and practices of others, or their own, are also classifiable objects which classify themselves (in the eyes of others)”. Becoming both the subject of a gaze that seeks to order and classify, as well as the object of the gaze of others, social reality outside the institutional space of the museum is thus imbued with the same patterns of behaviour and logic of looking that this space fosters.

While the Population Registration Act and many other acts employed according to racial designation in South African society had been enforced, common understandings of race allowed for individuals to both enact the power of racial classification while simultaneously being subjected to this same classificatory gaze – one that had real and material consequences. Here the (mutual) act of identifying the racial self and other was imbued with a power that dictated legislated racial as well as geographical boundaries.

At Stellenbosch University the hair, skin and eye colour tables had initially been used to provide evidence for existing narratives of racial science. But the objects also offered a perpetuation of a particular racial discourse: the existence of separate racial categories with inherent and

measurable differences. This represented the ultimate tautology: to create (with the support of ‘science’) what social scientists claimed was there from the beginning.¹⁷⁶ By the time the instruments acquired their status as historical and almost artefactual objects in Stellenbosch University's Ethnology Museum, the discourses and ideology they had perpetuated during the first half of the 20th century had materialised in the geo-political structures of Stellenbosch.

Categorisation in Practice: Forced Removals in Stellenbosch

In their writings on the socio-spatial consequences of racism, Owen Dwyer and John Paul Jones (2000:213) speak to how social positioning occurs along the “strict social binaries” of self and other, and spatially materialises in terms of centre and periphery. By drawing on a particular understanding of ‘distance’ as employed by American novelist James Baldwin, Dwyer and Jones argue that both status and space become “hierarchically ordered” (cited in Dwyer & Jones 2000:213).

In apartheid South Africa, racialised hierarchies also had a spatial implication and an implication for racial proximity, as notions of self and other became imbedded in delineations of ‘here’ and ‘there’. As Robert Chia (2000:513) argues: “[i]t is through this process of differentiating, fixing, naming, labelling, classifying and relating [...] that social reality is systematically constructed”. And in Stellenbosch (as in the rest of the country) the visceral result of classification was not only social division but spatial stratification as well.

The Group Areas Act was introduced in 1950. The Act was employed, according to the Minister of the Interior, T. E. Dönges, as “one of the major measures designed to preserve White South Africa” (cited in Christopher 1994:105). Based on a system of racial classification in accordance with the Population Registration Act, urban spatial segregation was employed to reduce social contact between the various racial groups – to keep contact to an absolute minimum (Christopher 1994:105). These debates drew strongly on D. F. Malan’s argument for a firm separation of white and coloured in the 1930s. According to Malan it was not a matter of coloureds being ‘uneducated’ or ‘uncivilised’, nor was it that contact between the two groups would result in

¹⁷⁶ This point is similarly argued by Jensen (2008) in relation to the coloured category in South Africa.

conflict. Rather, the danger lay in the growing acceptance of coloureds by whites of the lower classes (Giliomee 2007:194-195).

In following the debates that ensued with regards to the application of the Group Areas Act to those designated as coloured, Hermann Giliomee (2007:194) postulates that the problem urban segregation sought to address was thus not speaking to supposed ‘misconduct’ on the part of coloureds in mixed neighbourhoods, but was rather concerned with whites and coloureds getting along too well (Giliomee 2007:194). The concern was once again miscegenation. In these settings coloureds were able to pass for white – a claim that drew on the fears uttered by George Findlay in 1936. Social separation and spatial segregation were thus initially employed to create distance between coloured and white South Africans in an attempt to put an end to racial intermixing and ensure racial purity.

While the Group Areas Act was introduced in 1950 by the central government, its roll-out in municipal areas was often slow to take effect. Financial sanctions were often effectively used by the government to pressure municipalities into compliance (Christopher 1994:116). The results of these endeavours materialised and became increasingly visible in the 1960s and 1970s with large-scale forced removals followed by the relocation of residents to the peripheries of towns and the demolition of abandoned urban areas (Christopher 1994:116).

In the Cape Province, District Six became the most famous example of the ruinous effects of forced removals. Here it was particularly those classified as cape coloured (including the cape malay) who bore the brunt of these removals in the city of Cape Town. While the most well-known occasion of forced removals affecting coloureds, this instance is but one example where the coloured population “had undergone an exceptional transformation” (Christopher 1994:129-130).

In Stellenbosch the Group Areas Act first materialised in 1956 when 12 coloured families were evicted near the centre of town to clear space for the new Magistrate’s court and offices (Giliomee 2003:198). Further steps taken under the auspices of the Act were the legal obligation of whites to sell any property that happened to be situated in an area designated for coloureds, while coloureds were similarly obliged to sell any property situated in an area designated for

whites (Giliomee 2007:197). By 1960 these regulations had started to affect the overall landscape of home-ownership in Stellenbosch.

On 25 September 1964 *Die Vlakte*, a mixed race neighbourhood in Stellenbosch with predominantly coloured occupants, was proclaimed a white area. The area stretched along Merriman Avenue to the corners of Muller Street, Ryneveld Street, Banhoek Road, Smuts Street and Bird Street (Grundlingh n.d. [online]). Less than a week after this announcement, Stellenbosch municipality initiated the process of forced removals in this area.

In 1966 it was reported that a state committee had been appointed to assist the Stellenbosch town council with this process of 'slum clearance' as well as the subsequent planning and redevelopment of the area surrounding Merriman Avenue (*Eikestadnuus* 1966:6). In fact, after the announcement was made that this area would be reserved for white occupants in 1964, forced removals occurred with such rapidity that the Stellenbosch town council was obligated to approve *Noodkamp* (emergency camp) 1 and 2 to house those who had been affected by the latest implementation of the Group Areas Act (*Eikestadnuus* 1969b:3). The two emergency camps were intended as a temporary transitional space for coloured residents who were awaiting the completion of built housing in Idas Valley and Cloeteville – both still in an incomplete phase of development at the time.

The development of these new coloured neighbourhoods was advertised in the local newspaper (*Eikestadnuus*) as a means to advance the development of coloured enclaves in the town. While described as confined spaces where housing was provided, business could be conducted, and recreational activities could be pursued, these developing areas were founded and funded in an effort to limit inter-racial contact and simultaneously enforce the separateness of the coloured race.

Available commercial plots in Idas Valley were advertised in June 1967, and six months thereafter (in January 1968) a tender notice for the construction of coloured housing (488 sub-economic dwellings and 144 economic dwellings in total) appeared in the local newspaper. In the same year it was reported that the development of Cloeteville had come to a complete standstill after a tender fell through (*Eikestadnuus* 1968b:1). Meanwhile the roughly 500 forcibly removed coloured civilians remained in the emergency camps or *noodkampe* – halfway between

their home and their eventual destination. Here these individuals had to make do with informal dwellings (shacks) for houses and two communal taps to share between all who lived there (*Eikestadnuus* 1968a:7).

A local resident by the name of Paul Edmunds brought the “hardships, [and] the minimal facilities available to these people” to the attention of the town council as well as the readers of the local newspaper, *Eikestadnuus*. Edmunds further highlighted “the Municipality’s refusal to help [these residents] move” (*Eikestadnuus* 1968a:7). Towards 1969 a total of 48 families had been forcefully removed from their homes in Merriman Avenue. Hundreds of families were eventually relocated (Giliomee 2007:203). By the end of it all about 3700 people, racially designated as coloured, were affected by the proclamation of *Die Vlakte* as a white area.¹⁷⁷

The coloured community found itself at the mercy of both the apartheid state as well as their local town council. When Edmunds highlighted the hardships of those who had been forcefully removed from *Die Vlakte* in a letter to the local newspaper, he provided important commentary related to the developing situation in broader South Africa. Edmunds concluded: “[i]t seems to me that there are so many who have so much and there are so many with so little” (*Eikestadnuus* 1968a:7). Visible inequalities were starting to manifest along racial lines not only in terms of material belongings and access to resources, but more importantly, in terms of power.

The slow development of Idas Valley and Cloetesville was contrasted by the rapid development in the center of town in the wake of forced removals. In preparation for its new white occupants *Die Vlakte* became the site of demolition, restoration and renovation. The infrastructural development of Stellenbosch University (the institution that had contributed in its own way to the construction of an identifiable coloured population during the 1930s) benefited in part from the forced removals. In June 1969 the architectural representation of the new Education building (G. G. Cillié building) to be constructed on the corner of Ryneveld and Crozier street graced the pages of the local newspaper.¹⁷⁸ By 1978 the construction of the new Arts and Social Sciences

¹⁷⁷ The attempts to rid the centre of town of its coloured residents was seemingly so pressing that those who still occupied houses in *Die Vlakte* by August 1969 were given priority (above those still stuck in the emergency camps) for housing in Cloetesville (*Eikestadnuus* 1969a:1). The housing crisis in Cloetesville would last well into the 1970s.

¹⁷⁸ Construction of this building was completed in 1970.

building (first named after B. J. Vorster, Prime Minister to the country from 1966 to 1978) began on the corner of Ryneveld Street and Merriman Avenue.

In the wake of these developments, the predominantly coloured population who had once been located on *Die Vlakte* had been successfully moved to the outskirts of town. In keeping with their racial designation, the very location of coloured residents in Stellenbosch was thus determined by a white-governed state. Through the act of classification it was possible for this group of people to not only be racially categorised but spatially ordered as well.

In South Africa the world outside the museum had thus begun to resemble the logic of the museum exhibition: people coded and classified, and dioramas of sorts emerging through racially demarcated group areas and separate amenities. The engagements of the previous decade by social scientists, built on the knowledge produced by physical anthropologists in the decades prior, had real and visceral effects in everyday life. Discourse had materialised in the physical structures of apartheid South Africa. It is worth reiterating Foucault (1975) when speaking of spatial relations: it represented “the material crystallization of all the rules” (cited in Mills 2003:50).

In transferring the exhibitionary complex to apartheid South Africa (and thus locating the mutual gaze within the museum onto the streets) requires us to consider the role of racial categories as both applied and internalised by an entire population. Within the exhibitionary complex power is understood not to cause pain, but to “co-ordinate an order of things and to produce a place for the people in relation to that order” (Bennett 1988:80). It thus affords the populace a place within the inner workings of power as both subjects *to* and objects *of* – allowing them to be “inveigled into complicity with [power] rather than cowed into submission before it” (Bennett 1988:80). The application and enactment of racial categories in South Africa (both past and present) thus appear to have functioned according to this mutual gaze – being watched with a classificatory eye while watching others with similar intent. Like the visitors to the 1901 Pan-American Exposition, the citizens of South Africa were instructed: “[p]lease remember when you get inside the gates you are part of the show” (cited in Bennett 1988:81).

Through the continued implementation of racial categories and racialised laws, race materialised in the everyday structures of South Africa. While Geoff King (1996:43) claims that “[a]ll

classificatory grids are arbitrary”, he adds that these same grids can over time be viewed as “absolute or necessary” or simply as “reality”. In this regard King (1996:43) argues that “[t]o those born into them [classificatory grids] tend to appear as natural”. Thus, while the racialised structures of apartheid were based on a manufactured classificatory system, the consequences thereof were anything but arbitrary. Indeed, they had inescapable material effects.

