SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY PAINTING: REINTERPRETATION BY WOMEN ARTISTS

VANESSA RYCROFT

DEPARTMENT OF FINE ART
UNIVERSITY OF NATAL (PIETERMARITZBURG)

1996

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Arts Degree in Fine Art.

The research and presentation of material for this thesis is entirely my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged. This dissertation has been submitted to no university other than the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg).

SIGNATURE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their time and the assistance which they so willingly offered.

Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen	Lecturer and supervisor for this dissertation.
Prof. Terence King	Head of Department and supervisor of the practical painting component of my MAFA.
Janet Purcell	Lecturer

A special thanks goes to all the staff of the Fine Art Department and the Library.

Marilyn Fowles
Phil Scott
Jinny Heath
Henry Davis
Jenny Aitchison

The financial assistance of the Centre for Science Development (HSRC, South Africa) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.

I would furthermore like to thank the University for the funding received through the Graduate Assistantship programme.

Finally a special thank you to my parents, for their love, patience and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

The title of this thesis South African History Painting: Reinterpretation By Women Artists indicated that the focus was to be on South African history painting. As the research progressed, however, it became apparent that the initial title did not encompass a broad enough spectrum. Therefore a more suitable title for this dissertation is A Visual Reinterpretation Of Aspects Of South African History By Women Artists: Penelope Siopis and Philippa Skotnes.

It is the intention of this dissertation to examine the way in which two contemporary South African women artists namely, Penelope Siopis (1953-) and Philippa Skotnes (1957) visually challenge in their paintings and prints respectively the conventional depictions of recorded South African history.

Poststructuralism, deconstruction, new historicism and Postmodernism are among the theoretical currents upon which this research is based. It is from a Postmodern standpoint that selected works by Siopis and Skotnes will be analysed. The intention of this analysis is to examine their attempts to access the Postcolonial condition in South Africa through their visual presentations. The work of Siopis and Skotnes reflects an interest in Postcoloniality. Furthermore, their visual imagery addresses questions of culture and power in South African visual representation. Works such as those created by Siopis and Skotnes can be seen as uncovering some of the contradictions within the process of decolonization. Nederveen, Pieterse and Parekh (1995) describe decolonization in the following way:

> Decolonization is a process of emancipation through mirroring, a mix of defiance and mimesis. Like colonialism itself, it is deeply preoccupied with boundaries - boundaries of territory and identity, borders of nation and state. (Nederveen, Pieterse and Parekh 1995:11)

The focus in this dissertation is on the works of Siopis and Skotnes and their use of specific deconstructive methods to undermine prejudicial historical imagery and question established perceptions within South African history. In other words, the visual presentation of these two artists explores the boundaries or margins of established history. Both Siopis and Skotnes confront in visual terms the prejudicial representations of women and/or ethnic groups who have been subjugated by what they perceive as white, middle class, patriarchal history.

The primary concern of the research is the visual imagery produced by these two artists and the effect of deconstruction on their respective art works. In the first chapter selected works from Siopis's History Painting (1980s) series are to be analysed. In the second chapter the focus is on Skotnes's etchings in the Sound From The Thinking Strings (1993) exhibition. The investigation then moves to a project entitled Miscast (1996). Skotnes was the curator of the Miscast exhibition. It does not contain original art works by Skotnes. It is however an extension of the ideas which her prints embody and is therefore relevant to this dissertation.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This dissertation includes illustrations of the paintings and prints discussed in the text. The illustrations can be found immediately preceeding the initial mention of the painting or etching. A list of these illustrations follows the conclusion in which the works are referenced. The images which appear in the text are black and white photocopied images which represent the coloured origninal.

INTRODUCTION: CHAPTER 1

The work of Penelope Siopis and Philippa Skotnes must be interpreted within the context of South Africa's history. The works which have been selected for analysis in this dissertation were produced in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They reflect the oppressive effects of living in the Apartheid era. The works depict a socio-political subject and they concentrate on issues such as patriarchal domination, identity, the representation of the *Other* and unrecorded narratives in visual representation. Both artists are influenced by contemporary theoretical discourse which includes feminism, Poststructuralism and Postcolonialism. Their art works are often resistant to or attempt to undermine those images which contribute to the maintenance of white, Nationalist, patriarchal values. Research into this field of study is significant in that it investigates the impact that Apartheid has had on visual representation in South Africa.

This dissertation comprises two chapters each of which has a number of subdivisions. The first chapter examines specific paintings from Siopis's History Painting series. Siopis started this series in the late 1980s. The works examine various socio-political issues prevalent in South Africa's history. The intention of the work is to highlight established myths which are embedded in South African history. Three works have been selected from the History Painting series, namely Patience On A Monument (1988), Cape Of Good Hope (1989/90) and Dora And The Other Woman (1988). The paintings deconstruct 19th century historical imagery taken from South African history and aim to expose the discrimination which these images inadvertently record.

The techique Siopis uses in her paintings reflects a process of deconstruction. The following passage describes what is meant by deconstruction:

> As a mode of textual theory and analysis, contemporary deconstruction subverts almost everything in the tradition, putting in question received ideas of the sign and language, the text, the context, the author, the reader, the role of history, the work of interpretation, and the forms of critical writing (Leitch 1993:ix).

Chapter 2, entitled Penelope Siopis, examines the way in which deconstruction operates through Siopis's use of collage, fragmentation and layering of appropriated 19th century South African historical imagery.

Chapter 3 explores some of the "contradictions and tensions" that exist within a critique of cultural production (Roof and Wiegman 1995:x). The problem of who can speak is one of the complications which arises from such a critique. The question of whether artists such as Siopis and Skotnes have the authority to speak on behalf of cultural groups to which they do not belong is of primary interest in this chapter. The predominant focus in Chapter 3 is on Skotnes and her depiction of colonial interaction between the Khoisan and the early colonizers of South Africa. The historical interest which is prevalent in Skotnes's work is not dissimilar to that in Siopis's History Painting series. The historical interpretation given by both artists has considerable bearing on current debates regarding the representation of *Others*. The complexities of speaking for *Others* will be explored through an investigation into the work of Skotnes. Selected prints from her exhibition entitled Sound from the Thinking Strings: A visual, literary, archaeological and historical interpretation of the final

years of /Xam life (1993) will be analysed. As with the work of Siopis, Skotnes's work both tests and explores the boundaries of depicting South African history. Her work ventures beyond explanatory systems of history to an area of history and a group of people who have long been excluded and misrepresented in history. Her visual interpretation of the Khoisan culture explores the cosmology and experiences of a culture about which little is known. The Khoisan are a people who do not hold a significant place in documented South African history.

Skotnes's interest in and interpretation of Khoisan culture has led to much controversy. It is for this reason that this dissertation examines some of the protestations that have been levelled at the exhibition Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture (1996). This exhibition does not include any original art works by Skotnes. It is an exhibition in which her primary role is one of curator. The inclusion of the Miscast exhibition in this dissertation is relevant in that it offers a more tangible outflow of the ideas which are inherent in Sound From The Thinking Strings. The Miscast exhibition is both separate and different from Skotnes's prints but the extension of her ideas from the prints into the Miscast exhibition encourages the cross-reference of these two exhibitions. Issues such as the (mis)representation of the *Other* which are prevalent in Sound From The Thinking Strings are brought to the fore in the Miscast exhibition in a revelatory and compelling manner.

The chapter on Skotnes examines the problems of making the "margins visible as representational and/or political presences" (Roof and Wiegman 1995:x). As Roof and Wiegman discuss in their book entitled

Who Can Speak? (1995), "the project of exposing the 'margins' of history or speaking for/about the 'Other' has proven to be not only difficult but at times politically suspect" (Roof and Wiegman 1995:x).

In both Skotnes's prints and Siopis's History Painting series the principles of deconstruction and that of speaking about *Other* cultural groups will be explored in relation to Postmodern concepts such as the 'Death of the Author'.

Rosalind Krauss (1993) describes the phenomenon of the Death of the Author as,

> ...a deliberate abandonment of authorial intention as a ground of a work's meaning, and its replacement with a set of cultural significations pre-existing that intention, predetermining and de-originating it. By this notion, the author, stripped of his or her privilege, would act as proxy for all other subjects coming into contact with the work, thereby figuring those subjects forth as radically decentred (Krauss 1993:163).

Roland Barthes clarifies this point in 'The Death of the Author':

> A text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author (Owens 1992:99).

These quotations indicate that there is no one answer to the problems confronted by both Siopis and Skotnes. This dissertation aims to establish that the merit in both these artists work lies in their decision to address South Africa's controversial historical past.

In the chapters to follow the works of Siopis and Skotnes will be analysed from the point of view of reconciliation:

> Reconciliation is about perceptions and realities, the past, the present and the future. It is about South Africans in their own way coming to terms with themselves and locating their own practises within a broader social context...People want the story of apartheid's horrors told. I have no doubt that in most cases the truth is already known, but people want to put their ghosts to rest. We all have awful memories and it is important to find out who threatened us, who plotted against us, who tried to kill us...Reconciliation is about remembrance, rehabilitation and reconstruction. We must remember in order to commit ourselves never to allow such despicable violations of human rights to occur again. We must rehabilitate in order that we become conscious of the terrible scars that colonial conquest and racist apartheid created, and so that we emerge all the stronger in our commitment to doing good. We are all products of our history and must all be cleansed of those thoughts and deeds created by the past (Sutcliffe 1996:9).

CHAPTER 2

PENELOPE SIOPIS

When Penelope Siopis began painting her History Painting series in the late 1980s there was little or no spirit of reconciliation in South Africa. Siopis, along with many artists of the time, were working in an atmosphere of resistance to popular South African culture. The History Paintings intend to expose the patriarchal hierarchy of power which has had a pronounced impact on historical representation in South Africa.

Patience On A Monument (1988) [fig 1.1] is one painting in which Siopis addresses the issue of the recording of South African history. In this painting a monumental black female figure - Patience - sits on a pedestal of debris left behind by Western *civilisation*. Behind her stretches an infinite landscape comprising numerous images depicting soldiers and black warriors. The monument of waste upon which Patience sits includes

> ...fruit peelings, a stretched canvas, a dead bird, *objects d'art*, a skull, models of a pregnant womb and a broken heart, a little handbag, ornamental fittings, an open book, and two views of a bust of a black man (Williamson 1989:20).

The image of the bust is taken from a bronze cast by Anton van Wouw. The title of this bust is The Accused or The Witness (1907). The significance of this sculpture to the painting by Siopis can be found in the following quote:

> For me...it [the sculpture] refers to the tradition of the noble savage - which, given the history of racism in South Africa, is significant (Williamson 1989:20).

By including a representation of this sculpture Siopis is questioning the way in which certain artists such as van Wouw perceived and stereotyped black people. Siopis is criticising the presentation of a unified so called National art which in the past was portrayed as conveying historical perceptions.

Siopis incorporates objects such as the binoculars, the open book, and the fob watch as symbols of discrimination (Siopis 1991:6). They were used by colonials to survey the land with the intention of dominating and controlling those whom they *colonised*.

Siopis refers to the image of the broken heart as a representation of "a static, stereotyped emblem of emotion many times removed" (Siopis 1991:6). It is devoid of emotion in that it refers to an anatomical model used for scientific purposes. By incorporating this emblem Siopis is making reference to the impartial or objective account which science claims to present. This model of a broken heart is a manifestation of objective, scientific knowledge which is supposedly emptied of all emotional content. The inclusion of the image of the heart goes beyond the merely anatomical. It can be seen as representing a certain barrenness or lack of emotion in past South African painting.

The image of Patience is based on a sculpture of Nubia (Africa) which can be found outside the new Musee d'Orsay in Paris. The relevance of the inclusion of this sculpture is that it is "part of an allegorical set of sculptures which depict the continents of the colonial world" (Siopis 1991:4).

By including an image which relates to the depiction of Nubia [an emblem of a colonial past] Siopis is making reference to those who were seen as *Other* and upon whom civilization needed to be imposed. Just as the magnifying glass and binoculars represent objects of discrimination and control, Patience represents the effects of these objects of domination and the discriminatory ideas which lay behind their use (Siopis 1991:1).

In the painting Patience sits on the *monument* of civilization whilst performing the domestic task of peeling a lemon with a knife. Siopis comments that while the "frontal pose, revealed breast, and pseudo-classical drapery [of Patience] may allude to past heroic representations of resistance, for instance Liberty Leading the People, her activity (the domestic task of preparing food), inverts the heroic Western convention of depicting women" (Siopis 1991:4). Her appearance is one of modesty, thoughtfulness and domesticity. Siopis acknowledges that Patience is not unlike the silent witness in Dora And The Other Woman (1988) [Fig 1.2] (Siopis 1991:4). In both works the emblematic image of the lemon being peeled is evident. Its significance is one of revelation in which the past is uncovered and exposed (Richards 1986:7).

The receding landscape background is constructed from mediated images of naked *savages*, Boers, missionaries, British military, Voortrekkers and scenes of heroism, violence and disaster. The images are photocopies which have been taken from contemporary periodicals, 19th century popular engravings, illustrations from high school text books and from various other documents on the history of South Africa. These photocopies are cut up, collaged together and painted over to form the

Figure 1.2 Penelope Siopis
Dora And The Other Woman (1988)
Pastel on paper
153 x 120 cm
Private Collection - Greg Catz

main body of the work. The same image is often repeated and the scale of the image may be either enlarged or reduced. Siopis says that there is no horizon line to restrain or define the space: "The only limit, above and below, forward or back, is the artificial one of the frame and the illusionism" (Siopis 1991:6).