By 1970 the South African national census indicated that residential racial segregation in the major cities all across the country had neared completion. By the mid-1980s the apartheid state “had achieved virtually total segregation in residential patterns in most South African cities” (Christopher 1994:131). An estimate 3.5 million people were relocated between 1960 and 1983 under the auspices of the Group Areas Act (Worden 1994:111). By the time political negotiations for a new democratic South Africa started in the early 1990s “few urban dwellers had lived in racially and ethnically integrated conditions” offering a particular challenge for the dismantling of apartheid and its legislated racial categories (Christopher 1994:131-132). The materialisation of apartheid discourse in the construction of cities and towns, as well as the territorial ‘mappings’ offered by apartheid legislation, became largely accepted as “the way things are” (King 1996:43). Through a prolonged discourse of racial difference and hierarchy in this country, the a ‘museum logic’ of classification and differentiation became an inherent (and commonsense) part of the lives of all South Africans

Conclusion

Although Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Von Luschan’s skin colour table and the anatomically prepared human skull were minimally employed for teaching purposes after they had been acquired by Stellenbosch University’s Ethnology Museum, the world outside this space was increasingly shaped by race knowledge – race knowledge that had once been shaped by these very objects. In 1984 a request was communicated to the university to move the Ethnology Museum to the Eben Dönges Centre – named after the Minister of Interior who oversaw the implementation of the Population Registration Act of 1950 and a host of other

apartheid laws that were to follow during the 1950s.¹⁷⁹ After 1984, students enrolled in the *Volkekunde* Department were no longer introduced to the objects.

No longer employed for teaching, the eye, hair, and skin colour tables along with the skull became viewed as little more than “relics from a bygone anthropological era” (Steyn & Botha 2013). The objects had finally disappeared from scientific discourse and anthropological teachings. And with the transfer of the collection to the Eben Dönges Centre, they were finally relegated to a storeroom. Yet despite their progressive disappearance (first from applied studies of human measurement, then academic discourse, and finally from academic teaching) these objects had nonetheless contributed to a racialised landscape outside of the academic institution in which they had originally functioned. In the museum, these objects remained “living things” (Tompkins 1992:533) that, even when no longer in use, continued to linger in the legal, administrative, and social acts of racial classification. Outside of the museum, on the streets, the South African population had been thoroughly racialised – each individual intimately familiar with the power of racial classification both as classifier and as classified.

¹⁷⁹ The museum was renamed in 2015 to the Stellenbosch University Museum.

PART IV

The Objects Re-emerge: From Dormant Objects to Vibrant Matter

The apartheid state slowly showed signs of decay during the 1980s. The decade saw the end of the coloured labour preference policy and from 1984 onwards ushered in the “relaxation of pass controls” (Worden 1994:126). These shifts were particularly noted in Cape Town where the shack dwellings of ‘illegal’ occupants in the informal settlements near the city were no longer simply destroyed by the state. These ‘squatter camps’, along with the number of migrant black africans in the Cape area, were allowed to expand unabated – permitting black africans to settle and stay in the region (Worden 1994:126).

But while the grip of apartheid governance showed signs of slippage, the act of racial classification coupled with the underlying beliefs and assumptions about the racial other remained intact. The social and material structures generated by the apartheid state – structures that contributed to racial distance in the form of separate neighbourhoods and separate amenities – similarly continued unabated even in the face of legislative decay. While the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act, and other forms apartheid legislation were repealed in 1991, the first twenty years after South Africa’s first democratic elections in 1994 are a testament to the fact that the negotiations for a racially equal country and a power-shared government did little more than secure a vote for the previously disenfranchised.

In 2013 it was clear that 19 years of a post-apartheid South Africa had done little to disrupt the underlying structures of apartheid. Today, national statistics still reveal discrepancies in access to health, education and a stable income along lines of race; while on a social level coloured people, specifically in the Western Cape, continue to be plagued by “general processes of social exclusion based on derogatory stereotypes” (Jensen 2008:11). As an Afrikaans-medium institution whose past is deeply embroiled with apartheid rhetoric, the post-apartheid period has similarly brought new challenges for Stellenbosch University.

In March 2000 Stellenbosch University released *A Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond*, a document that is still pursued as a guideline for institutional transformation in 2017. In this document the University was said to:

commit itself to an open, broad process of self-scrutiny and self-renewal. This process involves, not just the making of projections, but a serious and critical reassessment of the University's institutional character (Stellenbosch University 2000:7).

The University further “acknowledge[d] its contribution to the injustices of the past, and therefore commit[ted] itself to appropriate redress and development initiatives” (Stellenbosch University 2000:16).

The apartheid government was transformed into a democratic government in 1994, a new all-inclusive constitution was written in 1996, and a Stellenbosch University document that acknowledged past injustices and the pursuit of a ‘critical reassessment’ of the institution was released in 2000 – promising a bright future for every South African. In this new chapter of Stellenbosch University, as well as the country as a whole, there was seemingly no place for Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Von Luschan’s skin colour table, and an anatomically prepared human skull. These objects, and their relation to racial categorisation, had long been forgotten – that is until February 2013.

CHAPTER 8

The Return of the Repressed

The subject of the ‘uncanny’ ... is undoubtedly related to what is frightening, to what arouses dread and horror – Sigmund Freud (1955[1919]:219)

“I have items, locked away in my office, that might be the ‘instruments’ you are referring to”, read the email I received from the director of the University Museum (then Eben Dönges Center) in February 2013. Within an hour of reading the email I was sitting at a round table in Dr Lydia de Waal’s office while a collection of objects slowly and systematically emerged from a cardboard box and were laid out on the table in front of me. The experience undeniably revealed “the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle” (Bennett 2010:6). Jane Bennett (2010) encapsulates this provocative nature of objects with her notion of ‘thing-power’ – when the object becomes ‘other’; when it transcends semiotics; when it speaks; when it stares back. And here I sat staring at: a bruised and battered metal tin with a sliding lid revealing 16 glass eyes; a shiny silver casing containing 30 synthetic hair samples – reflecting my own stare upon opening and closing it; and a tissue paper silhouette of a human skull. I had never seen Martin’s eye colour table and Fischer’s hair colour and texture table before in my life, not even in pictures. Although I knew nothing about the historical uses of these objects, I experienced an instantaneous recognition of them. These objects struck me with a sense of unease.

Confronting the instruments evoked what Sigmund Freud would refer to as the uncanny (*unheimlich*). While the uncanny can be related to that which arouses “dread and creeping horror” (Freud 1955 [1919]) or evoke a sense of uncertainty, Freud (1955 [1919]:12-13) conceptualises the uncanny as “something familiar and old” – something “established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression”. It speaks to a “not-quite-there-ness” that is sensed in the experience – “unfamiliar and unsettling” (Holloway & Kneale 2008:306), yet “known of old and long familiar” (Matless 2013:450). Simply said, the uncanny encapsulates the return of the repressed – something unknown that triggers a strange recognition.

My own hair colour and texture, my own eye colour, my own skull. In South Africa these partial characteristics carry my racial designation: the category I indicate whenever I complete an application for my Identity Document (ID), for my driver's license, to apply for a job and to apply for any degree at Stellenbosch University. Ticking boxes to identify with a racial category has become an all too familiar action – a habitual part of daily life.

By the time the objects were revealed to me in February 2013, they had been in the cupboard of the museum director's office for close to a decade. They had been retired as teaching aids in 1984 – almost 30 years before my encounter with them. They had become useless, even as museum objects, seemingly unfit for public exhibition.

I had located them, these “instruments for the measurement of human samples” as requested in my email. And then, before I could become accustomed to the sight of them, the objects were placed back in their box and the four flaps of brown cardboard were neatly entangled again – forming a lid and showing little sign of what lay beneath. “I have been meaning to return this to your department”, the director said. While my initial reaction was a refusal to take them, a sudden change of heart was prompted by the fear that should I walk away now I might never see these objects again. They had grabbed hold of me. And I, in turn, knew I had to grab hold of them.

Several minutes later a security guard held the door for me as I left the museum with the cardboard box in my arms, and made my way down Ryneveld Street to the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology – a mere 300 meters away. The objects, once confined to a cupboard, had in that moment been sent back into the world.

Introduction

Erica Lehrer and Cynthia Milton (2011:1) pose the question: “[w]hat happens when the invisible is made visible, when knowledge relegated to society's margins [...] is suddenly inserted into the public domain?”. A similar question emerges in relation to Fischer's hair colour and texture table, Martin's eye colour table and an anatomically prepared human skull wrapped in tissue paper. The ‘discovery’ of the objects became public information on 25 April 2013 when a number of media outlets featured the story. But it was in *Die Burger*, a daily Afrikaans-language newspaper distributed in the Western Cape, where the objects evoked the greatest response.

This chapter traces the official response by Stellenbosch University as well as responses from alumni in the Afrikaans press and beyond. It interrogates, or attempts to unpack, the salience of these objects – remnants of physical anthropology – in a broader social context of post-apartheid South Africa. At Stellenbosch the re-emergence of these objects set in motion a broader discourse related to racial classification and the apartheid state, as well as the historical and contemporary part played by Stellenbosch University in these debates.

As a collection these objects may have been fascinating but they were similarly deemed threatening and dangerous to social anthropology's post-World War II identity. The re-emergence of these objects urged a disciplinary reflection at Stellenbosch University. In this chapter the reaction(s) to these objects are analysed in relation to Mary Douglas's (2002 [1966]) classic text on dirt and pollution. Deemed "matter out of place" (what Douglas defines as 'dirt') these objects seemingly posed a threat to a disciplinary order as well as the newly pursued institutional identity of Stellenbosch University as linked to its transformation agenda. This threat to order was met with a rejection of these objects and their relation to a history of racial science. The chapter thus incorporates Julia Kristeva's (1982) notion of abjection, a process brought forth by "a massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness", that sees a violent 'casting out' of unwanted matter. In engaging discussions surrounding the eye and hair colour tables the notion of abjection is used to illustrate how these (dirty and polluted) objects were transformed into the site of the abject – violently cast out in an attempt to restore order.

A Contentious History

The discipline of anthropology has been fraught with confronting a global disciplinary past that offers a "contradictory heritage" – being both "a discipline that once nurtured 'scientific racism'", providing "a rationale for slavery, colonialism, segregation, and eugenics", while harbouring "a significant antiracist tradition" in the aftermath of World War II and beyond (Mullings 2005:669). A general period of disciplinary reflection was particularly set in motion in the 1960s – a moment coinciding with the decolonisation of Africa, Indo-China, and South America. Here the dominant paradigms of the discipline were questioned specifically in relation

to this discipline's relationship with a colonial past that had propelled a racist logic of scientific classification and political disenfranchisement.¹⁸⁰

The inherent power structures embedded in anthropological fieldwork had, for a long time, evaded any form of questioning and reflexivity, and had thus remained a central component to this discipline. Anthropology was “an unequal power encounter between the West and Third World” (Asad 1973:16) that simultaneously provided a fountain of information about the societies that were or would be dominated by western powers.

Talal Asad produced a landmark text contributing to an ensuing paradigm shift occurring within the discipline of anthropology. In *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, Asad (1973:17) questioned the relationship between anthropological knowledge and European domination, urging his readers to reflect on “how this relationship ha[d] effected the practical pre-conditions of social anthropology” and to simultaneously reflect on “the uses to which [anthropological] knowledge was put”. In this regard Asad (1973:17) asserts that anthropology “contributed, sometimes indirectly, towards maintaining the structure of power represented by the colonial system”. Yet, Asad (1973:18) similarly warned against notions of anthropology as “primarily an aid to colonial administration, or as the simple reflection of colonial ideology”. Through the functionalism that emerged in the work of Bronislaw Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, along with the culturalism that emerged in the work of Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber, the discipline had moved away from, and in many ways rejected, its racialised origins (Fox 2002:786).

A case in point is the disciplinary reaction to the pursuit of human sociobiology, particularly during the 1970s. Sociobiology, or human ethology as it is otherwise known, is defined as “the systematic study of the biological basis of human social behavior” (Strickland 2002:104). Publications such as Desmond Morris's *The Naked Ape* (1967), Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox's *The Imperial Animal* (1971), Edward Wilson's *Sociobiology* (1975), and Robin Fox's *Biosocial Anthropology* (1975) captured the essence of this new application of animal behaviour and

¹⁸⁰ In fact, the discipline's roots are to be found “at the beginning of the colonial era” and it flourished by its closing (Asad 1973:14).

genetic studies to humans (Fox 2002:786).¹⁸¹ These studies stemmed from a (controversial) marriage between zoology and anthropology after World War II (Fox 2002:787). In his work Wilson used anthropological data to locate human ‘cultural’ attributes in genetic strains. In this way sexual selection, political organisation, aggression and human warfare, as well as male and female hierarchies (to name but a few) were attributed to an inherent genetic basis. The approach thus postulated that “in order to understand what people are up to and how societies work, one ha[d] to see their activities in the light of the ‘hardware’ of their genetic apparatus” (Eriksen & Nielsen 2001:124).