In the work entitled Cape Of Good Hope (1989/90) [Fig 1.3] Siopis again includes appropriated depictions of art and artefacts which constitute historical evidence. Although a black woman is again the subject of the history painting Kendell Geers (1990) remarks that she is excluded from the "history depicted because of both her gender and her race" (Geers 1990:15). In this work the naked black woman holds up, or on to, a heavy curtain. She stands with her back to the viewer and her arms are outstretched, a pose which Geers describes as being reminiscent of the stance taken by a slave before being whipped (Geers 1990:15). This stance reflects the history of violence and abuse towards women and people of colour in South Africa's past. The viewer is forced to acknowledge this mistreatment and confront the prejudice within themselves.

Siopis uses photocopied imagery taken from text books to make up the woman's body. The historical images used are of South African women taken from the 19th century visual genres. Elizabeth Rankin (1992) describes the surface of the female form as rich and sensuous in both colour and texture (Rankin 1992:13). Rankin adds that the intensity and profusion of imagery within the dominant female form prevents a simple reading of this sensual surface and hinder the immediate acquisition of meaning (Rankin 1992:13).

Rankin says that despite the figure's nude body being outstretched and exposed, the viewer is denied easy access (Rankin 1992:13). The tiny collaged images that shape the contour of the woman's body are trapped beneath a layer of wax, which is her skin. Rankin notes that the viewer is forced to become aware of shift between surface of the image and the depth within the image (Rankin 1992:13). Rankin explains that the spectator, therefore, has the option of reading the collage in two ways: either as textual detail, i.e. as a sensually painted surface, or as individual images which embody colonial history (Rankin 1992:13). The woman in the painting thus embodies history both literally and figuratively Her body is constructed of images from the past, yet the viewer is denied immediate access to this visual rendering by the wax layer that entombs the imagery.

According to Geers, authentic, documented pottery shards were found physically incorporated into the work (Geers 1990:15). Labels are used to identify the place where the pottery shards where found as well as their specific use and the cultural group that produced them. The body of the woman contains a number of unidentified fragments. Geers explains that the convex shape of these shards echo the curve of the woman's buttocks and breasts. He goes on to say that the placement of these shards corresponds with those areas of the woman's body which would traditionally be adorned with jewellery. In an art gallery context, the specific historic significance of the shards is diminished. The shard has been removed from its original context to a fine art context where it is used as a formal fine art component. This altered context of the shard creates a change in meaning although its original meaning remains evident. Geers makes the following deduction about the altered context of the shards:

> The shards are transformed from being conceptual evidence of a historical, practically forgotten era, into historically loaded formal elements of a late twentieth century painting examining issues of representation (Geers 1990:15).

Dora and the Other Woman (1988) centres on the stories of two women. Dora was a young woman from the Viennese bourgeoisie who, at the turn of the century was sent to Sigmund Freud for the treatment of "hysterical unsociability" (Williamson 1989:22). Saartje Baartman, the *Other* woman in the painting, was a Khoisan woman who was bought by a Victorian man and exhibited in England and Paris from 1810 until her death in 1815. Hazel Friedman (1990) reports that Saartje was placed on exhibition and was displayed with the intention of showing both the sexual and racial differences between whites and blacks (Friedman 1990:4). She was used to reinforce the myth that black people occupy an "inferior position to whites on the scale of humanity" (Friedman 1990:5).

Marilyn Martin, the director of the South African National Gallery describes Saartje Baartman as follows:

> Saartje Baartman is a potent symbol of the humiliation suffered by indigenous people in general and indigenous South Africans in particular...[she] has become a focus of the way in which human beings were used by eighteenth-and nineteenth-century theorists of race to prove the superiority of Europeans; she stands for all those who were reduced to specimens and scientific information. Her people were regarded as closer to the animal kingdom than to humankind, or at least among the most primitive of human types. As a result, they became the most brutalised people in the history of southern Africa-victims of genocide and slavery, stripped of their land and the fabric of their lives and their culture (Martin 1996:9).

The following account of Dora and the Other Woman is derived in part from an unpublished description of the work by Siopis, obtained from

the Johannesburg Public Library. The image consists of a "theatrical, baroque" setting in which the figure of Dora stands (Williamson 1989:22). The artificial, stage-like environment is made more prominent by the inclusion of a box or pedestal upon which Dora stands (Williamson 1989:22). Dora holds a piece of fabric around her body, into which she buries her face in a posture of shame or embarrassment. The function of this cloth is ambiguous: is it meant to conceal, to cover-up or obscure, or is its function one of unveiling or revelation? (Siopis 1991:2). Pinned onto the fabric, and scattered on the stage-like floor are images of Saartje undergoing supposed scientific observations (Williamson 1989:22). The images are drawn in a cartoon-like fashion, thus heightening the abusive nature of the situation. They show Saartje being looked at from various angles, often with the use of a telescope and a magnifying glass (Williamson 1989:22). These instruments of science are intended to reflect the racial and intellectual superiority of European thinking which was prevalent in the 19th century. The belief in Western superiority resulted in an almost obsessive need to establish physical difference (Williamson 1989:22). Women such as Saartje were subject to extensive photographic documentation as part of scientific projects which were established to explore racial difference.

Siopis makes further reference to the humiliation and shame inflicted upon both Saartje and Dora through the inclusion of the jewel-box, which appears in the lower right of the painting (Siopis 1991:3). The jewel-box refers to the interpretation of one of Dora's dreams. The jewel-box was said to symbolise Dora's genitals - as were the things that the box contained. The jewel-box and the specimen bottles refer to the experiments done on Saartje, and indicate the way in which

science, which has traditionally been dominated by white western males, has controlled the image of female sexuality (Siopis 1991:3). The introduction to the book Miscast (1996) Martin states that the plaster cast made upon Saartje's death, together with her skeleton and sexual organs, continue to be kept at the Musee de l'Homme in Paris (Martin 1996:9). It was only in December 1995 that the South African government intervened on behalf of the Griqua people, to return Saartje's remains to South Africa for burial.

The lavish drapery, which occupies a large section of the painting, together with the empty gold frames and other props, all emphasise the artifice of the setting (Siopis 1991:4).

THE HISTORY PAINTING SERIES - THE PROCESS OF DECONSTRUCTION

It will become evident through the analysis of the History Painting series, that Siopis sees the necessity for a thorough re-evaluation of those humanistic principles upon which art history is based (Owens 1992:203). Siopis uses deconstructive methods such as allegory and metaphor in her paintings. Craig Owens depicts allegorical imagery as imagery which is appropriated (Owens 1992:205). The "allegorist does not invent images but confiscates them [and] poses as its interpreter" (Owens 1992:205). He goes on to relate how the image becomes something other and adds another meaning to the image" (Owens 1992:203). The use of allegory in her paintings together with processes of collage, fragmentation and layering, allows Siopis to question established vocabularies, assumptions and methodologies used in traditional presentations of South African history (Degenaar 1987:2).

Siopis uses deconstruction in her paintings as a means of transcending established borders in representation. Jacques Derrida's definition of deconstruction relates the possibilities of this method and indicates the possibilities that deconstruction offers artists such as Siopis. Vincent B. Leitch (1983:118) includes Derrida's concept of the text in which Derrida describes how the text is no longer a unit nor can it be confined within certain boundaries:

> What has happened is a sort of overrun that spoils all these boundaries and divisions and forces us to extend the accredited concept, the dominant notion of a "text",... is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far (not submerging or drowning them in an undifferentiated homogeneity, but rather making them more complex, dividing and multiplying strokes and lines) (Leitch 1983:118).

The relevance of Derrida's definition of deconstruction to Siopis's History Painting series may be found in the process of layering, fragmentation, collage and the appropriation of imagery. Elizabeth Rankin (1992) describes the process used by Siopis as constituting an important part of the meaning (Rankin 1992:6). The use of collage, for example, was to act as the foundation of her history paintings. Siopis uses the process of collage as a means of extending the painting's frame of reference (Rankin 1992:6). Through the collage technique Siopis disrupts the unity of the images employed and in so doing disrupts the certainty of dominant metaphors which these images present. Certain dominant metaphors, such as those which maintain white nationalist principles, are the constructs of a western patriarchal society and it is these established constructs of power that Siopis aims to deconstruct in her paintings.

One of the consequences of the deconstructive process in Siopis's History Paintings is that it challenges the boundaries and divisions of the text and refers to issues such as feminism, politics and social concerns which exist beyond the painted images.

Siopis uses the collage technique as a means of dismantling both socio-political and representational boundaries. Hal Foster (1987) makes the following deductions regarding collage:

> ...each cited element breaks the continuity or the linearity of the discourse and leads necessarily to a double reading: that of the fragment perceived in relation to its text of origin; that of the same fragment as incorporated into a new whole, a different totality. The trick of collage consists also of never entirely suppressing the alterity of these elements reunited in a temporary composition. Thus the art of collage proves to be one of the most effective strategies in the putting into question of all the illusions of representation (Foster 1987:88).

Therefore, by using a process of collage, Siopis aims to intercept the sense of order and structure that is often essential to the credibility and power of the dominant metaphor. Siopis disrupts the unity of mediated images. In so doing, she exposes the way in which photocopied dominant images covertly record the history of racism and oppression in South African history.

One of Friedman's deductions is that the use of mediated imagery reveals the way in which society is encouraged, through texts and visual material, to classify individuals according to categories which are characterised by the use of stereotypes (Friedman 1990:2). Owens reiterates this deduction in the following quote on representation:

> It could be demonstrated that art history has always defined representation in relation to these two activities - substitution or imitation - representation, in the sense of a symbolic activity; presentation in the sense of a theatrical presentation. The first, or symbolic mode is the mode of substitution; the image is conceived as a replacement, a stand-in, and therefore as compensating for an absence. The second, or theatrical mode is the mode of repetition; the image is defined as the replica of a visual experience, and the artist works to promote the illusion of the tangible, physical presence of the object he represents. Thus, art historians have always located representation in terms of the poles of absence and presence which, as Derrida has shown, constitute the fundamental conceptual opposition upon which Western metaphysics is based. What is needed, then, is not a concept of representation (for we already have two), but a critique (Owens 1992:97).

Colin Richards (1986) adds another perspective to this concept of *presence* in Western representation (Richards 1986:1). Richards uses the term as a reference to that which is made to appear obvious and "determinable" (Richards 1986:1). The concept of *presence* is equated with notions of truth and knowing, which are primarily attained through the mastery of opticality (Richards 1986:1). The illusion of objective realism is therefore at the centre of this concept of *presence* (Richards 1986:1).

Richards states that the faith in *presence* is displayed through the use of "concepts such as 'achieved unity', autonomy, closure, singularity, completeness (totality)" (Richards 1986:1). Richards believes that the retention of these ideas of a "fixed, established and essentially unchanging 'given' reality, contributes to the "maintenance of specific forms of sexual and/or cultural supremacy" (Richard 1986:1). Siopis addresses these problems within visual representation by rendering visible those invisible strategies and tactics which representation utilises.

Richards explains that Siopis uses collage as a means of extending the painting's frame of reference and of drawing the viewer's attention to her critique of representation (Richards 1986:4). Siopis uses mediated imagery to critique the invisible identity strategies of representation. The inclusion of photocopies denies masterful illusionistic painting and puts into question the status of Western opticality. The images, therefore, do not adhere to the illusionistic space of traditional Western representation. The images do not comply with conventional pictorial codes of "centralised, static, illusionstic space and perspectival recession" (Richards 1986:6). Richards draws attention to the fact that "the whole status of opticality in general has been questioned by many feminists" (Richards 1986:5). He gives Luce Irigaray as an example of a feminist who "criticises the whole specula logic of patriarchy" (Richards 1986:5).

In Patience On A Monument the fragmentation of the imagery implies that the viewer is given partial access to the information which the images present. Siopis informs the viewer of the subjectivity of historical representation by undermining those pictorial codes which are used to reinforce and justify notions of historical truth. Richards explains that the viewer is not offered a coherent, unified image, but one that is disrupted and fragmented (Richards 1986:2). This implies that the viewer can no longer remain neutral, but is forced to negotiate meaning.

Siopis questions the dominance of *presence* in Western painting by disrupting the painted surface through fragmentation, layering and the inclusion of mediated imagery. Siopis explores various historically established Western painting conventions such as illusionism. The use

of a receding landscape in Patience On A Monument may initially appear to conform to conventional Western illusionism. However, on closer examination the viewer is made aware of the fragmented nature of the landscape and the way in which both the layering of the repetition of the imagery subverts and deconstructs the Western convention of the illusion of perspective.

By literally cutting up images of South African history, Siopis is segmenting that which was previously whole. In so doing, she undermines the composed unity of 'presence' by using both fragments and fragmentation in her work. Richards describes a fragment as the "partial use of an object as image; whilst fragmentation designates a process of fracturing, cutting, dividing, rupturing or destroying the totality of the image" (Richards 1986:2). Fragments contain an element of shrouded mystery or partial knowledge. The use of the fragment, according to Owens, results in a departure from the logocentric realm of the complete text to that of the text ruined (Owens 1992:206).

The inclusion of photocopied imagery reduces the power and status of the appropriated images as they are consigned to background imagery. Their presence becomes secondary to the more dominant presence of the black women in these paintings. The positioning of a black woman as the central focus in a historical painting can be seen as having an ironic significance. Paintings such as Patience On A Monument reflect on the shortage of imagery in South African history painting depicting the varied historical experiences of women. Most historical paintings reflect the power struggle of men.

Siopis undermines the authority of male dominated representations and their claims to objective rendering. Rankin states that the scenes of iconic historical events are not given prominence in Siopis's history paintings (Rankin 1992:4). The more accustomed depictions of history i.e. those representing heroic protagonists, battles and victories are relegated to minor roles in her paintings. Whereas these scenes would customarily be seen on a grand scale, Siopis reduces the scale of these images. Rankin describes how "the tiny images of such conventional heroes as adventurers, soldiers and colonial rulers" merge into the landscape background and become secondary to the more dominant figure of Patience - a black woman, whose monumental presence asserts itself over the landscape (Rankin 1992:4).

By diminishing the scale of these heroic historical scenes, Siopis is undermining not only the importance of the appropriated historical imagery, but the patriarchal values that they embody. The traditional Western interest in historical depiction of battles and conquests are no longer the central interest. Its importance has been relegated to the background and made way for feminist and other socio-political concerns. Rankin explains that by using copies of copies the images are distanced as much by the process of representation as they are by time (Rankin 1992:11). This reduction in scale results in a loss of their original significance as indicators of power and domination. The removal of this overt display of authority creates an arena for the presentation of other aspects of history and the opportunity to explore the relationships which have resulted from the misuse of power.

Siopis again turns Western values of representation in on themselves by placing Patience on a monument. South Africa is known for its

extensive collection of monuments, especially those which represent certain leaders and events in South Africa's past. The men presented were, predominantly white, nationalists. These monuments stand as inherent symbols of the apartheid era and represent the ideological beliefs of the forefathers of apartheid.

Richards makes the following poignant statement about the focus on South African history in Siopis's painting:

> And then there is History proper, or more properly improper! A culture anxious as to its historical fate is perhaps fated to memorialise its past. White Afrikaner nationalist culture ardently carved its vision of history in stone. The often bittersweet words of 'Die Stem' ('The Call of South Africa') chisel out an ultimately sour, leaden picture of history as almost unremitting pain, punishment, migration, leavened only by a finally self-serving, other- excluding, narrative of divine redemption. This seems nowhere more concrete and visible than in the Voortrekker monument in Pretoria, where the story is a dismal one of the triumph of 'civilisation' over barbarism. (Richards 1994:8)

Siopis utilises this tradition of glorifying the heroic by inverting celebrated historical concepts of the heroic in her paintings. She does this by placing a black woman, who is traditionally seen as unheroic, in a position usually reserved for prominent Western males in positions of power (Williamson 1989:22).

In Cape of Good Hope for example, the traditional concept of creating illusion through perspective is disrupted by the inclusion of three-dimensional objects which protrude from the painting's surface. Instead of the viewer's eye being drawn into the painting through the devices of perspective, the viewer is forced to acknowledge the presence of the shards, which extend from the surface.

Rankin confirms that one of the reasons for Siopis's use of collage is to "mediate between herself and the unfamiliar experiences of", for example Patience and Saartje Baartman (Rankin 1992:9). Siopis uses collage as a means of representing the suffering of these women.

A feature which is common to both Cape of Good Hope and Dora And The Other Woman is the dramatic, artificial setting in which the women are situated. This stage-like, theatrical effect is gained by the use of dramatic drapery, and a harsh spot-light effect which illuminates the figure and the platform upon which she stands. Siopis uses these elements, which are established and well-known features in previous genre paintings, to point to discriminatory features such as racism, bias, sexism and stereotypes which Western representation inadvertently contains. Just as the stage is an artificial construct, so too are these discriminatory features which reflect what society presents as its *norms* in representation.

In an unpublished description of her History Paintings Siopis conveys the way in which she 'adapts' features such as realism, beauty and talent from Western high or fine art traditions, because they are conventions which have in the past been seen as being "exempt from prejudice" (Siopis 1991:3). In the past it was assumed that Western pictorial conventions were above discrimination "by virtue of their aesthetic autonomy" (Siopis 1991:3). Siopis proves this to be untrue by pointing to the discriminatory conventions within the fine art tradition. She examines the discriminatory and limited conception of what Western society has depicted as standards of beauty and acceptable behaviour. The reference made here is to representations of defined and accepted constructs of *femininity* as perceived by the male gaze.

Siopis places into sharp focus the mistreatment of Saartje Baartman due to her race and sex (Williamson 1989:22).

The derogatory uses of the name 'Hottentot Venus' which was used to refer to Saartje Baartman is both ironic and cruel. Saartje was not seen as a traditional Western Venus but as someone less than human, as out of the ordinary, a bizarre spectacle of repulsion. Williamson explains that features such as Saartje's enlarged buttocks and the flap of skin which covered her genitalia (known as the 'Hottentot Apron') were seen as grotesque (Williamson 1989:22). This reaction stemmed from Western society's gross ignorance of non-western anatomical and cultural differences.

Siopis explores not only the discrimination directed at Saartje but also the way in which Dora was stereotyped as suffering from hysteria. Williamson examines the way in which certain feminist re-interpretations of Dora's case and particularly symptoms of hysteria can be presented as a "sign of resistance to patriarchal domination" (Williamson 1989:22). Similar concerns can be found in the early work of French feminist Helene Cixous who:

> ...questions the naturalness or inevitability of structural hierarchies. An important part of Cixous's project is to unearth the myth that sustains the logic of patriarchy, undoing their 'naturalness'. Cixous often uses both myth and dream in her texts as ways of exploring the archaic and the repressed, and as ways of unsettling the illusion of subjective autonomy and conscious control...Cixous's commitment to moving beyond the categories of the rational and the knowable, towards the site of creation, multiple subjectivity and the bodily roots of human culture derives from a close study of Nietzsche...Wanting to challenge the unconscious structures of patriarchal oppression, the group [French feminists which included Irigaray and Kristeva] worked 'like moles' to disturb the dominant order (Sarup 1993:110-112).

Just as the hands expose the inner flesh of the fruit in both Patience On A Monument and Dora And The Other Woman, so Siopis reveals the discrimination and pain caused by stereotyping.

In her paintings Siopis examines and tests the assumptions that support notions of "self-evident truth" (Davis and Schleiffer 1991:152). She uses the deconstructive method to undermine the "self-evident" assumptions which patriarchy presents through historical illustrations (Davis and Schleiffer 1991:152). Through processes such as cutting and collage, she seeks to uncover the unexamined rules that are concealed beneath existing models of Western representation.

Siopis is not interested in what representation reveals, but in what it conceals. In other words, Siopis seeks to question cultural codes and to explore, rather than conceal, social and political affiliations. Siopis does this through juxtaposition, collage, fragmentation and mediated imagery to weaken the concept of a unified narrative. The creation of unities is denied through the simultaneous presence of different perspectives. The result is the disruption of the harmony within the text and the narrative structure. As Sarup writes:

> ...there is a shift of focus from identities to differences, unities to fragmentations, presence to absence ... deconstruction celebrates dissemination over truth, explosion and fragmentation over unity and coherence, undecidable spaces over prudent closures, playfulness and hysteria over care and rationality (Sarup 1993:53).

THE POLITICS OF DECONSTRUCTION

The mediated images which Siopis incorporates in her History Paintings are intended to reveal the pictorial conventions that are employed in historical representation (Friedman 1990:4). Siopis uses these images to present a radical critique on established *master narratives*. These master narratives refer to the supposedly objective account of patriarchal history that white males have produced in Western culture (Friedman 1990:4). It is a presentation of history which obviously provides much scope for feminist critique.

The History Painting series presents a critique of historical representation that may be seen as both a "political and epistemological event" (Foster 1987:xiii). Hal Foster says a master narrative is "political in that it challenges the order of patriarchal society and epistemological in that it questions the structure of its representations" (Foster 1987:xiii). Siopis reveals the way in which 19th century history painting and the political context from which these paintings come are a product of restriction and exclusion. The ideology behind certain 19th century imagery was to control the production of knowledge in South Africa and eliminate alternative view points. Only those paintings which continued to reiterate and maintain the ideology of the nationalist government where accepted the government funded galleries and museums. Friedman explains that by using imagery that is familiar to the viewer [i.e. images such as those of Jan van Riebeeck, taken from school history text books], Siopis intends to reveal how our knowledge of history is "determined through ideologically charged visual conventions" (Friedman 1990:4).

Through the exploration of established dominant metaphors, Siopis exposes the principles of bias and discrimination which were previously

masked by a facade of objectivity in earlier South African history painting. Despite their claim to objective renderings of truth, the historical imagery which Siopis examines focuses on the way in which that imagery is used to legitimise and reinforce the authority of a patriarchal Western culture. It is for this reason that Siopis focuses on the way in which race, class and gender discrimination have resulted in a biased presentation of South African history. Siopis' work "challenges and criticises historical mythologies", exposing the prejudice behind the once unquestioned conventions (Friedman 1991:15). Siopis does not intend to replace what she sees as an unsatisfactory presentation of South African history with the "real story" (Ferguson 1990:6). She does, however, cast doubt and recontextualise the dominant images representing South African history.

Siopis offers a critique of what she determines as oppressive relations within Eurocentric discourse and analyses the historically configured relations of power. The History Paintings project a multicultural stance which is intended to decolonize representation in order to expose the power relations between communities. It is a process which is less concerned with eliminating that which Eurocentric tradition has established, as it is with seeing things anew. Instead of segregating historical periods and presenting cultural groups in isolation, Siopis aims to explore their interconnectedness. By exploring and incorporating a female perspective on history, Siopis brings another dimension to South Africa's past. In paintings such as Patience On A Monument and Dora And The Other Woman Siopis examines the way in which women, particularly black women, have been misrepresented and largely absent in history. Siopis creates the space for those whose names and

lives were not recorded by official history to contribute to the narrative that constitutes the history of South Africa.

Her History Paintings focus on the problem of generalising knowledge and of giving a simplistic presentation of experience. She questions the categories of "self-evident" truth and "absolute grounds of knowledge" which traditional representation has attempted to enforce (Davis and Schleiffer 1991:162). The result is that established meanings and values are continually destabilised. The purpose of this decentring process is to "suspend all that is taken for granted about language, experience and communication" (Norris 1986:xi). Elfriede Pretorius explains that this decentring of visual imagery in Siopis's History Paintings follows the deconstructive principle "that truth has no specific origin or centre" (Pretorius 1982:125). An endless shift from sign to sign results in an infinite search of meaning (or possible meanings) which is never terminated or fixed" (Pretorius 1982:125). This is evident in the way in which Siopis uses established traditions in a way that attempts to turn its own values against itself. Works such as Patience On A Monument and Dora and the Other Woman, epitomise the misrepresentation of cultural identity, gender and race in South African history.

However, her works show not only an interest in the "representation of politics", but also the "politics of representation" (Williamson 1989:22). Williamson explains that Siopis does this by using popular South African historical imagery and exposing "Western painting in ways which attempt to turn its own values against itself" (Williamson 1989:22). Siopis reveals the way in which prejudice operates and is validated in historical images and texts by exposing and undermining

the appearance of objectivity and realism. Siopis achieves this by placing the principles of logocentricism "under erasure" (Sarup 1993:36). Siopis attains this in her paintings by emphasising the links that connect communities in a "conflictual network rather than presenting the binarisms of oppositional categories" (Shohat and Stam 1994:6). The idea of emphasising the links within communities can be seen in the juxtaposition of Dora and Saartje Baartman in which the discrimination and misrepresentation inflicted upon these two women is rendered visible. Rather than creating an alternative account of these women's stories Siopis reveals the way in which patriarchal ideology operates in Western representation. Paintings such as Dora and the Other Woman undermine the principles upon which logocentricism is based. Sarup gives the following account of logocentricism:

> First principles are often defined by what they exclude, by a sort of 'binary opposition' to other concepts. These principles and their implied 'binary opposites' can always be deconstructed... Derrida suggests that we should try to break down the oppositions by which we are accustomed to think and which ensure the survival of metaphysics in our thinking...He states that it is this longing for centre, an authorising pressure, that spawns hierarchized opposition" (Sarup 1993:36-7).

In other words, Siopis analyses the complexity of inter-relating cultural groups, instead of reversing established binary oppositions. This eliminates the privileging of certain signs to the disadvantage of others. Binary oppositions are questioned by Siopis in her paintings and placed under erasure through the critique of the ideological bias which she reveals to be concealed within Western representation.

BINARY OPPOSITIONS

The method of which Siopis uses in her paintings is a process of deconstructive close-reading. She uses this method in her work in order to expose the binary oppositions which are inscribed within South African historical representations. Deconstructive reading reveals how, in binary oppositions the one pole is privileged over the other: "public/private, masculine/feminine, same/other, rational/irrational, true/false, central/peripheral, etc." (Sarup 1993:47). It is therefore Siopis's intention to show in her paintings how the 'privileged' term relies, for its identity, on its excluding the other. Siopis explores the issue of the *Other* in Dora and the Other Woman. Siopis uses the method of deconstruction in this work to expose established myths that have become ingrained in historical representations. These myths include the perceptions and representations of women and issues related to women. She also examines the stereotypical representation of *Other* cultural groups which have been defined by Western visual presentation. She uses deconstruction not as a means of reversing categories but as a way of exploring the intricacies of representation and the codes and stereotypes that they inadvertently record.

Sarup writes:

> ...deconstruction is not simply a strategic reversal of categories which otherwise remain distinct and unaffected...texts must be read in a radically new way. There must be an awareness of ambivalence...Derrida's method consists of showing how the privileged term is held in place by the force of a dominant metaphor and not, as it might seem, by any conclusive logic. (Sarup 1993:51)

As Sarup points out, deconstruction should not be employed to simply reverse dominant categories of representation.