In the 1970s sociobiology was met with resistance by social anthropologists who saw in it the return of biological determinism reminiscent of pre-World War II theories bent on postulating “correlations between racial, cultural and mental variation” (Strickland 2002:104). The highly controversial topic evoked responses from influential American anthropologist Marvin Harris and Marshall Sahlins who dismissed the claims made by sociobiologists as “biological reductionism” (Barnard 2000:43). Sociobiology was deemed to revert the discipline back to the early 20th century, before a young Boas had proved that even skull size was influenced by the environment as opposed to being dictated purely by genetic coding.¹⁸²

While the sociobiological approach to human behaviour is said to have been “academically lightweight” and to have “caused less anxiety than irritation among professionals” (Eriksen & Nielsen 2001:132), there nonetheless emerged a strong reaction from social anthropologists who refused to be associated with anything resembling turn of the century biological theories of race.

¹⁸¹ A similar movement manifested in South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s where Afrikaans-speaking academics “argued in favour of a biological basis for culture” (Dubow 2015:236). Geneticist J. D. J. Hofmeyr and *volkekundige* P. J. (Pieter) Coertze formed part of this movement. Coertze “was more or less convinced that there is a connection, in a genetic sense, between race and ethno-cultural life” (Dubow 2015:259). Dubow (2015:237) argues that this period of high apartheid was thus marked by “a resurgence or a new sub-traction of explicit hyper-racism”.

¹⁸² Boas conducted anthropometric studies of immigrants in the United States between 1908 and 1910. Through these results Boas argued that “long headed immigrants to the [...] tend to change their head-shape within a period of about ten years” (Penniman 1952[1935]:285). Based on this finding Boas argued that environmental influences (such as nutrition or illness) can affect the shape of the skull – the shape that had been previously considered inherent to an individual’s biological make-up. At the time, his argument was not generally accepted within the realms of anthropological theory in the United States.

This push-back with regards to sociobiological theories by anthropologist is an important example of the radical rejection of the roots of their discipline. The emergence of sociobiology brought with it the re-emergence of a ‘polluted’ past that individuals operating within this field had long rejected. Deterministic notions surrounding race were deemed unacceptable and out of place by social anthropologists – very few wanted to be associated with this area of study.

According to Douglas (2002 [1966]) we attribute the status of dirt to that which is deemed “matter out of place”. Drawing on this definition of dirt, Douglas (2002 [1966]:44) further deems it “a by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements”. As a scientific theory out of place, sociobiology was arguably condemned because it propagated ideas that “confuse[d] or contradict[ed] cherished” (Douglas 2002 [1966]:45) understandings of contemporary anthropology – namely that race was *not* rooted in biology.¹⁸³

The Story Begins: A Disciplinary Reflection

In 2013 I arrived at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology with the cardboard box cradled in my arms. Knowingly interrupting a meeting I knocked on the door of Professor C. S. (Kees) van der Waal. This was important. I informed him that I had just collected the box, containing items that used to be part of the *volkekunde* collection, from the University Museum. I requested a moment to discuss the event as soon as possible. When the urgency of the matter did not quite translate, I simply blurted out: “There’s a skull in the box”. With a hand flying up to his forehead and a gentle turn away from the door and towards the window Van der Waal reacted: “*Ag nee, net nie dit ook nog nie*” (“O no, not this as well”).

The *Volkekunde* Department at Stellenbosch University was introduced “to keep up with the trends of the time and the interest of the *volk*” (Thom et al 1966:80, own translation). While founded in 1926 as the Ethnology Department, by the 1930s it was known under its new name – the Department of *Volkekunde*.

¹⁸³ In this interpretation of Douglas’s (2002 [1966]:45) the upsurge of antagonism against sociobiology can be viewed as “pollution behavior” in that it threatened established understandings of contemporary social anthropology.

Previous studies on *Volkekunde* (Coertze 1991; Gordon 1988; Gordon & Spiegel 1993; Hammond-Tooke 1997; Schmidt 1996; Sharp 1980, 1981) have focused mainly on this discipline's historical development, its involvement with national politics, and its attempted influence on South African segregationist policies. As an 'afrikaner' brand of anthropology, *volkekunde* has generally been portrayed as radically different from the social anthropology that was being taught at English-medium universities at the time. The introduction of *volkekunde* at Stellenbosch, and later other Afrikaans-medium universities across the country, is thus largely viewed as bringing forth a split in South African anthropology: between the more 'liberal' anthropology and the more 'conservative' *volkekunde* (Hammond-Tooke 1997:60). George Stocking (1995:325-326) argues that anthropologists at English-medium universities in South Africa preferred to keep politics 'at arms-length' while *volkekunde* often embraced political involvement. Another prominent difference was *volkekunde*'s supposed pre-occupation with race (Hammond-Tooke 1997:61) and its emphasis on eugenics (Dubow 1995:227). Andrew Bank's (2015a) recent work outlining the racial disposition of W. W. M. Eiselen, the first head of the Ethnology (later *Volkekunde*) Department at Stellenbosch University, corresponds with this thoroughly racialised conceptualisation of the formative years of *volkekunde*.¹⁸⁴

A brief historical account of the discipline of *volkekunde* at Stellenbosch University speaks of changing conceptualisations of humans over time. Key terminology within documents produced by the lecturers of *volkekunde* at the university during the 1930s and 1940s, and even up to the late 1950s, generally spoke of race as a natural occurrence marked by bodily difference,¹⁸⁵ of racial clashes (the contact theory),¹⁸⁶ of racial mixture (or the bastardisation of the white race),¹⁸⁷ of the civilised/uncivilised divide,¹⁸⁸ and of progress along evolutionary lines (socially, economically, and politically).¹⁸⁹ However, the extent to which race featured as a central concept

¹⁸⁴ During these formative years modules such as 'Introduction to Human Heredity' as well as 'Racial Hygiene' were offered in the *Volkekunde* Department at Stellenbosch University. The inclusion of these modules, the themes of which spoke to the eugenic climate of the 1920s, can be cited as supported for Hammond-Tooke's (1997) claim.

¹⁸⁵ See Schoeman, van Eeden and Olivier (c.1942); Coertze, Language and van Eeden (1944); Eiselen (1950); and Coertze 1959.

¹⁸⁶ See Schoeman, van Eeden and Olivier (c.1942); Coertze, Language and van Eeden (1944); and Coertze 1959.

¹⁸⁷ See Coertze, Language and van Eeden (1944); and Schoeman, van Eeden and Olivier (c.1942).

¹⁸⁸ See Coertze, Language and van Eeden (1944); Eiselen (1950); and Language (1950).

¹⁸⁹ See Schoeman, van Eeden and Olivier (c.1942); Coertze, Language and van Eeden (1944); Eiselen (1950); and Coertze 1959.

within *volkekunde* remains contested. This is particularly the case for the post-World War II period when, according to John Sharp (1980:25), a reformulation and *re*-articulation of the race concept in relation to notions of ethnicity and culture in South Africa was required.

The development of the ethnos theory,¹⁹⁰ that surfaced in the 1950s and 1960s (Gordon 1988:549), may be evidence of such a shift within *volkekunde*. The construction of the human, in *volkekunde* terms, had entered the murky waters of the racial/cultural fusion, where it became increasingly hard to distinguish one from the other.¹⁹¹

In the mid-1960s, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, Martin's eye colour table, and Von Luschan's skin colour table along with an anatomically prepared human skull were acquired by Stellenbosch University's Ethnology Museum. The "particulars of how [they were acquired], who [they initially belonged to], where [they came from] and when [they arrived in the *Volkekunde* Department]" (Steyn & Botha 2013, own translation) remains unknown to previous lecturers who taught in the department between 1970 and 1997.¹⁹² What is known, is that once the objects had been acquired by the *Volkekunde* Department, they were employed during a first year lecture to "explain the anatomy of the skull and skull index and to illustrate biological diversity" until 1984 (Steyn & Botha 2013). The university's annual calendar reveals that the *Volkekunde* Department included 'Introduction to the study of physical and cultural anthropology' as part of the first year syllabus from 1937 to 1974. And although this module was seemingly replaced by 'Classifications of the nations of the world' in 1975, this latter course continued to incorporate a dimension of physical anthropology as it included a subsection titled 'Origin, distribution, and the problematics of physical-cultural classification'. While the module

¹⁹⁰ For the definition of the ethnos theory I quote at length from Sharp (1981:19): "Ethnos theory starts with the proposition that mankind is divided into *volke* (nations, peoples) and that each *volk* has its own particular culture, which may change but always remains authentic to the group in question. The entity comprising a group and its culture is an ethnos, which, viewed over time and in relation to its physical and social environment, forms a life-process within which individuals exist. An individual is born into a particular volk; its members are socialized into its attendant culture; therefore they acquire a *volkspersoonlikheid* (a volk-personality)".

¹⁹¹ Essentialist notions of cultures as fixed and bounded systems were closely related to essentialist notions of race (Sharp 1980). I refer the reader to footnote 6 where the inherent connection between race and culture in *volkekunde* is addressed.

¹⁹² Lecturers teaching in the *Volkekunde* Department after 1970 were aware of the fact that these "anthropometric instruments came into the possession of the University of Stellenbosch before 1950" (Steyn & Botha 2013, own translation).

name changed again in 1981, this subsection remained part of *volkekunde*'s teaching syllabus until 1987 – one that likely continued to employ the “anthropometric instruments” as visual aids.

With the formal change of the department name from *Volkekunde* to Anthropology in 1988, the syllabus also appears to have been modified. In particular, the subsection ‘Classification and distribution of the peoples of Africa’, was altered to ‘Composition and distribution of the population of Africa’ in 1993 – a change that saw a move away from ‘classification’ as South Africa entered its political transition. By the end of 1997, the Anthropology Department had ceased to exist.

A decision had been made by the Executive Committee of the University on 14 December 1995 to offer severance packages to the four remaining staff members still working in the Anthropology Department. Historical documents reveal that the phasing out of Anthropology was only brought to the attention of the broader Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences during a meeting on 7 February 1996 – a mere two months later. Here it was reported by the dean that severance packages had been offered to the staff of the Anthropology Department as part of a university-wide “programme of ‘rationalization and staff reduction’” (Steyn & Botha 2013, own translation). Three of the four staff members accepted these severance packages – thereby irreparably compromising the structure of the department.

On 21 February 1996 the head of the Sociology Department proposed that anthropology should be allowed to continue as a subject and incorporated into his department. The dean had namely reported that “the discipline of anthropology could not be continued in its **current** form” (Faculty Meeting 1996), and a plea for the continuance of anthropology by members of the Faculty had urged the dean to investigate the necessary steps for the continuance of this discipline (albeit not in its previous form) (Faculty Meeting 1996). In addition to the proposed incorporation of anthropology with the Sociology Department, it was further suggested that a senior professor of anthropology be appointed to lead the initiative. This proposal was accepted by the Senate and a position was made available, to be filled by 1 October 1996 “or as soon as possible thereafter” (Senate Meeting 7 June 1996). Professor John Sharp, a South African anthropologist who had received his PhD from Cambridge University in the United Kingdom, was appointed. No lecturer of the previous Anthropology Department was considered for the position.