Deconstruction and other such processes should be used to encourage the viewer to look at those categories "in a radically new way" and to question the apparent "conclusive logic" of dominant metaphors (Sarup 1993:51).

Derrida describes deconstruction as a political practice, which attempts to dismantle the logic upon which a particular system of thought operates (Sarup 1993:51). Siopis employs this concept in her History Paintings by revealing that white, patriarchal history does not speak for all South Africa's citizens and that it has neglected the voices of women and people of different cultural groups.

Therefore, instead of re-establishing categories in which one term dominates or suppresses the other, Siopis addresses the "overlapping multiplicity's of identities and affiliations" (Shohat and Stam 1994:6). This point is qualified in the writings of Michel Foucault:

> We must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable...we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies...because of its inherent multiplicity, no discourse is all-encompassing nor finite, none ultimately 'correct'. (Ferguson, et.al. 1990:)

The critique offered by Siopis on South African history is neither meant as an endorsement or condemnation of one view-point over another, nor does she offer conclusions. Siopis disrupts the logocentric notion which aims to find a privileged position which establishes fixed meaning and final interpretations. The unified and reductive approach of logocentricism is replaced by a deconstructive process in which Siopis explores the possibilities opened up by the critique of

Eurocentricism. In Siopis's History Paintings the viewer is encouraged to confront issues such as colonial history, apartheid, patriarchal values and Nationalism. The viewer is not provided with a logocentric concept of the truth but is encouraged to establish his/her own conclusions. This follows Jean-Francois Lyotard's view that Postmodern knowledge is not simply a "tool of the authorities" but could be used to "refine our sensitivity to difference and reinforce our ability to tolerate different cultural traditions" (Boyne and Rattansi 1990:11).

Shohat and Stam explain that the "purist notion of establishing a text which is 'correct' or which is the site of resistance, is replaced by the attitude of exploring a wide variety of cultural practices" (Shohat and Stam 1994:11). As is evident in Siopis's History Painting series these texts hold within them elements of subversion which can be developed into an altered context.

CHAPTER 3

PHILIPPA SKOTNES

Skotnes's work reflects current changes in the perceptions regarding early Khoisan:Colonial history and reflects some of the ideological changes that have occurred in the representation of popular imagery regarding the Khoisan. Skotnes's prints have transcended the aesthetic borders of representation and art and have confronted various social issues. Her prints reveal her extensive knowledge of technical printmaking processes. It is, however, her presentation of ideologically based socio-political concerns that are the focus of this chapter. Rees and Borzello (1986:4) discuss what they perceive as a shift in art from being merely aesthetic to a focus on social issues.

> In discrediting the old art history, words like connoisseurship, quality, style, and genius have become taboo...The presence of the new art history is signalled by a different set of words - ideology, patriarchy, class, methodology, and other terms which betray their origins in the social sciences. Behind them lies a new way of thinking, one which sees art as intimately linked to the society which produces and consumes it, rather than something mysterious which happens as a result of the artists genius (Rees and Borzello 1986:4).

SOUND FROM THE THINKING STRINGS

The catalogue which documents the Sound From The Thinking Strings (1991) exhibition describes Skotnes as an "artist and archaeologist, printmaker and academic" (Godby 1993:2). It was in her archaeological studies that Skotnes encountered the photographic and document records of Lucy Lloyd and Wilhelm Bleek. Both Lloyd and Bleek were responsible for photographing and recording interviews with the Khoisan in the late 19th century. These photographic and documentary records provided the stimulus for Skotnes's interpretative prints as well as her own

subsequent academic publications (Friedman 1993:8). In the book she published entitled Sound From The Thinking Strings, Skotnes worked with archaeologist John Parkington, poet Stephen Watson and historian Nigel Penn, to formulate a book on the "oral history and literature, mythology, cosmology and art of the San" (Godby 1993:6). The book was published as a means of paying homage to the Khoisan people, "whose place in South African history" has yet to be acknowledged (Friedman 1993:8). It must be mentioned that these indigenous people "do not see themselves as a single unit, nor do they call themselves by a single name [the notion of the *Bushman* is as] European or settler concept" (Gordon 1992:4). Many see the term *Bushman* as being both racist and sexist. It is for this reason that the term Khoisan is to be used as a means of referring to this diverse group of people (Gordon 1992:5).

The Sound From The Thinking Strings exhibition comprises of collection of prints and a handmade book which reflect Skotnes's research on Khoisan rock paintings. Skotnes describes her aim in this project as one which:

> ...addresses aspects of the politics of culture in South Africa through reference to Bushman history, art and folklore, while at the same time to use images taken from rock paintings in such a way as to provide a new context for their interpretation (Skotnes 1992/3:52).

Skotnes incorporates in her etchings imagery taken from rock art. Although the full extent of the meaning behind rock art is not resolved, the making of rock art is believed to be associated with shamanistic practices (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:394).

> Entering an altered state of consciousness during a communal dance or in more solitary circumstances, these shamans were believed to activate a supernatural potency so that they could move between the cosmological levels as they performed

> such diverse tasks as curing the sick, making rain and controlling animals (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:394).

It is believed that the images are not, however, "simply records of religious experiences" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:395). In their book Contested Images (1994) Dowson and Lewis-Williams explain that:

> There is reason to believe that at least some of them [the rock art images] were reservoirs of potency that could be tapped by trancing shamans...They were not just pictures, but powerful things in themselves that could be implicated in effecting alterations in the shamans' states of consciousness, that is, in facilitating the mediation of the cosmological realms (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:395).

To examine the prints by Skotnes, it is necessary to consider that contact with white Colonials influenced and changed rock art images. Dowson and Lewis-Williams relate that as relations between the Khoisan and the Colonials increased "political and economic struggles developed between competing shamans" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:396). Rock paintings were affected by these changes in that they began to reflect "political power" among the shaman (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:396). Dowson and Lewis-Williams however, warn against a simplistic interpretation of rock art images:

> The artist who made these types of paintings were not merely painting historical events, chronicling social changes. Such an understanding would be related to the close-to-nature stereotype - simple people painting what was happening around them. Rather, the making of each painting was a socio-political intervention that negotiated the artist's political status. The art did not simply reflect social relations: in some instances it transformed those relations; in other instances it worked to reproduce them (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:396).

It is these rock art images which Skotnes interprets in her exhibition Sound From The Thinking Strings. The exhibition consists of three interrelated sections: Sound From The Thinking Strings, White Wagons

and eight large colour etchings which are dedicated to specific individuals who were interviewed by Bleek and Lloyd (Godby 1993:6).

The imagery in the White Wagon series is of a more historical nature than that found in the Sound from the Thinking Strings which is concerned with the cosmological beliefs of the Khoisan. Although the interpretation of Khoisan mythology by Skotnes is relevant the historical interpretation of Khoisan:Colonial interaction is more prevalent in this chapter.

The etchings which constitute the White Wagons series are "drawn in 30 cm square plates" (Skotnes 1992/3:53). They do not have titles and are identified by plate numbers. This series consists of "seven copper-plate etchings and includes a Hietshware text from the early twentieth century" (Skotnes 1992/3:52). The text represents a starting point from which the images are developed, rather than an explanation of the imagery (Godby 1993:14). The text refers to the "Hietshware Bushmen" of the Eastern Kalahari, and their first encounter with the wagons of the Trek Boers during the 19th century (Godby 1993:14). The text describes the conflict which resulted between the Hietshware and the Trek Boers as they crossed the Kalahari in their wagons in search of Lake Ngami. Godby says that the text relates the "incomprehension of the [Khoisan] people and their experience of aggression when they came directly into contact with the Trek Boers" (Godby 1993:15).

The prominent image in this series, as the title suggests, is the wagon. Michael Godby (1993) explains that Skotnes's depictions of the wagons reflect the different ways in which they were perceived by both the Khoisan and the Colonials (Godby 1993:15). The Hietshware, who saw

the wagons entering their territory for the first time would have viewed the wagons from a different perspective to that of the Trek Boers who travelled and lived in them (Godby 1993:15). Skotnes conveys through the imagery she uses the varying perceptions of the same object by these two groups. The irony is that these images reflect what Skotnes distinguishes as the various perceptions of the wagons. All seven etchings employ a roughly circular form which suggest something different in each case: a wagon wheel; the laager (one purpose of which was that of defence); the gathering bag used by the Khoisan; and the shield of the Khoisan used in defending their territory (Godby 1993:15). The images are of symbolic significance in depicting the confrontation between the Boers and the Khoisan. They are symbols of the conflict which resulted in the Khoisan being expelled from their land and denied their livelihood (Godby 1993:15).

In Plate I (1993) [Fig 2.1] the images are contained within a circular format which represents the shield of the Bechuana. Godby explains that the Bechuana were defending the region from both the Khoisan and the Trek Boers (Godby 1993:16). Skotnes says that the form of the "wagons is loosely based on rock paintings from the Ceres region" (Skotnes 1992/3:53). The images used by Skotnes in the etchings are depicted in a style that is reminiscent of Khoisan rock art. Dowson and Lewis-Williams explain that the "colonists were not intended to be among the viewers of the art, but threatening presence implicated them in the social production of the art none the less" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:397).

The images in Plate I depict "horses and their riders, animal-drawn vehicles and women in dresses" (Skotnes 1992/3:53). White forms appear

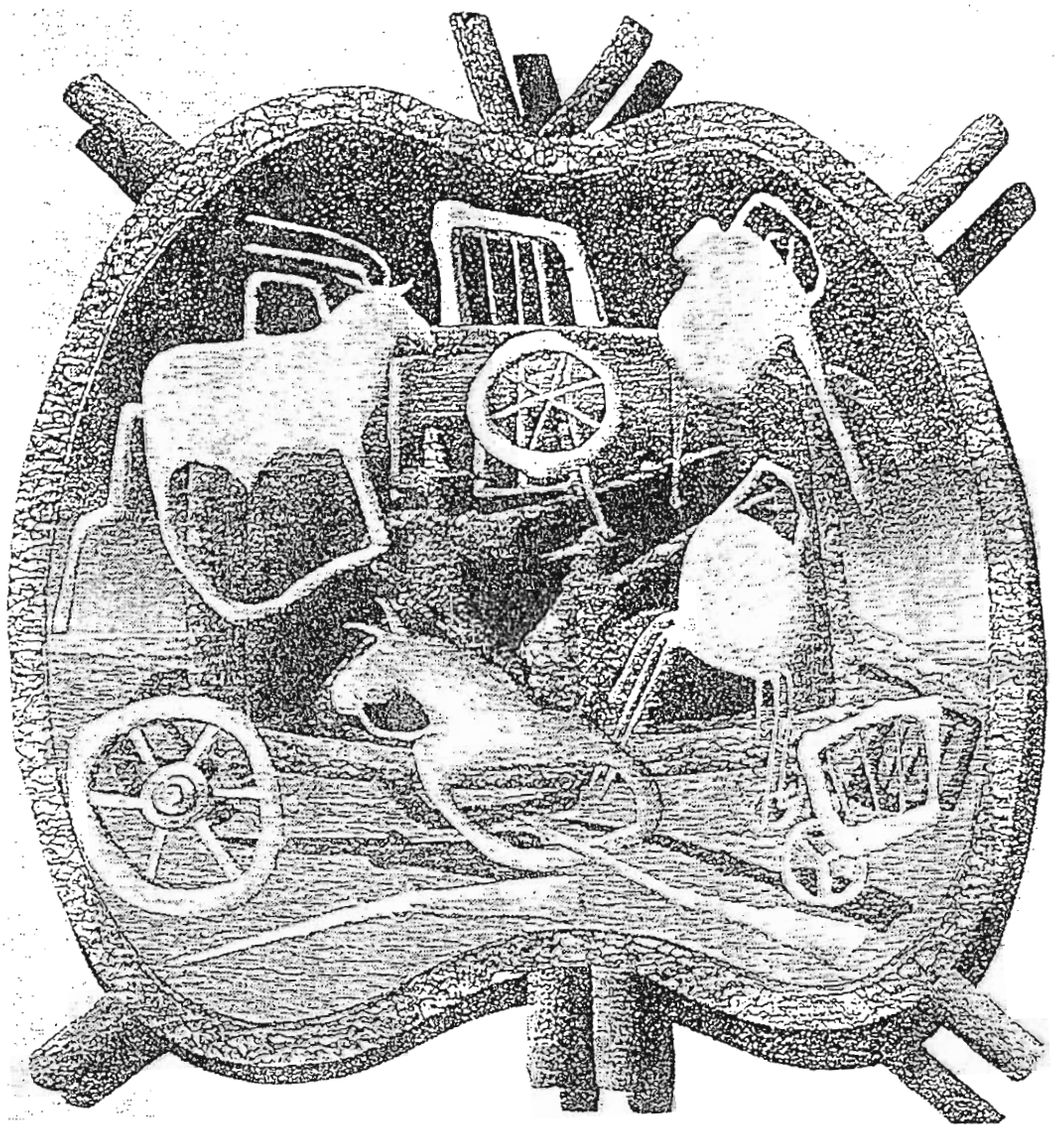

Figure 2.1 Philippa Skotnes
White Wagons - Plate I
Monochrome etching on plate
300 x 300 cm
Private Collection

to float in front of the aforementioned imagery. The white forms include a bag and wild-life. These images are symbolically linked to the Khoisan. The bag which was used by the Khoisan to carry edible goods and weapons also had symbolic significance. According to Skotnes the bag was "closely related to the animal from which it was made, it was a culturalised artefact which was [believed to be] able to revert to its animal form" (Skotnes 1992/3:55). The bag was further associated with the trickster god called Mantis who possessed a bag made from hartebeest skin which was said to follow the Mantis (Skotnes 1992/3:55).