While the old Anthropology Department was entering its final year of existence in 1997 (its formal closure scheduled for 31 December 1997), the discipline was reintroduced as social anthropology and integrated with the Sociology Department (a few years later renamed to the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology). Sharp, one of the early critics of the existence of two very separate types of anthropology in South Africa and very critical of *volkekunde* as taught at Pretoria University during the 1960s and 1970s under Pieter Coertze (Sharp 1980), was to lead the new initiative.

The reasons for phasing out the Anthropology Department shortly after South Africa's democratic transition in 1994, and the introduction of a 'new' anthropology initiative accommodated in the Sociology Department, coupled with the appointment of new staff, are still debated. The interpretation of Sharp's successor, Van der Waal, was that the old *Volkekunde* Department was closed inter alia due to its 'political baggage' (*Kampusnuus* September 2009). However, Van der Waal's interpretation was vehemently opposed by Louis Botha, a retired lecturer of the previous *Volkekunde*/Anthropology Department. According to Botha (2013), if the image of the *Volkekunde* Department was simply "masquerading" under its new title of Anthropology (since the department's renaming in 1988), it could have possibly been an institutional concern. But, according to Botha, "no oral or written pressure of any kind by any person was exercised on [the lecturers] to leave the service of the university because of perceived political baggage" (Steyn & Botha 2013, own translation). In other words, there was no politically incorrect status to shed. Indeed, during the press conference of April 2013 Johan Hattingh (then dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) attributed the closure of the old *Volkekunde*/Anthropology Department to dwindling student numbers that had rendered it financially unviable during the 1990s.

While *volkekunde* as practiced across South Africa has been broadly portrayed as a discipline driven by nationalist ideologies and practiced in service of the apartheid state (see Gordon 1988; Gordon & Spiegel 1993; Hammond-Tooke 1997; Sharp 1980,1981), individuals who had lectured in the *Volkekunde* Department at Stellenbosch University after 1970 defended their field. Their claims in correspondence to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences were threefold: that a biological notion of race was never deemed important in studying human populations, that the content of the courses was not informed by broader political processes, and that *volkekunde*

at Stellenbosch University was practiced outside of, and separate from, the afrikaner nationalist ideology and apartheid politics – claims that contradicted historical writings on this discipline (see Van der Waal 2015; Hammond-Tooke 1997; Gordon 1988; and Sharp 1981).

A correlation can seemingly be found between social anthropologists who reacted to the claims of sociobiologists in the 1970s and the need for Stellenbosch University to distance itself from its institutional past in the 1990s. With the dismantling and closure of the Anthropology Department, an attempt seems to have been made to wipe the slate clean and start anew – under a different name and with a different syllabus. But the past came back to haunt in 2013 – this time in the form Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and an anatomically prepared human skull.

While the University Museum was willing to part quite easily with the objects in an informal handover (Lydia De Waal framing it as a “return to its formal owners”) these objects were received by anthropology lecturers within the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology with a sense of shock and horror. Indeed, so great an upheaval was caused by the reappearance of these instruments that it prompted the formal procedures of informing the head of the department, the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and eventually the rector of the university.

The reaction to these objects within the university spoke to a general discomfort with these material objects – evidenced by the decision of the university managers to hand over the matter to the institutional risk assessment committee before the ‘discovery’ was made public. While at the time very little knowledge was available about the institutional history of the objects at Stellenbosch University, the inclusion of a human skull, an eye colour table, and a hair colour and texture table developed by well-known Nazi eugenicist Eugen Fischer evoked a sense of unease. Upon the re-emergence of the objects it became clear that they were perceived to be (at the very least) part of a troublesome collection.

At Stellenbosch University the response from both the university as a whole and the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology more specifically was one of disciplinary reflection and damage control. The anthropologists at this institution were forced to confront their discipline’s

heritage. The emergence of Martin's eye colour table, Fischer's hair colour and texture table, and a human skull had compelled a response.

The Study Unfolds: Entering the Zones of Taboo

From February to April 2013 the objects' return and a question of how to publically engage their re-emergence were on the agenda of the risk assessment committee. The inclusion of an "unregistered" and "unlabelled" human skull (Du Toit 2013b) was a particularly troublesome aspect. In the 1990s museums across the world had moved towards "removing human remains from their collections" for repatriation and/or reburial (Museums Association 2017 [online]). The same trend had informed the initial removal of the skull from the *volkekunde* collection in the early 2000s.

On 22 February 2013 the skull was examined by Professor D. F. Du Toit, the former head of the Anatomy and Histology Department at Stellenbosch University's medical school. Du Toit (2013b:1) was able to confirm that the skull had not been "exhumed from a coffin or a grave". It was further found that the skull was embalmed, meaning it had come from a "designated anatomy facility, functioning within the requirements of The Human Tissue Act" (Du Toit 2013b:1). The preparations, referring to the way in which the skull had been cut open coupled with the types of clips used to make it functional for teaching purposes, were reminiscent of skulls prepared by technicians "in the era of Professor Kirsten [...] at the Anatomy Facility, then resident in the D. F. Malan building, Merriman Avenue, Stellenbosch" (Du Toit 2013b:1).

In 1957 the Zoological Institute, an extension of the Zoology Department, had been transformed into the Anatomy Department (Thom et al 1966:111). Prior to this transformation, C. S. Grobbelaar (Stellenbosch University's physical anthropologist and resident in the Zoology Department) had centred his anthropometric studies in this facility. Equipped with a *Meetkamer* (a measurement room) for these purposes (Grobbelaar 1964:iv), the then Zoological Institute hosted Grobbelaar's work from 1943 until he retired in 1956. Upon its transformation into the Anatomy Department two years later, this division "was moved to the D. F. Malan Building" (Grobbelaar 1964:iv) as part of the newly established Medical Faculty. Here Grobbelaar, a man who attached great anthropological value to the study of human skulls – considering it to be "the most important characteristic used to determine type and race-kinship" (Grobbelaar n.d), own

translation) – was accommodated by Professor J. F. van E. Kirsten to continue his studies related to physical anthropology.

While Grobbelaar concluded his work at the Anatomy Department in Stellenbosch in 1964, this department along with the remainder of the Medical Faculty would later move to its new home at the Tygerberg campus in 1975. A collection of Grobbelaar's skulls, coupled with a set of callipers, can still be found in the Medical Morphology Museum located in the Fisan building at the Tygerberg Medical Campus.

The skull located and retrieved from De Waal's cupboard was thus determined after its examination to have once belonged to the Anatomy Department while it was still located on the Stellenbosch campus. It had been “anatomically bi-valved in an approved facility and then cut into quarters and fixed with *brass hinges, special small screws* and with *inter-locking clips*” (Du Toit 2013b:2, original emphasis). According to Du Toit (2013b:1-2) the observed preparation of the skull was “popular for academic study of Anatomy, Osteology and Race in the 60-70s [and] was important at the time for anthropological study”. The skull would have been acquired legally – “originat[ing] from paupers, unclaimed persons and donations within the state provision of the *The Human Tissue Act (Anatomy Act at the time)* of that era and now known as the **Health Act**” (Du Toit 2013b:2). No laws were broken, the past use of the skull as well as its preparation were in line with the context of the time (1960s and 1970s). And yet its re-emergence was highly problematic.

Two months of silence followed after the report on the skull was generated in 2013. Once the threat of possessing illegally obtained human remains had been neutralised and the measuring instruments had been thoroughly assessed by the risk committee, the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology was informed by the university's public relations office that the information would be made public in a press conference. The press conference would provide an opportunity to outline the institution's official response, including a decision by the anthropology lecturers that the recovery of the objects (as well as the questions it posed about the discipline's history at Stellenbosch University) required intensive research. At the press conference the University would announce that a new research project would be launched by the department: *Indexing the Human: From Classification to a Critical Politics of Transformation*. This project sought to use Stellenbosch as a particular locality from which to “think through a range of

problematics concerning the production of knowledge, the techniques of governance and their limits, and the distribution of hope and harm” (Indexing the Human 2015 [online]).¹⁹³

The anthropology lecturers and I were called in for a preparatory meeting by the university's public relations office in which the details for the press conference were discussed. Here we were told to refrain from using the term ‘discover’ when speaking about the events leading up to the re-emergence of Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and the anatomically prepared skull. To have ‘discovered’ these objects would have implied previously ‘hidden’ status. Contrastingly, the hand-over of the objects upon enquiry spoke of institutional transparency. One day after our preparatory meeting we would face the press.

Armed with individual statements and the eye and hair colour tables (human remains excluded) we gathered in a conference room located in the Administration B building (also home to the rector’s office) on 24 April 2013. The vice-rector of research, the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and the four anthropology lecturers along with myself sat at a long table facing the press on the other side of the room. Without having ‘discovered’ anything, I was about to announce my PhD research. By the end of the press conference, and at the request of journalists, I posed for photographs holding Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and Martin’s eye colour table. The ambiguous nature of the objects – an exciting find coupled with a highly sensitive and possibly dubious past – resulted in a notably awkward encounter captured on film.

On the same day the press conference occurred, Stellenbosch University posted a media release on their website: ‘New research project at SU focuses on racism in science’. In the media release it was reported that a student had “stumbled upon a human skull and two hair and eye colour charts among the remnants of the closed down department of Anthropology (*Volkekunde*)”. It was further stated that these objects raised interesting questions about “the paradigm of knowledge production that was used in the defunct Department of Anthropology with regard to racial classification, segregation and related matters” – a quote provided by Professor Johan Hattingh, then dean of the Faculty of Arts.

¹⁹³ The project was eventually funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and hosted seminars aimed at “[p]rovoking a re-thinking of the past and future of social anthropology and of the human sciences more broadly at Stellenbosch University” from August 2014 to September 2015 (Indexing the Human 2015 [online]).

The story broke in the national media on 25 April 2013. ‘Hair-raising ‘Nazi’ discovery at varsity’ appeared on page three of the *Cape Times* with a photograph of Fischer’s hair colour and texture table. In ‘Discovery inspires new research’ (*Vonds inspireer nuwe navorsing*) *Die Burger* reported the “discovery of artefacts” with a focus on Eugen Fischer’s relation to the hair colour and texture table and his relation to Nazism as a leading eugenicist. The article on page 10 was accompanied by photographs of the hair and eye colour tables. While taking heed of the fact that eugenics was a global phenomenon in the early 20th century (becoming politicised by the Nazis only during the 1930s and 1940s), the article reported on the “troubling questions” about the existence and place of these objects at Stellenbosch University.

The *Cape Times* reported the story in a very similar fashion with a few additions. With reference to Eugen Fischer – a “German scientist during the Nazi era” (Gosling 2013:3) – it was reported that these objects had been used globally to “classify people into races”. The objects, as tools for racial classification, were also linked to racial segregation and apartheid in the South African context. Proclaiming the historical “abuse of science” (Gosling 2013:3), Stellenbosch University was thereby immediately implicated as the source of influential academic thought and the translation thereof into apartheid policies.

A variety of online articles were published in the days that followed: *iolNews* published Melanie Gosling’s article as it originally appeared in the *Cape Times*, but this time a photograph of European football fans clinging to a Nazi flag accompanied the article. The *TimesLive*,¹⁹⁴ *University World News*,¹⁹⁵ and *Varsity Breakout*¹⁹⁶ similarly published versions of the story. In the international news, *University World News* (2013) contextualised Stellenbosch University as historically “considered the intellectual heart of *Afrikanerdom* [during the apartheid era]”. Official responses from the university consistently employed a narrative of transformation to juxtapose the Stellenbosch University of the present with that of the past. Attempts to rectify the university’s historical identity had been instated during the new millennium in the form of an institutional transformation agenda. A vision of a more diverse and inclusive Stellenbosch University was central to its narrative.

¹⁹⁴ ‘University of Stellenbosch to research racism in South African science, 26 April 2013.

¹⁹⁵ ‘Dead woman’s skull leads to racism-in-science’, 26 April 2013.

¹⁹⁶ ‘Stellies do research into racism in South African science’, 30 April 2013.