The Khoisan-related objects in Plate I appear to be floating between the spectator and the landscape background of the print (Godby 1993:16). Skotnes says that this device is used to suggest "a veil of Bushman thought through which the viewer must see the Trek Boers' encounter with the land" (Skotnes 1992/3:53). As Dowson and Lewis-Williams convey "the [rock] art...does not describe a world, it is that world...the boundaries between 'this world' and 'the world of the spirit' is a special Western construction" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:327). It is this concept that Skotnes intends to perpetuate in the representation of the Khoisan encounter with the Colonial wagons.

In many of her etchings Skotnes draws attention to the formal elements used in Khoisan rock art. Skotnes argues that the "rock-face itself provides the context for the individual images and that this rock face is the divide between the real world and the world of the spirit" (Skotnes 1992/3:52). Skotnes applies this principle to the White Wagons series. The depiction of space which Skotnes adopts in the

etchings is one in which the objects appear to float between the surface upon which they are drawn and the viewer. The result is one that denies Western illusionism and its conventional use of perspective. In 'The Visual As A Site Of Meaning' Skotnes suggests that "perhaps the time has come for us to begin to 'learn from' San art since enough perhaps, has been 'learnt about' it" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:316).

Skotnes acknowledges being influenced by Walter Battiss (1906-1982), specifically the way in which he adapted formal elements in his representation of the Khoisan (Skotnes 1992/3:52). Skotnes describes Battiss as "the most important of South African artists to meditate and interpret the images of the San through creative exploration" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:319). Skotnes explains that the study of Khoisan art by Battiss in the 1930s "altered the formal arrangement of his work" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:319).

Skotnes was influenced by the way in which Battiss "framed and cropped his images in such a way as to imply a continuous unframed space behind them" (Skotnes 1992/3:52). She was also influenced by the way Battiss "stacked figures vertically and horizontally and altered scale relationships" (Skotnes 1992/3:52). The influence of Batiss is evident in Plate I specifically in the way in which the imagery is arranged across the surface of the etching. The space which the objects occupy are not determined or defined by a horizon line (Siopis 1991:6). Skotnes uses fragmented imagery taken from various sources in order to create a dream or trance-like space. As with the space constructed by Batiss in his paintings, Skotnes stacks the imagery both vertically and horizontally in certain etchings (Skotnes 1992/3:52). In so doing she

undermines Western pictorial codes of perspective and proportion. Skotnes explains that her etchings do not follow the "Renaissance tradition of 'the window on the world' [approach] of organising the picture plane along the vertical and horizontal axes" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:323). Instead Skotnes employs in her etchings the Khoisan system of representation in which Eurocentric perspective is denied. Skotnes explains that:

> San painting cannot be assumed to be organised so as to form a direct axis of relation between the ground on which the viewer stands and the orientation of the painting. In many cases paintings are made on ceilings of caves, high out of normal reach, or on walls of caves so shallow that the only possible viewing position is on one's side or back (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:323).

The rock paintings from which Skotnes derives the imagery and composition in her etchings can not therefore be viewed according to the "Vasarian Renaissance tradition" of perspective (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:323). The reason for this, as Skotnes explains, is that "the painting [on the cave wall] was...not a static depiction of a 'visionary still', but a dynamic composition, reinforced by its situation and site" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:325).

The use of this device in Skotnes's etchings can be seen in Plate II (1993) [Fig 2.2] of the White Wagons series. In this etching Skotnes "rejects the horizontal/vertical axis [of Western representation] - and thus the constrains of gravity" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:325). The image is "composed in a concentrically dynamic way" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:325). In other words the images are arranged in a circular manner around the edge of the composition and are not necessarily viewed from left to right. Skotnes conveys that "these circular compositions act against gravity, disorientating the

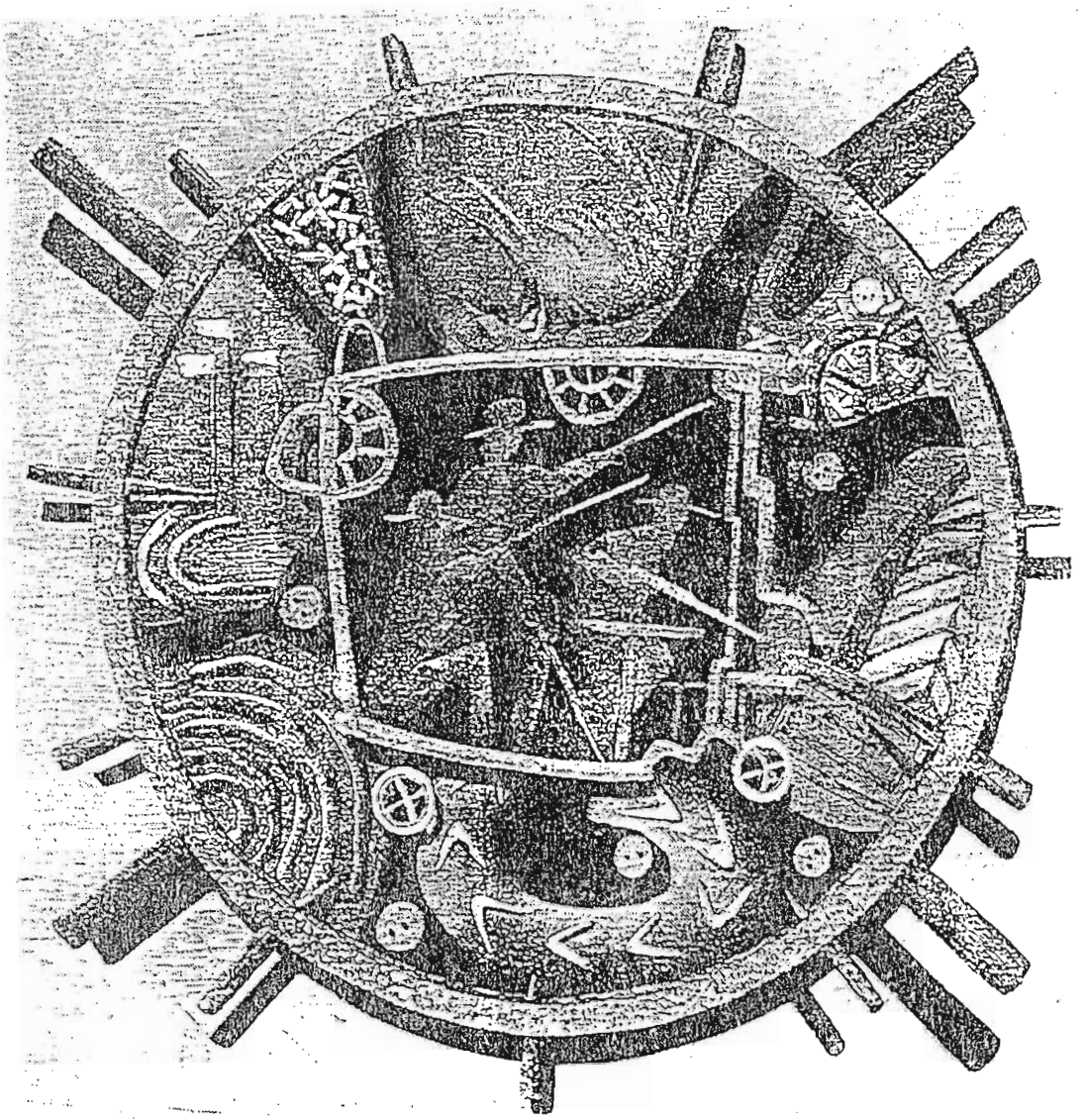

Figure 2.2 Philippa Skotnes
White Wagons - Plate II
Monochrome etching on plate
300 x 300 cm
Private Collection

viewer...this disorientation is part of the content" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:325). The use of this disorientating representational device in Plate II serves to disrupt the viewers ability "for quiet passive viewing or contemplation" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:325).

As in the previous plate Plate II also consists of a juxtaposition of various images and symbols related to the Trek Boers and Khoisan. The images are contained within a circular wagon-wheel format. The representation of a wagon containing three Trek Boers is "foregrounded in the centre of the image" (Skotnes 1992/3:54). The three Trek Boers are holding rifles which are indicative of the hostility and domination which is to result from the encounter between the two cultures. The rifles will furthermore "slaughter the wild-life on which the Khoisan way of life had depended" (Godby 1993:16). This premonition of what is to come is indicated by the representation of a dead bloated animal at the top of the image. Not only does it refer to the wild-life that will be slaughted by the Trek Boers but it also makes reference to the "water-starved cattle of the Boers" as they crossed the Kalahari in search of water (Skotnes 1992/3:54).

The imagery that surrounds the wagon in a circular manner refers to "ships and the origins of the Boers" (Skotnes 1992/3:54). Skotnes says that the flags which can be seen in the upper left hand corner of the etching symbolise the "claiming of land and the theft of birthright" (Skotnes 1992/3:54). Godby goes on to explain that the flags "proclaim the introduction of an unprecedented form of ownership" and denote the arrival of Colonial rule (Godby 1993:16). Throughout this series Skotnes depicts the contrast between the world of the Khoisan and that of the Trek Boer. This is done by continually depicting the Trek Boers

as oppressed. They appear to be confined to the earth by their cumbersome wagons. The implication of such imagery is that the Colonials are confined and oppressed by their own history. In contrast to the renditions of the Boers, the Khoisan who are not bound by the earth, appear to float across the landscape in a "cosmic space" (Godby 1993:16). Skotnes creates this sense of "cosmic space" by denying Western perspective (Godby 1993:16). As Dowson and Lewis-Williams conclude:

> The experience of Modern art has taught us to accept not only the site of the painting as a site of meaning but the portrayal and manipulation of space as an essential component of the whole pictorial programme. In the Renaissance, the world of the painting was created through a complex construction of illusionistic space. In the modern era this space was manipulated, flattened, inverted, denied, turned inside out, in each instance re-positioning the viewer, providing those seeking meaning with a new range of possibilities (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:327).

Not only does Skotnes use an alternate means of depicting space to represent an alternate view of Khoisan/Colonial history, she also uses symbols. The use of symbols such as the flag in Plate II allows for "several meanings to come into play in different contexts and [to represent] relationships [which] are never entirely static" (Godby 1993:15). The meanings of the rock art from which Skotnes derives much of her imagery are themselves neither static nor fixed. Dowson and Lewis-Williams explain that the "artists' [or shamans] manipulation of metaphors and symbols was far more complex and subtle than many modern viewers realise" (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:395).

In White Wagons Skotnes uses symbols as a deconstructive device which allows for the interplay of meaning and the dismantling of established boundaries. In this way Skotnes utilises "material culture as text"

(Skotnes 1992/3:51). She explains that "Post-structuralists such as Foucault, Barthes and Lacan have interrogated authorial authority, decentred the subject or author and given the 'text' autonomy" (Skotnes 1992/3:51). The ambiguous symbols which constitute her etchings allow for the deconstruction of the text as well as a critique of Eurocentric artistic principles. Skotnes uses objects such as the bag, flag, wheel and the rifle as symbols which are then "redeployed in a new context" (Richards 1986:3). Richards describes the role of the symbol as one which

> ...refers to lost contexts, fragments of ruined or decaying systems of signification...one has double or multiple voices, broken syntax, repetitive or cumulative open endings (Richards 1986:3).

By appropriating imagery from rock art Skotnes makes reference to "decaying systems of signification" (Richards 1986:3). Rock art images were "powerful things in themselves" which were used in shamanistic rituals (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:395). Through the incorporation of rock art images in White Wagons Skotnes refers to the potency of these images as symbols and indicates the intricate network of meaning which these images convey.

Skotnes conveys through her use of symbols the idea that "perception can never be neutral but will always be informed by the culture of the viewer" (Godby 1993:22). Godby explains that Skotnes employs a combination of Khoisan and Western methods of representation:

> Throughout the series the Trek Boers, for example, are represented as if seen by the San, and objects of San material culture, for the most part, are described in Western terms. The point is not simply to draw a line between these two worlds but, rather, to make clear that there is not one single history (Godby 1993:22).

The use of the fragment by Skotnes in White Wagons is similar to the way in which Siopis uses fragmentation in her History Painting series. Siopis employs metaphor and allegory together with processes of collage, photocopying, fragmentation and layering to deconstruct images from 19th century representations of South African history. Through the deconstruction of the appropriated imagery the context of the image is altered and a new meaning created. Siopis constructs her History Paintings from various layers of photocopied imagery in order to build up the surface and add history to the process of assembling the imagery. Skotnes uses a similar process of layering in her etchings. Skotnes incorporates layers of fragments or symbols as a means of representing "forms seen through the eyes of the Khoisan, symbolic forms, superimposed forms, fragments and palimpsests, [which] define the [landscape] as a mythical zone" (Godby 1993:21). The process of layering adds a "mystical dimension" to the etchings (Godby 1993:21).

Godby says that Skotnes utilises the layering technique to add further meaning to her work:

> Skotnes has applied her colour in layers, like the superimposition of images and palimpsests in a San rock painting, to suggest the overlaying of one version - or perception, or reality - over another...In the same manner, Skotnes has composed most of these etchings from several different plates that contribute different realities - or levels of reality (Godby 1993:19).