In an attempt to dismantle the local and international press coverage, the late Russel Botman, then rector of Stellenbosch University, was the first to provide a response to initial reports in the media. In ‘The Nazis lie behind us, but what lies ahead?’ (*Die Nazi’s lê agter, maar wat lê voor?*), published in *Rapport* on 28 April 2013, Botman spoke of the re-emergence of these objects as a reminder of an “uncomfortable part of our past”. According to Botman this discovery confirmed the idea that Stellenbosch University had close ties with the National Party and had provided “the intellectual foundation for policies of separate development, segregation and apartheid” (Botman 2013). Drawing on the institutional transformation narrative in an attempt to create an ideological division between past and present (or simply to distance the present institutional ideology from that of the past) Botman (2013) proclaimed: “[w]e have long since left this laager” (own translation).¹⁹⁷

Professor Johan Hattingh, then dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, provided his own take on the objects’ re-appearance in ‘Nazis at Maties?’ (*Nazi’s by Maties?*), published in *Die Burger* on 15 May 2013. Much of the article echoed Botman’s initial response. Using the analogy of a ghost that haunts, Hattingh (2013) claimed that the “aftereffect of the history of apartheid was still with us in many ways” – predominantly through “racial discrimination and racial prejudice”. According to Hattingh (2013), the “tragic misuse of science for morally suspect political ideals” was of particular importance to the university’s inquiry into its past.

Through this initial (as well as official) narrative, the objects themselves were framed as more than dirty remnants of scientific racism said to be indicative of how Stellenbosch University had been contaminated by Nazi ideology. Seemingly polluted by the association with an historical abuse of science (as testified by Fischer’s hair colour and texture table and Martin’s eye colour table), the testimonies of the university’s rector and the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences juxtaposed this ‘tainted’ past with a transforming present (and ideally a transformed future). As a result, discussions posited a notion of ‘now’ and ‘then’, ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘self’ and ‘other’ – those who had employed the objects and those who were now confronted by their (historical) use.

¹⁹⁷ Original text: “*Ons het lankal die laer verlaat*”.

However, such a narrative soon provoked resistance from a past that refused to be othered. Stellenbosch alumni, especially students who had once sat in *volkekunde* lectures during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s made their voices heard in the pages of *Die Burger*. The power of these objects seemingly had an effect on humans (Bennett 2004:348) as a debate unfolded amongst an exclusively white, male, Afrikaans-speaking portion of the readership.

Leopold Scholtz, correspondent for *Die Burger* and Stellenbosch University alumnus, expressed his doubts in response to Botman and Hattingh's articles – declaring the new research project, *Indexing the Human*, to be “the umpteenth attempt to link Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid to Nazism” (Scholtz 2013, own translation).¹⁹⁸ The letters column in *Die Burger* became a podium for similarly aggrieved alumni. Here the proposed research was dismissed as yet another attempt to “brand Afrikaners, Nats [National Party supporters], and the previous builders of the University of Stellenbosch as racists and backward individuals who could not think for themselves” (Coetsee 2013, own translation). It was further interpreted as resembling “a commission of inquiry” rather than academic research (Ellis 2013, own translation), as well as criticised for the “immediate sinister and dastardly connections made with apartheid and politically motivated racial classification” (ibid, own translation).¹⁹⁹ This section of *Die Burger* thus reflected one of the main issues readers had with the proposed research: it once again attempted to demonise the apartheid past and provide an accusatory label to the embodied perpetrators of the apartheid state – specifically white afrikaner males.

In addition to this general resistance, another issue that surfaced was the inability of readers to grasp the need to question racial categories at the most fundamental level. The announcement that the university's new research project would problematise the notion of racial classification could simply not gain traction among some of *Die Burger*'s readership. Mocking undertones of the absurdity of the proposed research into racial classification (as a complete construct and practice that had to be done away with) seeped through. The research was interpreted by some of the responders as “political servitude” (Du Toit 2013c) or as merely being in service of political correctness (Scholtz 2013).

¹⁹⁸ Original text: “[...] die soveelste poging om die Afrikanernasionalisme en apartheid aan Nazisme te Koppel”.

¹⁹⁹ Original text: “Dit wil voorkom asof daar onmiddelik sinistere en duistere konneksies met apartheid en politiees gemotiveerde rasseklassifikasie gemaak is”.

There was also critique of the sensational manner in which the re-emergence of Fischer's hair colour and texture table, Martin's eye colour table, and the skull was reported. For many readers, as well as academics, the issue was hardly newsworthy. These objects revealed little more than the existence of a global science – one that had also landed at Stellenbosch University. It was argued by a number of responders that courses in eugenics were incorporated in the curricula of universities across Europe and the United States (Heese 2013; Malan 2013). Thus the inclusion of this racial science at Stellenbosch spoke to global scientific trends (Scholtz DB 12.06.2013) that were “generally seen as progressive” at the time of their teaching (Du Toit 2013a, own translation).²⁰⁰ But such reactions were not limited to the press.

In a letter addressed to the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (with copies sent to the vice rector and chair of Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology) two former lecturers of the *Volkekunde*/Anthropology Department, H. P. Steyn and Louis Botha, took issue with what they regarded as the accusatory tone of newspaper articles published by university staff who publicly “create[d] the impression that all former staff members of the department were automatically associated with some obscure racist agenda” (Botha & Steyn 2013, own translation).²⁰¹ Conversation and contact with previous lecturers and students of *volkekunde* had been stymied by a narrative that was deemed by some as accusatory. And so it was that those who had been part of this scientific discipline, those who could historically be defined as Afrikaans-speaking whites of Stellenbosch University, those whose embodied identity had itself been measured and compared to Fischer's hair colour and texture table, Martin's eye colour table, and Von Luschan's (now absent) skin colour table in 1925 (Van der Westhuyzen 1929), again became the subject of interest in an unfolding debate. The protests as well as the silences appeared to say one thing: as a public, we had entered the zone of taboo.

‘Dirty’ Objects of a Polluted Science

Douglas (2002 [1966]:xi) regards societal taboos as “protecting the distinctive categories of the universe”. Far from earlier anthropological writing on so-called ‘primitive religions’ and

²⁰⁰ Here Du Toit refers to the 1920s and 1930s during which the broad institutionalisation of eugenics occurred.

²⁰¹ Afrikaans text: “[...] wek by die oningeligte onvermydelik die indruk dat alle voormalige personeellede van die departement outomaties geassosieer is met een of ander duistere rassistiese agenda”.

subsequent interpretations of taboo as irrational or located in superstition (see Tylor 1870; Frazer 1890; Malinowski 1929), for Douglas (2002 [1966]) a societal taboo serves a particular purpose – it “protects the local consensus on how the world is organised” (Douglas 2002 [1966]:xi). Douglas (2002 [1966]:xi) further offers an eloquent illustration of how taboo operates in *every* society: taboo encapsulates that which is considered “dirty and dangerous”. It is around the notion of taboo that an order assembles through classificatory systems that eliminate ambiguity. But this removal of ambiguity (essentially functioning to safeguard society) requires the complicity of an entire community – the existing order can only survive through a committed effort on the part of society.

Societal taboos are employed to protect against uncleanness – that which is dirty; that which pollutes; that which is ‘out of place’; that which threatens symbolic order. Douglas (2002 [1966]:xiii) explains:

Criticism will be suppressed, whole areas of life become unspeakable and, in consequence unthinkable [...] Taboo is a spontaneous coding practice which sets up a vocabulary of spatial limits and physical and verbal signals to hedge around vulnerable relations. It threatens specific dangers if the code is not respected.

Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and the human skull had been stored in a cardboard box, in a cupboard located in the office of the director of the University Museum. The objects themselves had been contextualised to me as having been previously part of the *volkekunde* collection. Similar objects had been distributed globally in 1917 as a toolkit for the study of humans (including human measurement), and so the skin, eye, and hair colour tables had found a home in many universities across the world. Indeed, the presence of similar instruments at another South African university – there in a storeroom in the Faculty for Medicine and Health Sciences – testifies to the distribution of such collections of scientific artefacts, albeit in a less newsworthy location.

In the history of the medical sciences these objects appear to belong: they are contextually ‘in place’ within a history of the hard sciences, of human anatomy, physical anthropology and genetic studies between the 1920s and 1940s. However, in the social sciences these objects appear fundamentally ‘out of place’ – especially after the UNESCO Statement of 1950 and the

acceptance that race eludes biological definition and demarcation. Fischer's hair colour and texture table, Martin's eye colour table, and the human skull comprised a collection of objects that belonged to a past long gone. And yet their significance refused to dissipate upon their re-emergence.

At Stellenbosch University these objects were employed for human measurement in the Zoology Department between 1925 and 1955, they were moved into the Ethnology Museum once they had produced and established all the required scientific knowledge about the racial self and racial other, they were employed for teaching until 1984 in the *Volkekunde* Department, and they were removed from the *volkekunde* collection by the turn of the millennium, and kept in a box until 2013. Over the course of their life cycle the results these instruments had helped produce became ever less recognisable. Detached from their source, the scientific knowledge gleaned about physically determinable difference had left their origins behind as the objects themselves disappeared out of sight. Upon their re-emergence these objects were thus fundamentally 'out-of-place' both in time and location. They belonged to another era, and to another discipline – one that Stellenbosch University wished to cleanse itself of.

Viewed as “unwanted bits of whatever it was they came from” (Douglas 2002[1966]:197), dirt is dangerous when “identity still clings to [it]”. Once categorised and classified as belonging to the “rubbish heap” dirt becomes neutralised, nothing more than “common rubbish” as it no longer “create[s] ambiguous perceptions since it clearly belongs in a defined place” (Douglas 2002[1966]:198). However, even ‘common rubbish’ retains the propensity for the revival of identity once one begins to “poke about in the refuse to try to recover anything” (Douglas 2002[1966]:197). In more recent analyses of trash, or ‘rubbish’ or ‘refuse’, Julian Stallabrass (2009) and Jane Bennett (2004) similarly locate meaning in that which has been discarded.

Stallabrass (2009:406) defines trash as “the direct product of ‘consumption’” – a sign that the use-value of the object in question has been exhausted. Following a Marxist interpretation of consumption, Stallabrass (2009:408) views the consumed product as “merely a material husk”. And yet the object as trash is never completely meaningless. Drawing on the importance of material culture Stallabrass (2009) sees in the discarded object (trash) the possibility for storytelling, while Bennett (2004) draws on her notion of *thing*-power to analyse her encounter with trash – what she regards as the “excess of human flaws or projects” (Bennett 2004:350). For

Bennett (2004:350) identity is revived once the refuse “commands attention, exudes a kind of dignity, provokes poetry, or inspires fear”. These are feelings that provoke a reaction – and in the case of dirt it is a fearful reaction against pollution that is inspired. For Douglas (2002 [1966]:2) it is because “dirt offends against order” that we shun it. Thus, when confronted with ‘matter out of place’, we are inclined to pursue actions that would restore order, actions that would defuse threat.

Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and the human skull were recovered in a time and location where they were perceived to have no place. They were things long forgotten yet also things whose existence had material implications not only in the past, but in the present. Many responders in the letters column of *Die Burger* pointed out that racial classification was rife in everyday society – ranging from employment equity schemes to the national census or Stellenbosch University application documents. In fact, it was rightly pointed out that Stellenbosch University will *have to* make use of racial classification to fulfil its vision for 2030 – as related to its transformation agenda (Van Rhijn 2013).

Although the objects could be deemed the ruins of a discarded science, the knowledge they embodied and their initial use had been internalised and employed daily, even at Stellenbosch University, and even in 2013. The objects were thus a threat to order – they were a threat to a university attempting to shed its public association with an apartheid past; a threat to an institution whose links to the ideologies embodied in these objects needed to be denied. For Douglas (1966) dirt is dangerous only as long as a trace of identity still clings to it. With their re-emergence, the objects had seen their identity revived, indeed, rendered threatening. The imminent status of the objects as dirty and polluted thus had broader implications. The objects themselves had acquired a “dangerous identity” (Crawford 1994). Radically deemed ‘of the past’, the ‘out-of-placeness’ of a past re-emerged had in material form.

Similar to Douglas’s (2002 [1966]) notion of dirt, Julia Kristeva’s psychoanalytic writings offers the notion of the abject as something that “disturbs identity, system, [and] order” (Kristeva 1982:4). Defined as neither subject nor object, the abject signifies that which is ‘of the self’ but no longer part of the self. The abject is “‘other’ to the self” (Navaro-Yashin 2009:6). It is ejected matter; matter that has crossed the border from inside to outside; matter that has been permanently cast out (abjected). In the case of the human body it signifies matter such as

excrement, urine, vomit and spit. In its ejected state abject matter threatens the stability of self for it reminds of the malleability of boundaries – what was once on one side of the boundary now resides on the other. That which is abject thus prompts a process of casting out with the ultimate intent of complete rejection in an attempt to restore order (Kristeva 1982:54).

In locating Martin’s eye colour table and Fischer’s hair colour and texture table in *volkekunde*, the historical and institutional proximity to social anthropology appears to have prompted a similar process of abjection. The objects were dirty and polluted, they needed to be cast out to guard against defilement and to restore order. By entering the present, the zones of taboo had been breached – the past that should not be named emerged in a violent fit of accusation and defence. According to Douglas (2002 [1966]) taboos are employed to protect against uncleanness. And so both a discipline and an institution needed to frame their source, in this case *volkekunde*, as wildly ‘other’.

Conclusion

Anthropology in South Africa remains a discipline seemingly plagued by its polluted past. From a discipline often utilized for colonial governance, to the global teachings of eugenics in the first half of the 20th century, to the international re-emergence of a biological determinist narrative in the 1970s, to the continued reliance on physical markers in *volkekunde* until the early 1990s, contemporary studies of human diversity have been forced to confront their problematic origins time and again. The anxiety triggered by the re-surfacing of Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and the anatomically prepared human skull speaks to the problematics of living “with the objects and within the ruins left behind by the other” (Navaro-Yashin 2009:1) – in this case those left behind by both the disciplines of zoology and *volkekunde* at Stellenbosch University.²⁰²

²⁰² Yael Navaro-Yashin (2009) applies Kristeva’s (1982) logic of abjection in relation to an encounter with Turkish Cypriot research participants during fieldwork conducted in Northern Cyprus in the aftermath of war. As she notes:

Would we have wanted to wear the dirty linen of the Greeks?’ one of my informants said, in reference to garbing herself with clothes left behind by Greek-Cypriot escapees after the war. A clean item of clothing left in a Greek-Cypriot wardrobe (a ‘ruin’ of war) feels ‘dirty’ to the Turkish-Cypriot who is to wear it because of the knowledge that it has been misappropriated (and is classified as ‘loot’) (Navaro-Yashin 2009:5).

When it comes to racial categorisation we are all complicit. As argued by Douglas (2002 [1966]), the existing order can only remain in place through the complicity of an entire community. In many ways the re-emergence of these objects unsettled deeply because it reminded us what our racial categories rested on – categories we continue to rely on. Here it might be useful to draw on Christine Tan’s (2013:3) analysis of the abject as “vile, impure, [and] a Stranger that lives within us”. Herewith Tan (2013:4) combines the uncanny and Kristeva’s notion of abjection as follows:

“I” reject the “other” in order to maintain my own identity, but in this process, I am at the same time drawn to the abject because I recognize in it a part of myself that is forgotten and repressed, buried into the unconscious [...] underneath our pillows, underneath our beds (Tan 2013:4).

Through an analysis of the objects, Stellenbosch University becomes the *unheimlich* place – “the entrance to the former home of all human beings, to the place where everyone dwelt once upon a time” (Freud 1955 [1919]:16). The inheritance of ‘*volkekunde*’s objects’ had implicated the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology in destruction and violation – they served as a material embodiment and a material reminder of the ‘project of ruination’ (Stoler 2008) embarked upon by anthropology, the university, and that manifested in the country’s legacy. In Stellenbosch, the objects spoke to the national context of racial classification and disenfranchisement: apartheid (what was) and post-apartheid (what is). It spoke to an institutional context: Stellenbosch University and its reputation for being one of the primary intellectual contributors to apartheid (what was), and Stellenbosch University in the process of transformation (what is). The objects, these ruins, thus evoked a particular positioning by the university as evident from official narratives in the media that stemmed from this institution. The objects were ruins – garbed in a shameful past.

Douglas (2002 [1966]:196) tells us that “each culture has its own notions of dirt and defilement which are contrasted with its notions of the positive structure which must not be negated”. By locating Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour table and a human skull in the past, in a

In the case of Navaro-Yashin’s (2009:5) research the narrative of ‘dirt’ emerged in relation to “the self who [was] to be donned with the objects of another” (the objects of the Greeks left behind, inherited by Turkish-Cypriots).

discipline that was *discontinued* at Stellenbosch University, the present (and the institution as well as the discipline of anthropology in its current form) was absolved, not implicated in the use of the objects as related to racial categorisation.

A Final Note on the Anatomically Prepared Human Skull

The recovered skull is now permanently stored in the Department of Anatomy and Histology at the Tygerberg campus of Stellenbosch University. It is simply labelled An1191 – the name and identity of the person it used to be indeterminable. In May of 2014 the skull was once again scientifically assessed, this time by Professor Alan Morris of the Department of Human Biology of UCT. Correlations are to be found in the reports produced by Du Toit (2013b) and Morris (2014). Although the two experts disagree on the gender of the specimen (Du Toit (2013b) stating it was that of a female and Morris (2014) considering it to be male), both place the age of death between 30 and 50 years. They also seemingly agree on the racial descent of the deceased. Du Toit (2013b:1) indicated “Mixed/Coloured/ Hottentot/Bushmen” strains, while definitively excluding the possibility of “Xhosa, Zulu or Caucasian (white)” origins. Confirming that “‘race’ is difficult to assess from skeletonized cases”, Morris (2014:1) was of the opinion that the skull indicated “Khoesan” as well as “South African Negro” genetic origins. Morris (2014:1) concluded: “I think the original identity was more likely to be ‘Coloured’” (Morris 2014:1).

CONCLUSION

The Spectre That Haunts

When you see, in a photograph or in a hat or in a footprint, the hand of the state [...] you have seen the ghostly matter: the lost beloveds and the force that made them disposable” – Avery Gordon (2008:205).

The *Augenfarbentafel*, *Haarfarbentafel*, and *Hautfarbentafel*, otherwise known as Rudolf Martin’s eye colour table, Eugen Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and Felix von Luschan’s skin colour table, had a productive life at Stellenbosch University. The collection had arrived in 1924 and was immediately put to practical use in the Zoology Department. Between 1925 and 1955 these objects became the scientific conveyors of information related to racial type. They were used for the meticulous measurement of the Dutch-speaking (white afrikaner) male students of Stellenbosch in 1925, the coloured males of Stellenbosch in 1937, the continued measurement of white Stellenbosch students between 1940 and 1944, and the measurement of the korana between 1947 and 1952.

By the time these objects were employed to measure korana subjects, the measurable differences thought to be found between races had been produced and solidified. The inclusion of film and photography in the methodology for studying the korana indicated a shift in the role of these objects: they were becoming obsolete for practical application. Through the internalisation of race knowledge, coupled with the visual representation of the racial other, viewers could simply see racial difference for themselves.

When the National Party started to employ apartheid laws after 1948, race had become common sense (Posel 2001b). But this common sense rested on notions of racial difference as determined by physical anthropologists (among others) during the latter half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. Social scientists at Stellenbosch University similarly drew on these notions of race and the existence of a racial hierarchy to offer their support for separate development and the apartheid state. In the 1950s and 1960s, through engagements of the Stellenbosch-based

SABRA and the WKNP, the scientific results produced by these objects became a mere point of reference. And yet these same results also provided support that inherent biological differences could be found between the separate racial groups – groups that had become the target of government policy in South Africa. The evidentiary nature of these objects was solidified when they were transferred to the Ethnology Museum of Stellenbosch University in the mid-1960s. But on the museum shelf these objects likewise started to fade out of focus, all the while the classificatory practices they had once endorsed gained momentum outside of the museum walls. As the objects settled in the museum, the local coloured population (the subjects of measurement in 1937) were moved to the outskirts of Stellenbosch.

By the mid-1980s the objects had officially disappeared out of sight. They had seemingly become victims of their own productivity. In 1994 South Africa entered a new era of democracy when the right to vote was extended to every person above the age of 18 (regardless of what their racial category was determined to be). A coalition government was formed between F.W. De Klerk's National Party and Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) with subsequent national elections producing comfortable victories for the ANC in most parts of the country. While the election of 1994 embodied the future prospects of eliminating racial disparities and social and economic inequalities, the government held on to apartheid era racial categories (albeit to assist those who were previously disadvantaged) and a general survey of the South African population still revealed major correlations between race and social and economic standing.

In 2013, in their re-emerged form, these objects embodied a ghost of old. In this newly configured form, the objects became central to a narrative of our past as well as our present. They revealed an uncomfortable similarity between these opposing timeframes – a resemblance that contributed to the deeply unsettling and highly debated status of the objects once their return was made public. But the objects similarly revealed their propensity for storytelling: Eugen Fischer had not donated the instruments, nor did he ever visit Stellenbosch University, nor was he in touch with the academics of Stellenbosch – as I had speculated in my initial email to Dr Lydia de Waal of the University Museum. Similarly the instruments did not initially belong to the *Volkekunde* Department, and they did not arrive in the 1930s or 1940s. Yet none of these initial missteps made the objects any less potent.

Instead they continued to offer a point of engagement – one that sought to unravel the broader social and political structures that circulated around these objects. It offered a narrative that allowed for the engagement of structures of racial dominance. This research thus became the story not only of a collection of objects, but of their subjects as well: how a coloured category was prescribed (partly through measurement), made other (through their embodied deviance), and disenfranchised (through state policy). The objects marked a project of ruination – one that had “[laid] waste to certain peoples and places, relations and things” (Stoler 2008:196).

As a collection Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and von Luschan’s skin colour table were globally used in the discipline of physical anthropology from 1917 onwards.²⁰³ Rightly pointed out by two former lecturers in the *Volkekunde*/Anthropology Department, “the anthropometric instruments owned by Stellenbosch University were anything but unique” (Steyn & Botha 2013). However, at Stellenbosch University these objects provide a particular case study that illustrated the interplay between the scientific, the social and the political. The institution itself had historically been home to the proponents of the afrikaner nationalist movement and D. F. Malan’s National Party, and later contributed to the development of segregationist policies and the implementation of the apartheid state.

At Stellenbosch University, the use of these objects *was* informed by specific social and political forces due to the locality in which they were employed. Although these objects were not necessarily globally used to practice ‘racial science’ or for the purposes of racial classification, at this South African institution they were employed for a very specific purpose between 1925 and 1955: the formation of racial subjects. This study thus offered a particular opportunity to engage the formation of racial subjects as well as the consequence such events bear when rendered useful to the state. These objects can therefore be understood to have contributed to a racial ideology that would sustain the apartheid state as well as haunt our present moment.

As the objects slowly disappeared from sight, the results they produced became a seething presence – one that materialised in the structures of the apartheid state. In fact, race knowledge

²⁰³ In the later versions of Brenda Z. Seligman’s *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (see 1954 [1892] and 1960 [1892] prints specifically), von Luschan’s skin colour table, Martin’s eye colour table, and Fischer’s hair colour and texture table are listed along with other measuring tools such as rods, compasses and calipers, for general use in the discipline of physical anthropology in Europe, Britain, and the United States.

assumed its most frightening form once the objects had been laid to rest: race disappeared into the realms of common sense. As Frederic W. Maitland postulated in 1900, in the United States “[t]he slave law of the South may have been dead, but it ruled us from the grave” (cited in Anderson 2016:38).