The White Wagons series requires the spectator to recognise the contrast between the value systems of the Khoisan and the Colonials and to view the encounter between these people from a new point of view. Skotnes attempts to represent the way in which the landscape is perceived differently by the Khoisan and the Colonials. Her etchings portray "the landscape of the San as simultaneously a physical and

spiritual space" (Godby 1993:16). In so doing Skotnes "draws attention to issues of representation and the significance of different voices" (Godby 1993:23).

Dowson and Lewis-Williams suggest that one of the solutions to undermining the stereotypical portrayal of Khoisan art and culture can be achieved through a process of critical thought and education (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:398). Dowson and Lewis-Williams argue that

> ...the Bushman art of the past is, wrongly, seen as being beyond controversy. Such controversy as there is centres on what the rock art images meant to their makers and original viewers; what they mean to us today has not been much debated. This emphasis on the past obscures the dialectic between 'original meaning' and 'contemporary meaning' that is inevitably raised by an exhibit. By mediating this dialectic, the sort of exhibit we advocate, no doubt shocking to many viewers, may help to perpetuate something of the Bushman's own power of making history (Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994:401).

In retrospect the quote by Dowson and Lewis-Williams anticipates the Miscast exhibition - a project in which *Bushman* history is rendered controversial. In the Miscast project Skotnes exposes documentation, illustrations and cultural artefacts of Khoisan history which have been relegated to museum storerooms. The exhibition aims to provide further insight into Khoisan:Colonial interaction and examine and deconstruct this controversial past.

THE MISCAST EXHIBITION - DECONSTRUCTING SOUTH AFRICA'S PAST

Unlike the exhibition Sound From The Thinking Strings, Skotnes's subsequent exhibition Miscast:Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture (which opened on 14 April 1996) did not include her own art works. A comparison between Sound From The Thinking Strings (White

Wagons) and the Miscast exhibitions indicates a progression from a more figural interpretation of Khoisan:Colonial interaction to one which depicts the subtleties of Colonial discourse and the subsequent issues of cultural representation which have resulted.

Martin describes Skotnes's role in this exhibition as one in which "curatorship itself becomes the creative act, and the sense of sight and interaction with the visual presentation, the material become the prime vehicles for reading and revealing, interpreting and celebrating" (Skotnes 1996:10).

It was while Skotnes was "researching a paper on rock painting in the South African Museum" that she became increasingly aware of the stereotypical information being presented regarding the display of *Bushmen* (Narrandes 1996:13). The dioramas in question represent a dehumanised portrayal of the Khoisan in their "natural environment" (Narrandes 1996:13).

Skotnes makes the following observation about the dioramas:

> Most South African museums include sections on the Bushmen. These are usually devoted to revealing them as timeless, ahistorical hunter-gatherers, cast all but naked and set in dioramas, which show a pristine landscape in which no foreign intrusion is evident. This image is further exploited by advertisers and popular film-makers, who perpetuate the image of the Bushmen as cast out of time, out of politics and out of history - miscast (Skotnes 1996:17).

It was this distorted portrayal of the Khoisan that resulted in Skotnes's exploration beyond the dioramas and those artefacts on display. It was in the storerooms that she discovered the skulls, teeth, jaw-bones, full body casts and cast of female genitalia which

were obtained mainly from Khoisan groups who were perceived to be a declining "racial type" (Koch 1996:15).

Skotnes realised that there was an "enormous distance between what was on display and what was in the storerooms" (Narrandes 1996:13). She therefore took the opportunity to perform a critique on both the visual representation and displays and the bones and cultural artefacts relegated to the storerooms of museums. It was Skotnes's intention in both Sound From The Thinking Strings and the Miscast project to deconstruct the stereotypical portrayal of the *Bushmen*. She examines the way in which the stereotypical presentation of the *Bushman* has been perpetuated in South African historical illustrations and documentation.

The following description of the Miscast exhibition relies extensively on Carmel Schrire's (1996) review. The exhibition, which has been housed in the South African National Gallery, consists of "three interleading rooms" (Schrire 1996:13). The first room is almost bare. The floor is covered with linoleum beneath which lies an array of documentation which refers to the Khoisan (Schrire 1996:13). These include photographs, letters, government documents, lithographs and the poster and flyers which advertised the exotic displays of *Bushmen* held in London in the 1880s (Schrire 1996:13).

Another feature of this first room is the "three antiquated cameras" which are positioned at random in the room and act as a link to the modern photographs found on the walls (Schrire 1996:13). These photographs, which were taken between 1984 and 1995 by Paul Weinberg,

portray the modern Khoisan in Namibia, Schmidtsdrift and Kagga Kamma (Schrire 1996:13).

In the second room various copies of rock art made over the past century cover the walls. Schrire explains that the copies include depictions by scholars such as "Orpen, Grey, Pringle and Stow, the artist Battiss, archaeologist Vinnicombe and a team from UCT" (Schrire 1996:13). These interpretations of rock art are set in sharp contrast to the bold, even clumsy depiction of animals and spirits made for Lucy Lloyd by Khoisan informants almost a century ago (Schrire 1996:13).

Schrire describes the third room as "a dark screening chamber where images of Bushmen and a film flicker instructively to the mournful twang of stringed instruments" (Schrire 1996:13).

As in the Sound From The Thinking Strings, the three-roomed display which makes up the Miscast exhibition includes numerous emblematic features which represent Khoisan:Colonial interaction. The "central exhibit" includes twelve rifles with brass embellishment which are chained together with the muzzles facing upwards, around a green flag (Schrire 1996:13). The display rests on a platform of grey bricks which is buttressed on four sides. The walls surrounding this feature are punctuated by various emblems (Schrire 1996:13). These include, to mention a few, a crucifix, an elongated slit window and three vertical bricks which simulate bars. The platforms which are filled with gravel house five books, each containing a letter from the word 'TRUTH' (Schrire 1996:13).

The platform opposite consists of a display box containing fragments of a human skull and jaw. The next two platforms hold "three rows of tiny potted plants" (Schrire 1996:13).

A disturbing feature of each corner are the pillars which display the fibreglass heads of various Khoisan individuals. The heads are copies taken from the "collection of Plaster of Paris live casts made a century ago" (Schrire 1996:13). They are made prominent by the surrounding illuminated base which bears the "image of a headless person" (Schrire 1996:13). In addition casts of legs, a boy's torso, a reclining man and a woman's back echo the configuration of body parts found along the storage wall encircling the dismembered heads. This is a gruesome reflection on the "instruments of death" which are found in the centre of the room (Schrire 1996:14).

On the edge of the fortress there are two cabinets. The one contains a display of nineteenth century leather dolls which are dressed in a manner "depicting a variety of tribal folk" (Schrire 1996:14). The other cabinet holds beaded leather aprons which are "surmounted" by a barbarous pair of shackles (Schrire 1996:13). The torturous juxtaposition of the shackles and aprons is reiterated and expanded upon around the walls by the series of illuminated cabinets which hold various Khoisan artefacts such as "rattles, carved bones, musical instruments and pierced ostrich eggs" (Schrire 1996:14). These cabinets are set in contrast to the surrounding walls which display the black and white photographs of poverty, "severed trophy heads, strangulated corpses [and other] exhibited curiosities" (Schrire 1996:14).

On the opposite wall is a stack of scientific paraphernalia, among which are measuring implements used for recording and documenting dissections. The wall presents a tall bank of brown cardboard boxes. They are exact duplicates of the boxes used to store collections of artefacts and bodies in museums. The labels used indicate the contents of the boxes: "Dried head 'Bushman' 429. No Details"; "Human tissue. Not for exhibition. Not for reburial"; "Human produce. Human teeth. Not for exhibition" (Narrandes 1996:13). With the use of these boxes Skotnes aims to avoid the chronological presentation of history, that is, the neat unified progression from past to present. The boxes reflect what Skotnes sees as the random nature of history, the existence of individual fragments of information which, in isolation, appear to be irrelevant but when combined produce significant meaning (Narrandes 1996:13).

Two step ladders stand between the neatly stacked boxes. The literal purpose of these ladders is one of utility in "the retrieval of the uppermost boxes" (Schrire 1996:14). However, the significance of these boxes is more extensive. They stand for those scientific undertakings which were responsible for the contents of the boxes. The symbolic use of the ladders is the classification of exotic cultures on the ladder of human progression or development (Schrire 1996:13).

The book, which accompanies the display, is filled with "provocative illustrations" (Anstey 1996:17). The (white) director of the National Gallery refused to have the word "Bushmen" in the title of the exhibition and it is for this reason that the book has a different name - Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen (Anstey 1996:17). Reading the book is a "time-consuming process" due to the consecutive

use of two different texts (Anstey 1996:17). One narrative is on the right-hand side of the page while a second text is on the left-hand side of the same page. Reading, therefore, demands "continual decisions as to whether to read the texts concurrently or separately" (Anstey 1996:17). To make cross-referencing more difficult, the chapters are not numbered. Instead of numbers, each chapter is headed by an artefact such as a skull, a gun or animal footprints (Anstey 1996:12).

Skotnes explains why she makes reading the text difficult:

> I tried to foreground the idea that looking and reading is not a passive activity. So you can't start on page one and continue until the end. You have to go back to the contents page to refer to certain things. And I picked up on some things later on, to suggest that the reader should reflect. The left-hand side is my essay - to show that, while all the text covers a lot of ground, plenty exists outside the book. History is a garbled mass which people try to bring into a coherent book. But it's an arbitrary process. The book is not chronological and it's not just narrative (Anstey 1996:12).

The fragmented technique used by Skotnes in the construction of the text was taken from Lucy Lloyd's method of recording data. Skotnes describes how in Lloyd's records the /Xam text is on the right-hand side of the page while the English translation appears next to it on the left-hand side (Skotnes 1996:23). The concurrent presentation of parallel texts on the same page offers an alternative means of recording data from the linear format used in Western methods of writing. In so doing Skotnes deconstructs this Western method. Skotnes explains that neither the stories which Lloyd was recording nor the "method of measuring the time frame of their occurrence" could be adequately represented within linear narrative (Skotnes 1996:23). It is for this reason that Skotnes employs the concurrent use of texts in the book which accompanies the Miscast exhibition. Skotnes adds that:

> ...the parallel text functions in a way that implies that there is much that lies beyond the pages of the book, and that images and representations serve less to illustrate texts, than to irritate the boundaries of the knowledge those texts are capable of encrypting. But it also serves to suggest, as Lloyd's archive does, that there is not just one narrative, nor one history, nor even one past, but that our knowledge of other realities is most severely limited when we limit the formal frameworks that we choose to employ in understanding them (Skotnes 1996:23).

James Clifford in his book entitled Writing Culture (1986) discusses the fragment and its possible benefits for representation in deconstructing Eurocentric ideology. In the following passage Clifford refers to a book written by Richard Price whose work "offers a good example of self-conscious, serious partiality" (Clifford 1986:7).

> Part of his [Price] solution has been to undermine the completeness of his own account (but not its seriousness) by publishing a book that is a series of fragments. The aim is not to indicate unfortunate gaps remaining in our knowledge...but rather to present an inherently imperfect mode of knowledge, which produces gaps as it fills them (Clifford 1986:8).

Both the recording technique of Lloyd and the processes of writing referred to in the above quotation undermines the unified and chronological presentation of knowledge that is associated with Western means of recording data. Skotnes arranges the information in the Miscast book in a fragmentary manner in order to disrupt the stereotypical representation of the Khoisan culture. As Richards explains:

> ...the ruin, the fragment, the emblem...are related to Postmodernist allegory. Its demand for supplementation and continuous deferral resists 'givenness' and pure 'presence'...like parody it resists total harmonious meaning (Richards 1986:2).

The method of "irritating the boundaries" of representation and knowledge as presented from a Western position is not dissimilar to method used by Skotnes in White Wagons (Skotnes 1996:23). In White Wagons the use of the fragment as a symbol of the Khoisan or Afrikaner/English culture allows for an interpretation which is "never entirely static" (Godby 1993:15).

> The meaning of the fragment is mysterious, partly because it represents a strange, mythical world, and partly because it is, by definition, incomplete. The spectator's mind seeks to resolve the enigma and draws information from all available sources: the juxtaposition of different forms, or of the different media themselves, becomes suggestive...(Godby 1993:14).

Although the use of fragments to deconstruct established stereotypes can be a viable means of undermining Western constructs the process of borrowing fragments from *Other* cultures has resulted in numerous problems. Accusations of speaking for or representing *Others* is one of the consequences of Postmodernism.

REPRESENTING THE *OTHER*

Skotnes accounts for her representation of the *Other* as reflecting "not knowledge of the other but practice upon the other" (Skotnes 1996:18). It is Skotnes's intention in the White Wagons series and the Miscast project to analyse the way in which "different people encountered each other, and about some of the consequences of those encounters" (Skotnes 1996:18).

In both the White Wagons etchings and related concepts which extended into the Miscast project Skotnes deconstructs the stereotypical

presentation of encounters between the coloniser and the colonised. Through the use of fragmentation and emblems in her prints and in the ideas which embody the Miscast exhibition Skotnes intends to reveal that the viewers knowledge of truth is both partial and incomplete.