In the aftermath of the press conference in April 2013 and the subsequent reports in the media, the absurdity of questioning racial classification became a common thread of critique in the letters column of *Die Burger*. The possibility of a society in which racial classification has no place was seemingly unimaginable to many South Africans. The usefulness of this study was similarly questioned. It was asked “how much pain would be relieved through this research?” (Van Zyl 2013, own translation). “Are there not more urgent topics in our wounded country?” was another question posed (Ellis 2013, own translation).²⁰⁴ Simultaneously, the former lecturers of the *Volkekunde*/Anthropology Department proclaimed in written correspondence that the ‘researchers’ had “no apparent understanding for classification as a general scientific principle” (Steyn & Botha 2013, own translation). The answer I provide to these questions is an anthropological one: that which is considered most trivial is often “most powerful and effective as social forces” (Miller 1998:9).²⁰⁵

While many would argue that we should leave the past in the past, that we have already addressed race and apartheid on a national level – partly through a democratic transition and partly through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – the inadequacy of past conversations about race are still coming to the fore in the reluctance of some to speak up, and the reluctance of others to listen. The recent Open Stellenbosch movement²⁰⁶ and the national Fees Must Fall

²⁰⁴ Original text: “*Is in ons geknelde land nie dringender onderwerpe nie?*”

²⁰⁵ This could be related to John and Jean Comaroff’s discussion of power: “to lie in what it silences” (1992:29)

²⁰⁶ Open Stellenbosch, a “movement for social justice” (Shabangu 2015 [online]), was founded in 2015 to “challenge the hegemony of white Afrikaans culture and the exclusion of black students and staff” at Stellenbosch University (Open Stellenbosch 2015). Despite the attempted steps taken towards the transformation of Stellenbosch University, which included a “Strategic Framework” (1999), a “Vision 2012” document (2000), a “Transformation Strategy” (2008), and an “Overarching Strategic Plan” (2009), the pace of transformation has been the source of great criticism by Open Stellenbosch. It was claimed by this movement that “only 3.5% of all professors at the University were black, while 86% were white” (Open Stellenbosch 2015 [online]). Issues of ‘racial’ transformation were further exacerbated by the university’s language policy. The previously Afrikaans-medium university officially implemented a language policy “which gives English and Afrikaans equal status” in 2014. Proposals to make English the primary language of communication and education at this institution has been met with great resistance

movement (as also manifesting on Stellenbosch campus) highlighted our inadequacies and deeply misguided understandings of race in post-apartheid South Africa. A lack of dialogue may have been the main contributor to insufficient understandings or general incomprehension.

Spectrality, Hauntology and Materiality

By 2013 the presence of Fischer's hair colour and texture table, Martin's eye colour table, Von Luschan's skin colour table, and the anatomically prepared skull that accompanied these instruments had been forgotten by history. And yet they loaded the moment of re-emergence with potency. These objects became a vessel through which to explore race and racial categorisation in South Africa. It is the story of a past resurfacing in the present and a record of the confrontation that ensued between the two. In the end it served to expose the fallacies of race and the active construction of at least one racial category that posed a threat to order, or rather a threat to the system of apartheid. Even in the comfortable relegation of these instruments to the dustbin of history, an interrogation of their past life illustrates the lasting nature of ideas and illuminates our need for more candid conversations about race.

In recent years the social sciences have increasingly embraced the value of 'the ghost' as "an analytical tool" (Del Pilar Blanco & Peeren 2013:1). It has allowed us to "[put] life back in where only a vague memory or a bare trace was visible to those who bothered to look" (Gordon 2013:118). It started with Jacques Derrida (1993) who claimed that the spectre of Marx was haunting Europe. In Derrida's work "the ghost or specter is seen to signify precisely that which escapes full cognition or comprehension" (Del Pilar Blanco & Peeren 2013:9). It also signifies that which is constantly present but of which we remain unaware and, as a result, do not acknowledge.

An eerie resemblance to notions of commonsense knowledge can be found in this conceptualisation of the ghost or spectre. It encapsulates a moment when the highly visible "can actually be a type of invisibility" or when "that which appears absent" becomes "a seething presence" (Gordon 2013:115). It might make us wonder: "[d]id we see something, or didn't we?"

by alumni and external funders. The exclusion that occurs through language thus became a central tenet to the broader grievances of Open Stellenbosch (Mortlock 2015 [online]).

[These ghosts] look so much part of the furniture [...] that we walk right past them” (Hall 2011:45). For Giorgio Agamben (2013:475) spectrality refers to a devastating afterlife of that which seemingly no longer exists – “a posthumous or complementary life that begins only when everything is finished” (Agamben 2013:475). The results generated by the scientific instruments harnessed for racial measurement at Stellenbosch University had bled into the confines of political and societal structures until they completely disappeared into the realms of the commonsensical, the realms of that which is rarely questioned – that which is constantly present but of which we remain largely unaware. The designated racial categories of the apartheid state had become an internalised and accepted part of South African society. It is what Avery Gordon (2008:205) would refer to as “the luminous presence of the seemingly invisible”.

Ghost-like in their absent-presence Martin’s eye colour table, Von Luschan’s skin colour table, and the anatomically prepared skull seemingly embody the return of the repressed – something of old and long familiar (Freud 1955 [1919]).²⁰⁷ They haunt our present, post-apartheid moment, where the effects of apartheid are still made manifest in our society more than two decades after the political transition of 1994. The most obvious lingering effect is that daily practice of racial classification – indeed, the very existence of seemingly ‘fixed’ categories that make racial classification possible.

The ghost of apartheid is alive in South Africa, and it haunts every day. When Edward Linenthal (1995) employs the notion of “comfortable horrible memory” to refer to “the ways that official narratives of tragedy may not do much beyond confirming what ‘we’, as a pre-determined collectivity, already know, think, or feel” (cited in Lehrer & Milton 2011:7), he might as well have announced that we have learned to live with ghosts.

For Fredric Jameson (1995:85) spectrality is “what makes the present waver”, it is the moment in which the present reveals the refusal of the past to simply be part of “the register of history” (Gordon 2008:168). It is through the ghost that the past is kept alive, it is through the haunting that an encounter can occur, and that the past can be confronted in the present. When the spectre

²⁰⁷ For Sigmund Freud the uncanny is experienced “in the highest degree in relation to [...] the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts” (Freud 1955 [1919]:13).

is made visible it demands a response (Del Pilar Blanco & Peeren 2013:9), or phrased more productively, when the spectre is made visible it offers an *opportunity* for a response.

In the case of this research the spectre was made manifest through material objects. It was materiality that confronted first – the uncanny nature of unsettling objects. The second confrontation was with the invisible, underlying aspects of these objects – a confrontation with societal norms, values and assumptions, and what is now considered commonsense knowledge.

Through materiality the spectre can confront. As Jane Bennett (2004:361) argues, *thing-power* “makes itself known as an uneasy feeling of internal resistance, as an alien presence that is uncannily familiar”. Julian Holloway and James Kneale (2008:300) argue for the importance of being confronted with “uncertainty, hesitancy, and the uncanny”. For these authors such a confrontation, one that acknowledges a haunting presence, “represents an opportunity to understand and come to terms with mystery”, for once the “monster becomes visible; the ghost [can be] laid to rest” (Holloway & Kneale 2008:300). Interpreted as the spectre in material form, Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, and the human skull ‘made the ghost visible’ and offered an opportunity for debate and discussion. It offered an “opportunity to understand and come to terms with mystery” (ibid.). These objects are, however, not a singular case in which a ghostly presence is made manifest in South Africa.

Another recent, and well-known, local materialisation of the spectre came in the form of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes (former prime minister of the Cape) located on UCT’s upper campus. For decades this statue stood in silence, present but largely ignored. But in 2015 it became hyper-visible – something that seemingly demanded a response. Its presence became most profound as a symbol of oppression, and the eventual removal thereof a way to address the past and to obliterate the statue's power (along with the legacy that it represented). When we discard such material remains they are transformed into ‘the past’, we turn them into trash. We remove their power by removing identity (Douglas 1966). But throwing out the trash can come at a price.

Material objects often embody a narrative of the past, and it is through material remains that we are able to (re)discover history. Had Martin’s eye colour table, Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Von Luschan’s skin colour table, and the human skull been discarded at any time before

2013, the narrative produced in the wake of their re-emergence would not have existed. These debates might not have surfaced, the specific confrontation with Stellenbosch University's institutional past might never have occurred – at least not in relation to the institutional influence on racial categories.

The past is both an important and dangerous place. As the location of individual and collective memories, the past is a place that forms “part of the repertoire of dominance in a society” and can “lead to open conflict” (Molyneaux 1994:8). These ideas appear particularly fitting in relation to the recent monuments debate that emerged in this country via the Rhodes Must Fall movement of 2015 – an initiative that saw students from UCT successfully call for the removal of the a monument commemorating Cecil John Rhodes. Echoing similarly heated debates emerging in the United States (around the removal of confederate statues) as well as in Australia (around commemorative depictions of white colonialists), it appears that the call to remove statues – and thus rid society of their burdensome presence – has been heard around the world.

Responding to the debate in Australia, Freya Higgs-Desbiolles (2017 [online]) declared: “[i]t is not a matter of erasing history but a question of *whose* history is told”. In a post-colonial world this story has often, if not exclusively, sided with the white colonialist. In these cases the ‘story’ is one of “power and dominance” and the monuments inherently “glorify men or events that brought direct harm to others” (Higgs-Desbiolles 2017 [online]). The public status of these monuments adds extra potency to their existence. Courtesy Bruce Scates (2017 [online]) argues that “[b]y occupying civic space [monuments] serve to legitimise narratives of conquest and dispossession”. The statue or the monument thus becomes the conveyor of an often one-sided story – and it appears to be this story that has lead the persistent cry for the removal of these material remnants.

The question is, however, whether society is best served by completely removing such remnants. Can we declare these left-overs ‘common rubbish’ (to use Mary Douglas’s term) without consequence? As Bennett suggest, when we encounter material objects, “we bring something from ourselves to the experience”. Thus, while *things* have the propensity to exude powerful affects, they are still “socially constituted” (Bennett 2004:358). In a similar vein, Susan Pearce (2003 [1994]:27) argues for the significance of the deciphering of objects as this provides us “the chance to bring out both what is in the object and what is in ourselves”. As we have witnessed,

both here in South Africa as well as around the world, the site of the monument can become the site of protest, the site of claims and counterclaims. Following Ann Laura Stoler (2013:9) it is argued that the ruins of the past can become “privileged sites of reflection”.

The statue of King Leopold in Ostend, Belgium, can thus be cited as the antithesis to the recent wave of statue removals. Adam Hochschild (2006 [1999]:309) describes this statue as “a grand equestrian statue of the king in bronze, surrounded by smaller figures of grateful Africans and local fisherman”. The atrocities committed in the Congo under Leopold’s rule remained conspicuously absent from this depiction. However, in 2004 a group of activists intervened in an attempt to provide a more truthful depiction of the impact this individual had on the Congolese people: they sliced off one of the figure’s hands as a reminder of the limbs violently removed from those under Leopold’s rule. The statue remains in place to this day. The hand remains missing. And a glorified, one-sided (and wholly misguided) depiction of history has been subjected to corrective procedures.

Material objects can become facilitators of debates and conversations – vessels for discussing uncomfortable topics. It is worth quoting Susan Pearce (1990:139) at length:

processes of making meaning enables us to analyse the nature of our relationship to the objects which come from the past, and to perceive how they affect us, both individually in the dialectical creation of meaning and self, and socially in the ideological creation of unequal relationships.