One of the complications which arises from this exploration of historical truth is the problematic question of who has the authority to convey meaning and give a historical account of the past and present. The following quote describes the problem of speaking for *Others*:

> Key to the arguments put forward by Foucault and Deleuze is the awareness that any presumption to speak on behalf of others is itself a form of repression. By renouncing the traditional role of the intellectual as "spokesman" for the masses, a role which implicitly renders dumb those who are spoken for, they further problematize the relationship between theory and practice (Ferguson, et.al. 1990:5).

The issue of speaking for *Others* is one which has concerned numerous theoreticians. In this vein Gayatri Spivak presents the question: 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (Nelson and Grossberg 1988:89). The complexities of the issues which the title of Spivak's text communicates will not be discussed here. However the relevance of speaking for *Others* is an issue which is pertinent to the art work of both Siopis and Skotnes.

Speaking for *Others* is an issue that Skotnes has been confronted with numerous times regarding her interpretation of Khoisan culture and the political issues which these interpretations invoke. It is an issue which creates more questions than answers. The concern over representing *Others* does however point to the political nature of

visual representation, which in Post-Apartheid South Africa is a volatile issue.

Kendell Geers (1993) criticises the Sound from the Thinking Strings exhibition for "reinforcing precisely those Western cultural conventions of display and dislocation [Skotnes] is objecting to" (Geers 1993:14). Geers' article entitled 'Culture Reduced to Illustration' (1993) points to various contentious issues within the exhibition which raise significant questions regarding Skotnes's presentation of *Other* cultures. Geers' dominant complaint is what he describes as the reinforcement of an "Us/Them dichotomy" (Geers 1993:14). He suggests that evidence of this can be found in the way in which the white colonialists are depicted as materialistic and "earth-bound", while the Khoisan are "eulogised" (Geers 1993:14). Geers says that Skotnes is "committing a form of cultural suicide" by presenting her interpretation of the Khoisan:Colonial cultures (Geers 1993:14). Geers explains that:

> Art functions for the Bushmen as a profound expression of deep-rooted mystical and religious values. The medium, composition, context and process all contributed intrinsically to that. Lifting imagery from that specific time and culture-bound context into the Western fine art tradition reduces the imagery to decoration. Despite Skotnes's intentions, this ends up reinforcing precisely those Western cultural conventions of display and dislocation she is objecting to...The rich mystical cultural conditions and images of the Bushman age are, in the attempt, reduced to illustrations and propaganda that have no real meaning for either the deceased or the present day culture (Geers 1993:14).

In Sound From The Thinking Strings Skotnes represents the Khoisan value system through the appropriation of rock art imagery which represent "forms seen through the eyes of the San" (Godby 1993:21). Megan Biesele's (1990) criticism of this approach is that the

> Bushmen have been seen both as a sort of fairy-folk, floating over the landscape with no concept of property and no need for solid resources, and as bloodthirsty poachers with a killer instinct. Romanticisation and denigration can amount to the same thing in the end, a kind of death by myth (Biesele 1990:9).

The criticism that Skotnes is reinforcing Eurocentric stereotypes in the Miscast project has resulted in strong criticism of this controversial exhibition. The presentation of Khoisan artefacts and historical documentation has uncovered an intricate network of problems regarding the representation of historical and/or cultural artefacts.

Schrire opens her review on the Miscast exhibition with the following statement:

> It has attracted more interest, outrage, and passion that any other exhibit in the Gallery's history, as well as in the history of the people it portrays, that is, the indigenous Bushman, Hottentot, Khoikhoi, Khoisan, and/or Quena peoples of Southern Africa (Schrire 1996:13).

Many Khoisan visitors to the exhibition considered the exhibition to be an insult. One of the recurrent allegations is one of a lack of respect shown by Skotnes for the Khoisan people and their history. Perhaps the most noticeable difference between the Sound From The Thinking Strings and the Miscast project was the shift in focus from the celebration of the "magical dimension of the San belief system" to one which examines the control of the Khoisan heritage (Godby 1993:16).

In her review of the exhibition Yvette Abrahams (1996) says, "I looked for any sign of African empowerment and agency (Abrahams 1996:14). I scanned the walls carefully, searched the corners and even the floors, to find nothing but the Khoisan cast as eternal victim. What Skotnes

had done was to renew that dishonour in the present" (Abrahams 1996:14).

Yet what is it that has caused people to deem the objects on display to be inappropriate for an art exhibition? Schrire offers one opinion:

> ...[the exhibition is] stepping right out of the mould of mannered dioramas and curate collections by exhibiting these same objects in an utterly different way. It does all this by dint of artistic creativity and sheer bravado, offering a series of images that catapult right into the darkest heart of the anthropological venture, to conflate science and sorrow, archives and agony, and to invest museums and their tidy displays with the cold, sour stench of the mortuary (Schrire 1996:13).

For Abrahams the most perplexing features of the exhibition is the plaster casts which are prominent on first entering the exhibit (Abrahams 1996:14). The reason for such offence was that decency and respect for the Khoisan had once again been defiled. Abrahams recounts some of the issues that were discussed in a meeting which took place with Skotnes the day after the exhibition opening. This account refers to one of the requests made by Abrahams at that meeting:

> My people had left little for me to say, so all I wanted to do was to ask Skotnes to remove the casts. I could hardly believe my ears when I heard her begin to enumerate reasons why she could not. Instead she offered to add the recording of our protests to the exhibition. Our deepest emotions were to be turned into instant art. The response to our attempt at empowerment was to immediately disempower us by, yet again, making us part of the objects on exhibit (Abrahams 1996:15).

Another of the contested features is the floor of the exhibit, which is covered with enlarged photocopied newspaper articles and photographs of the Khoisan. For Skotnes these references were, "a visual metaphor for trampling a history underfoot" (Anstey 1996:17). But for many Khoisan

visitors this visual metaphor adds further insult to the injustices suffered by the Khoisan over the centuries.

One visitor, who is identified only as "from the people of Schmidtsdrift, Kuru and Namibia" (Anstey 1996:17), had the following to say about the covered floor:

> I do not want to walk on the floor because I am walking on my people. Their suffering is too important. It should have been shown on the wall (Anstey 1996:17).

The collection of Khoisan photographs by Paul Weinberg is an integral part of this exhibition. Although the photographs are not taken by Skotnes they are relevant in that they contribute to her portrayal of the relationship between Khoisan and Western culture. Skotnes included the photographs with the intention of providing a contemporary view of the Khoisan. Skotnes sees the photographs as confronting present issues surrounding the Khoisan. The photographs are one of the problematic features of the exhibition in that they document the *Other* from the perspective of a white, male. At the 1996 South African Art Historians Annual Conference, Barbara Buntman and Rory Bester questioned the issue regarding what they see as the problematic construction of a *Bushman* identity in the photography of Weinberg.

The title of Buntman and Bester's paper is 'The problem of mainly White, middle-class men photographing everybody else: Paul Weinberg's photographs of Khoisan from Kagga Kamma and Schmidtsrift'. The paper examines what Buntman and Bester refer to as *Bushmania*. The term refers to the popular depictions of the *Bushmen* who are portrayed according to the dominant stereotypes constructed by predominantly white, middle-class men. The stereotype perpetuates the myth of the

Bushmen as unified, timeless, hunter-gathers. This is the same stereotype that Skotnes perceives as evident in museum dioramas in which *Bushmen* are depicted in their natural state.

Although Buntman and Bester accept that the photographs are an attempt to deconstruct the popular image of the *Bushmen*, they believe that the photographs construct an alternative stereotype. They believe that photographs provide a negative image of the *Bushmen* as victim and create a generalisation of African poverty which invites a judgmental interpretation of the subjects. The re-presentation of the Khoisan as victims is an allegation which Abrahams has accused Skotnes of perpetuating in the Miscast project.

Buntman and Bester believe that photographs create a fragmented reality in which *types* are created and which therefore re-romanticises the *Bushmen*. By focusing on the Khoisan underclass status, the photographs reflect the stereotype of the colonised subjects who co-operate with and accepts their subjugation in silence.

It is for this reason that Buntman and Bester see the photographs as problematic. They view the photographs as perpetuating the construct of *Bushmen* identity by white, western, middle-class males.

Abrahams' overall criticism of the exhibition is as follows:

> All of this would not matter, I suppose, were it not for Skotnes' stance. What the elite does to entertain the elite is their business. Fashions change and if the elite today enjoy a spice of guilt, a dash of naked bodies and some charity with their art it really could not matter less to us. But Skotnes' insistence that she is in some sense doing something 'for' the Khoisan remains an irritant. This is not a philosophical issue, but a practical one. Either she knew it would be offensive and did not care, or she had no

> idea. Either way, their exhibition casts into question Skotnes' claims to present a Khoisan voice. How can you speak 'for' a people you know so little about? How can you speak 'for' a people you do not respect? (Abrahams 1996:15).

The following quote by Greg Dening can be found in large red letters across the top of the hall at Miscast. In this quote Dening refers to the politics of speaking for *Others*. Ironically it is one of the issues that critics such as Abrahams have accused Skotnes of perpetuating. This quote perhaps offers some form of a response to this kind of criticism:

> There is no Native past without the Stranger. No Stranger without the Native. No one can hope to be mediator or interlocutor in that opposition of Native and Stranger, because no one is gazing at it untouched by the power that is in it. Nor can anyone speak just for the one, just for the other. There is no escape from the politics of our knowledge, but that politics is not in the past. That politics is in the present (Dening 1992:178-9).

Skotnes makes reference to this point in the exhibition through the inclusion of the quote from Dening which states that "there is no Native past without the Stranger" (Dening 1992:178).

Skotnes's response to the allegations that she is speaking for the Khoisan culture is as follows: "if people accuse me of appropriating the Bushmen, they're not accepting the fundamental premise of what I've done. This is about relationships and not one side or another" (Anstey 1996:17). Skotnes says that:

> All the evidence that I encountered in museums was constructed and created by Europeans. It is their photographs, their casts, their collections. For me it was important to foreground that, and at the same time to say that I am not in any way speaking on behalf of other people, I am just representing my choices and what I found in museums (Narrandes 1996:13).

Skotnes explains that the "exhibition is a critical and visual exploration of the term 'Bushman' and the various relationships that gave rise to it" (Skotnes 1996:18). In the White Wagons series and in later ventures such as the Miscast project Skotnes explores the

> ...relationships that existed between Khoisan individuals and white settlers: relationships that were fluid and changing, governed by differing needs and criteria, to which both parties contributed, and by which each party was irrecoverably altered (Skotnes 1996:18).

The problem of representing *Other* cultures and working with artefacts which belong to *Other* cultures is an issue which both Siopis and Skotnes have confronted in their visual representations of South African history. Clifford's remarks offer one perspective on the problematic issue of cultural representation:

> If "culture" is not an object to be described, neither is it a unified corpus of symbols and meanings that can be definitively interpreted. Culture is contested, temporal, and emergent. Representation and explanation - both by insiders and outsiders - is implicated in this emergence. The specification of discourses...is thus more than a matter of making carefully limited claims. It is thoroughly historicist and self-reflexive...Feminist theorizing is obviously of great potential significance for rethinking ethnographic writing. It debates the historical, political construction of identities and self/other relations, and it probes the gendered positions that make all accounts of, or by, other people inescapably partial (Clifford 1986:19).

This quote indicates that all historical and socio-political accounts are partial. Skotnes does not offer an impartial visual presentation of Khoisan:Colonial historical interaction. Instead Skotnes analyses the way in which the historical representations which document the interaction between these two different cultures has been constructed. Skotnes does not intend to speak for *Others*. Instead it is her

intention as an artist to deconstruct historical imagery that maintains a stereotypical portrayal of the Khoisan culture. Spivak says that:

> If critics are to open up their texts to others...without speaking for them, they will have to "unlearn" the privilege of their own vocation by taking into account their position as part of a social, political, economic, and psychosexual order (Ferguson, et.al. 1990:91).

Traditional masculine theory and practice therefore needs to be deconstructed in order to avoid replicating and maintaining established gender and ethnic based categories (Rando 1991:50). Mira Schor (1991) notes that a critique by women artists of the present "canon" of representation is necessary because

> ...despite the historical, critical, and creative practice of women artists, art historians, and cultural critics, current canon formation is still based on [white] male forebears, even when contemporary women artists...are involved (Schor 1991:58).

It is the intention of both Siopis and Skotnes to establish an alternate means of examining and representing South Africa's colonial past. Both artists confront the viewer with an alternate view of South Africa's visual history and expose the way in which "discourse construct[s] the spectator" (Shohat and Stam 1994:350). Shohat and Stam suggest that there is no perfect "alternative text" and that "tensions over class, gender, sexuality and ideology" will continue to exist (Shohat and Stam 1994:350). It is Skotnes and Siopis's intention however to expose the differences and contradictions which constitute these categories and to depict in visual terms that "spectatorial positioning is relational: communities can identify with one another" (Shohat and Stam 1994:350).

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE WORK OF SIOPIS AND SKOTNES

A comparison can be drawn between Siopis's appropriation of 19th century historical imagery and the fragments of historical material that Skotnes combines in the Miscast exhibition. The three rooms which constitute the exhibition contain selected fragments from the past. As mentioned in the description of the exhibition, the floor is comprised of photographs, letters, and other documentation which are collaged together in a manner not dissimilar to that used by Siopis in her History Paintings. Both Siopis and Skotnes employ appropriated material as a means of denying masterful illusionism in representation. Skotnes takes this process a step further in that she does not include her own art work.