The potential is not in what it *is*, but in what it can *become*: the source of discourse and possibly dialogue, or as Donald Preziosi (2003:3) would argue: they become “things to think with”. Discarding material objects removes a provocation for continued discourse or the possibility for the emergence of new narratives. This study has suggested precisely that: a collection of scientific objects was able to exude their ‘*thing-power*’, to have powerful effects, and thus be the pivot point around which it was possible to unearth a ghost of old.

As Christopher Tilley (2003[1994]:73) reminds us: “[t]he meaning of the past does not reside in the past, but belongs in the present”. Material culture, and particularly unsettling objects, offer sites of continued discourse. They are not merely sites of commemoration. We might thus be better served to follow the approach of Brian Molyneux (1994:4) who considers material

objects as vessels “through which we recreate the past”. To take away historical objects removes more than their material presence; it also removes the opportunity for conversation.

Even more, it seems an immodest claim – that somehow we (here and now) have the last say, rather than allowing narratives to emerge within shifting paradigms (see Kuhn 1970). Over the past few years we have witness how national statues were able to publicly illuminate people’s fears and desires, the legacies that we carry with us, and a past that survives in the present.²⁰⁸ These debates remind us what we are left with. As was the case with Fischer’s hair colour and texture table, Martin’s eye colour table, and the anatomically prepared human skull, these encounters force us to engage our racialised legacy of exclusion, impoverishment, and injustice. It forces us to engage “what is residual and tenacious, what is dominant but hard to see” (Stoler 2008:211).

²⁰⁸ Julia Kristeva (1982:6) tells us that “discourse will seem tenable only if it ceaselessly confronts that otherness, a burden both repellent and repelled, a deep well of memory that is unapproachable and intimate: the abject”.

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APPENDIX A: FIGURES



Fig 1. *The Haarfarbentafel (hair colour table) developed by Eugen Fischer (1907). Stellenbosch University.*



Fig 2. *The Augenfärbentafel (eye colour table) developed by Rudolf Martin (1903).*
Stellenbosch University.

No. 62	No. of Photo:	Place and Date of Observation:	Shell.	Parental Ascent:	Observer:
Name: <i>Johnannes</i>				<i>Klein</i>	
Surname: <i>S. S. van</i>				<i>(G. J. van der Grint)</i>	
Sex: <i>♂</i>	Place of residence:	Shell			
Age: <i>27</i>	Place of birth:	Shell			
Social position:	Religion:				
State of nourishment: very lean, lean, normal, fat, very fat.					
State of health:					
Diseases (hereditary): <i>Good</i>					
Defects:					
Colour of skin	v. Luschka's table:	No.			
	Forehead:	24			
	Cheeks:	25			
	Thoracic region:	21			
	Abdomen (over navel):	4, 23			
	Region of shoulder blade:	27, 23			
	Inner upper arm:	32			
	Outer upper arm:	23			
	Palm:	23			
	Inner surf. Tib. joint:	26			
	Muc. membr. of upper lip:	20			
	Muc. membr. of lower lip:	20			
Nature of skin: velvet-like, soft, rough; moist, dry, greasy.					
Iris:	Martin's colour tablet, No.:	2			
Sclera: white, bluish, yellowish.					
Conjunctiva: colourless, speckled, coloured at edges.					
Hair colour	Fischer's colour table.	No.			
	Hair on scalp:	5+4			
	Beard:				
	Hair on body:				
	Hair surrounding genitalia	5+7			
Form of Hair.	a stiff				
	b. straight				
	c. waves flat				
	d. waves broad				
On scalp:	e. waves narrow				
	f. locky				
	g. curly				
Beard:	h. curls loose				
	i. curls thick				
On body:	j. flat				
	k. fl. kil				
	l. spiral				
Hair Coat of Body: profuse, medium, weak, very weak, absent.					

Pressure: r. 110 l. 117 r. l. Mean: r. l.	Hearing:	Pulse:	Respiration:	Lang capacity:	
BODY.					
Breasts: Disc-shaped, hemispherical, pear shaped, pendulous. Development No.: Diam. of nipple (transv.) (vert.) Colour No.: 24/30. Border: clear, indistinct; nipple: large, small, deep.					
Genital Organs: Circumcision and other deformations: <i>S 20</i>					
Hands: Simian fold: —					
Fingers: thick, thin; long, short; tapering; hyperextended.					
Nails: large, small; long, short; narrow, broad; stubbed, flat; sagittally curved, oval, roundish, fanlike C, V, X.					
Ears: large, small; long, short; narrow, broad; flat, arched.					
Feet: longest toe: 1, 2, 1, 2. Big toe oppositely apposed, bent inwards.					
Special Observables: (tattooing, ornamental scars, scars on the epidermis, mental faculties, &c.)					
<i>Tattooed all on body.</i>					
<i>Simian scars.</i>					
<i>Scars on gen. organs.</i>					
Right Hand.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Left Hand.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Fig 3. Datasheet used by Stellenbosch University's Zoology Department [front] (1937).

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Datum	7/7/50	Waarnemer	
Familienaam	James Lass	Voorletters	
Geboortedatum			
Geboortedistrik		Dorp of plaas?	
Gesondheidstoestand:	baie maer, maer, normaal, vet, baie vet.		
Sigbare tekens van operasies			
Varikocoel		Spatare in vena saphena	
Skoliose	Lordose	Platvoet	
	Oogkleurtafel van Martin		3
OOG	Bereik B-pigment periferie van iris?		
KLEUR	Het irisperiferie 'n donker rand?		
	Is B-pigment totaal afwesig?		
	Sclera: blou	geel	wit effens geel
HUID	Ontbloot model dikwels bolyf aan son?		
KLEUR	Voorkop 16	Bo-arm, buitekant 16	Tepel 29, 30
	Wange 16	Bo-arm, binnekant 17	Penis 23
	Skouerblad 17	Lies 17	Scrotum 29
	Bors 16	Bokant nawel	Penisnaat 29
		Kuit	
HAAR	Kop 28+29	Baard	Romp
KLEUR	Geslagshare	Wortel van penis	Onder arms
HAAR	Kophare: steil, kroes, krulle breed, krulle nou		
VORM	Liggaamshare: steil, krullig, kroes		
HAAR	KLEED Weelderig, swak, baie swak, ontbreek		
HANDE	Aapvou?		
VOETE	Gryptoon? Tweede toon langste?		
BORSTE	Gynaekomastie polymastie (links, regs)		
	Knopbors		
	Grootte van pigmentarea: sagittaal	vertikaal	
			14
	19		

Fig 5. Datasheet used by C. S. Grobbelaar of Stellenbosch University's Zoology Department [front] (1950).
Stellenbosch University.

GESLAGS	Besnyding, glans bedek, glans ontbloot
ORGANE	Hypospadix Vena dorsalis penis superficialis duplex Prikkelorgaantjies op glansrand Onvolledig verslakte cremasterspiere <i>penis diagonaal</i>
HUID	Tekstuur: ferweelagtig, sag, ru Vogtigheid: klam, droog, vetterig
VOORKOP	Hoog, laag, N. — breed, nou, N. — <u>vertikaal</u> , effens <i>na dorsaal</i> terugwykend, sterk terugwykend — <u>plat</u> , gewelf, kielvormig
KROON	<u>Plat</u> , gewelf
AGTERKOP	<u>Vertikaal</u> , gewelf, sterk uitstaande
GESIG	Hoog, laag, N. — breed, nou, N. — <u>plat</u> , gewelf ellipties, rond, <u>ovaal</u> , hoekig
OOG	Spleet: <u>spindelvormig</u> amandelvormig Mongoolse vou, epicanthus
JUKBENE	<u>Uitstaande</u>
NEUS	Wortel: <u>breed</u> , nou, N. — hoog, <u>laag</u> , N., plat Brug: <u>breed</u> , nou, N. <i>afges</i> Konkaaf, konveks, golwend, hoekig geboë Punt: vorentoe, boontoe, ondertoe gerig Vleuels: <u>dik</u> , dun, N. — hoog, laag, N. — geapponeer, <u>gewelf</u> Septum: lang, <u>kort</u> , N. — <u>breed</u> , nou, N. — lateraal <u>sigbaar?</u> Openings: lengsovaal, dwarsovaal, skuinsovaal
KAKE	Prognatie?
LIPPE	Dik, dun, N. — bolip met saamgestelde boog?
TANDE	Skertipe, <u>tangtipe</u> , progente, opisthodontie, hiatodontie, stegodontie
ORE	Helixrand onderbreek? Oorbelletjie: <u>afwesig</u> , nie afgegrens nie Tuberculum darwinii

Fig 6. Datasheet used by C. S. Grobbelaar of Stellenbosch University's Zoology Department [back] (1950).
Stellenbosch University.

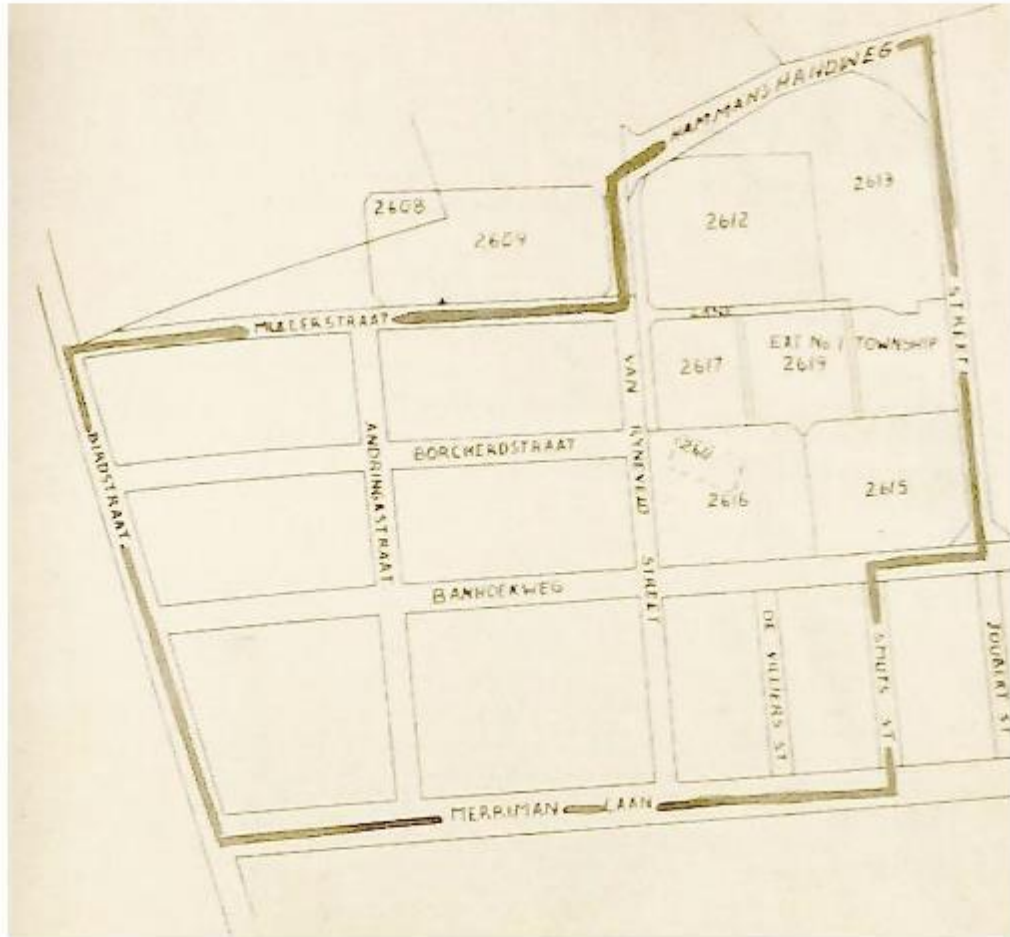


Fig 7. A schematic illustration of the area known as *Die Vlakte* as published in the local Stellenbosch newspaper (1964). *Eikstadmus*, 4 September 1964.