Both Siopis and Skotnes use emblems in their work. In Siopis's History Paintings the inclusion of emblems such as the peeled lemon, a globe of the world, a skull, to mention a few, refer to the tradition of 17th century European still-life painting. Richards describes how the objects and realistic scenes of 17th century Dutch paintings frequently served as a "veil to conceal meaning" (Richards 1989:3). Often unexpected, hidden meanings lay behind what appeared to be an obvious reading. Siopis uses these still-life paintings as references. The representations taken from these still-life paintings can also be used to refer to "lost contexts and fragments of ruined or decaying systems of signification" (Richards 1989:3).

In not a dissimilar way Skotnes employs emblematic features appropriated from Khoisan rock art in the White Wagons etchings. Not a

great deal is known about rock art and much of the meaning related to the imagery died with the Khoisan. Godby says that

> Skotnes acknowledges that our perception of the San world is inevitably mediated...But the presence within this text of fragmentary...images appears to make the claim that, while the full extent of this [the San] world has been tragically lost to us, art can provide both insight into some of its secrets and access to the structures of its thought (Godby 1993:23).

Siopis and Skotnes use emblems to denote concealed meanings and to refer to a system of signification which has been forgotten. Siopis uses images such as binoculars, an open book and other emblems in Patience On A Monument to signify instruments of discrimination and control; Skotnes includes similar emblems such as the flag and the wagon in her White Wagons etchings to refer to Colonial domination.

The use of the emblem continues in the Miscast project. Features such as the crucifix, the twelve rifles, two ladders, flag, three potted plants and the five books, each of which spell out the word truth, are emblematic in their signification. The emblem is one deconstructive device which can be used to "refer to an endless network of traces; information which has been submerged and given new meaning" (Leitch 1983:118). The presence of the word truth in the Miscast exhibition is a significant one in that Skotnes is attempting to deconstruct codes which were used to maintain notions of historical truth.

Siopis and Skotnes analyse in their respective disciplines the notion of scientific truth and the correlation between science and Colonial subjugation. Both artists make reference to the exploratory nature of scientific inquiry. In Patience On A Monument the inclusion of the anatomical model of a heart points to the impartiality and search for

pure knowledge which science sought to discover. Further reference is made to scientific traditions in Dora And The Other Women in which tools of exploration (not to mention exploitation) can be found in the form of a magnifying glass and a telescope. The jewel-box and the specimen bottles refer to the experiments done on Saartje Baartman.

In Miscast boxes are used in a similar way. The boxes refer to a tradition of recording and codification of bodies and artefacts. There is, however, further signification behind the uses of these boxes. The inclusion of the boxes draws attention to the contemporary debate of exhibiting and storing human remains. Skotnes questions whether it is more respectful to store these fragments of human remains in a cardboard box as opposed to displaying them as part of a public record. The labels which are used on the boxes question the relevance of these differences without necessarily providing the answers. Skotnes recognises the dilemma which the situation presents. She says that, "in some cases reburial, for example, may solve emotional and ethical problems, in others it may promote the closure of issues that should properly be kept alive" (Narrandes 1996:13).

It was Skotnes's intention to avoid the chronological presentation of history. She therefore aimed to disrupt, or deconstruct, this chronology by presenting each box as a fragment of South Africa's past and expose the random nature of history. Skotnes uses a similar process in the White Wagons series. Each etching is a fragment of Khoisan:Colonial interaction in which history is combined with mythology in order to critique the limited Western chronology of documented South African history. In so doing Skotnes challenges the

borders of established history and presents a broader visual spectrum from which to interpret cultural interaction.

Just as Siopis constructs a monument of civilization in Patience On A Monument, Skotnes also uncovers the debris of civilization and creates a monument. In Sound From The Thinking Strings Skotnes creates a visual *monument* which celebrates the cosmology and mythology of the Khoisan culture. In White Wagons Skotnes represents the way in which civilization intruded into that mythology and the disruption which such an intrusion caused. This aspect of Khoisan:Colonial interaction is extended in Miscast. In the Miscast project the monument that is constructed is not made only from the objects which aided colonial conquest, but also the bones of those who were most affected by the civilising of its subjects.

CONCLUSION

Issues and ideas central to the work of Siopis and Skotnes have resulted from numerous contemporary concerns such as decolonization, the representation of the *Other*, patriarchal values and Nationalism. All of these reflect in some way or other the undermining of certain western patriarchal ideals in much contemporary South African visual representation.

This dissertation has examined the intention of both Skotnes and Siopis to reassess in visual terms what they perceive as the selective presentation of South African history. The work of these two artists examines historical imagery not with the intention of establishing historical *truth*, but as a means of analysing established perceptions of the events, people and environments which have made up South African history. This history is one-sided yet it has been presented as the united history of South Africa. The critique of South African history is neither intended as an endorsement or condemnation of one view point over another, nor do these two artists offer definite conclusions. Instead the work of both these artists explores the possibilities which arise from a critique on Eurocentricism. "A critique of Eurocentrism is addressed not to Europeans as individuals but rather to dominant Europe's historically oppressive relation to its internal and external "others" (Shohat and Stam 1994:3).

The art works examined in this dissertation analyse the way in which Siopis and Skotnes "question and challenge existing patterns of cultural power" (Ferguson 1990:5). This can be seen in works such as Patience On A Monument and Cape Of Good Hope, where Siopis fragments

imagery taken from totalising Western narratives and focuses on a decentred multiplicity of localised struggles. It is for this reason that the privileged position of class and nation are supplemented and challenged by categories such as race, gender and sexuality. (Shohat and Stam 1994:338) Siopis challenges established master narratives and issues of gender stereotyping through the deconstruction of visual representation. Through the appropriation of 19th century representations of South African history Siopis uses these images to question the authority of the predominantly white, male presentation of history. It is evident that Siopis perceives this imagery as being biased and discriminatory.

Siopis has used Poststructuralist principles such as deconstruction to undermine Western representation and in so doing analyses the official version of South African history as presented "through the textbooks of Christian National Education" (Friedman 1991:15). Siopis does this by removing the 19th century historical images from their original context and altering them through a process of photocopying and fragmentation. The images are then re-presented in a new context.

Siopis and Skotnes use processes such as allegory and deconstruction in their art work to undermine past historical imagery and material. The inclusion of these processes in their paintings and prints result in the confrontation of contemporary issues of power, politics and cultural representation. Keith Moxey (1995) highlights the relevance of such a Poststructuralist critique in the work of Siopis and Skotnes:

> Rather than legitimating a pre-established canon of artists and works following the principle of 'objectivity', historians might pursue their own agendas and articulate their own motives for engaging in the

> process of finding cultural meaning in the art of the past. Instead of regarding the subject of art history as fixed and unchanging, scholars have an opportunity to define what that subject might be. In doing so, they can display rather that conceal the cultural issues that preoccupy them. The subject of art history thus becomes manifestly an allegory of the historical circumstances that have both shaped and empowered the subjectivity of the artist (Moxey 1995:400).

Both artists are confronted with the problem of who can speak and the accusation of speaking for *Others*. It is an issue which raises more questions than answers. It is Skotnes's intention in both the White Wagons series of etchings and the Miscast project to expose that "every version of an 'other' is also the construction of a 'self'" (Clifford 1986:23). Both Skotnes and Siopis draw the viewer's attention to the politics of historical representation in South Africa and the way in which representation has been used to reproduce established conventions and stereotypes. The following passage outlines some of the objectives which Skotnes and Siopis have taken into consideration in their representations of South African history:

> Our attempts to understand and define ourselves are necessarily made in conjunction with attempts to understand and define those who are different, or "other" than we are. Examining the extent to which we assert our own experience as the norm, and the degree to which we eroticize, mythologize, and/or marginalise the experience of those of other cultures, races, ages, genders, or belief systems is a crucial step towards understanding identity as a powerful ideological tool that can be as easily used to serve repressive interests as to promote the sense of group unity crucial in struggling against oppression (Ferguson, et.al. 1990:91).

The art work of Skotnes and Siopis indicates that South African history contains numerous unchallenged issues. By exposing Eurocentric concepts such as the acquisition and presentation of historical knowledge both Skotnes and Siopis have revealed the potential for an

in-depth enquiry into the ideological processes which South Africa's visual history embodies. The issues which Siopis and Skotnes address in their visual accounts of South African history may be problematic. However they are issues which can no longer be ignored. The art work of these two artists reflects the way in which art has become an integral part of cultural studies. A visual critique of representation which depicts South Africa's past is a necessary process in order to deconstruct the exclusive, patriarchal values which dominate South African history.

> ...we can no longer know the whole truth, or even claim to approach it. The rigorous partiality I have been stressing here may be a source of pessimism for some readers. But is there not a liberation, too, in recognizing that no one can write about others any longer as if they were discrete objects or texts? And may not the vision of a complex, problematic, partial [presentation] lead, not to its abandonment, but to more subtle, concrete ways of writing and reading, to new conceptions of culture as interactive and historical? (Clifford 1986:25).

The critical expression of artists such as Skotnes and Siopis have disturbed the foundations of a patriarchal society in South Africa. They have furthermore contributed to a "change in the form and content of criticism, and the reality that [white] male-dominated ideologies have constructed" (Langer 1991: 25).

LIST OF ILLUSTRATION

REFERENCES

Abrahams, Y. 1996. 'Miscast', Southern African Review of Books, 44: July/Aug. 14-15.

Adam, I. and H. Tiffin (eds). 1991. Past The Last Post. Great Britain: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Ahronson, M. 1995. 'Unseen Borders', International Biennale of South Africa. Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 5-12.

Als, H. 1991. 'Darling', Artforum. 29: 100-4.

Anstey, G. 1996. 'In the Tracks of the Bushmen', Sunday Times. 17: 12 May.

Araeen, R. 1995. 'What is Post-Apartheid South Africa and its Place in the World?', Africus, Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 16-19.

Barthes, R. 1977. 'The Death of the Author'. In Owens, C. 1992. Beyond Recognition; Representation, Power and Culture. USA: University of California Press.

Barthes, R. 1988. The Semiotic Challenge. United Kingdom: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Beckman, J. 1991. 'Many Voices', Art Journal. 50: Winter 19-20.

Bedford, E. 1995. 'Objects of Defiance/Spaces of Contemplation', Africus, Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 88-96.

Biesele, M. 1990. Shaken Roots. South Africa: EDA Publications.

Bennington, G. (ed). 1986. Postmodernism ICA Documents 4. London: Institute of Contemporary Arts.

Bentley, K. 1993. 'Award Winner's Work on Show', Eastern Province Herald. 10: 8 July.

Bentley, K. 1993. 'Superb Tribute to First True Natives', Eastern Province Herald. 8: 7 Aug.

Berman, E. 1993. Painting in South Africa. Pretoria: Southern Book Publishers (Pty) Ltd.

Bester, R. and B. Buntman. 1996. 'Bushman and "the problem of mainly White, middle-class men photographing everybody else": Paul Weinberg's photographs of Bushmen from Kagga Kamma and Schmidsrift', SAAAH (PMB) Conference.

Bhabha, H.K. 1990. 'DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation', In Nation and Narration. London and New York: Routledge.

Bharucha, R. 1994. 'Somebody's Other: Disorientations in the Cultural Politics of our Times', Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture. 26: Spring 3-10.

Boyne, R. and A. Rattansi. (eds). 1990. Postmodernism and Society. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Breitz, C. 1995. 'Towards Cyber-Creativity in Post Apartheid South Africa', Africus. Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 288-289.

Brookner, J. 1991. 'Feminism and Students of the '80s and '90s: The Lady and the Raging Bitch; or, How Feminism Got a Bad Name', Art Journal. 50: Summer 11-47.

Bryson, N., M. Holly and K. Moxey (eds). 1991. Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation. United Kingdom: Polity Press.

Butler-Evans, E. 1989. Race, Gender and Desire. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Carroll, B.A. 1976. Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Camara, E. 1995. 'The Reflections of Nights and the Glow of Dawn', Africus. Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 20-23.

Campbell, J. and J. Oakes. 1993. 'The Intervention of Race: Re-reading White Over Black', Reviews In American History. 21: March 172-183.

Canclini, N.G. 1994. 'Remaking Passports: Visual Thought in the Debate on Multiculturalism', Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture. 28(29): Autumn/Winter 139-146.

Chevnis, R.E. 1987. The Role of Sources and Field Studies in the Teaching of History in Natal Provincial High School History Textbooks. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.

Clayson, H. 1995. 'Art >< History: Materialist Art History And Its Points of Difficulty', Art Bulletin. LXXVII, 3: September 367-391.

Clifford, J. and G.E. Marcus (eds). 1986. Writing Culture: Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. University of California Press.

Davis, C. and R. Schleiffer. 1991. Criticism and Culture: The Role of Critique in Modern Literary Theory. United Kingdom: Longman Group UK Limited.

Dean, E., P. Hartmann and M. Katzen (eds). 1983. History in Black and White" An Analysis of South African School History Textbooks. Paris: United Nations Educational.

Deane, S. 1993. 'Critical Reflections', Art Forum. 32(1): December 52-53,105.

Degenaar, J. 1987. 'Writing and Re-Writing', Rewriting the Art and Architectural History of Southern Africa. South Africa: University of Stellenbosch.

Dening, G. 1992. 'Mr Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the "Bounty". In Skotnes, P. (ed). 1996. Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen. South Africa: University of Cape Town Press.

Dhlomo, B. 1995. 'Emerging From the Margins', Africus, Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 26-27.

Diab, R. 1995. 'Different Values - Universal Art: The State of Modern African Art', Africus, Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 28-29.

Dowson, T.A. and D. Lewis-Williams. 1994. Contested Images: Diversity in South African Rock Art Research. South Africa: Witwatersrand University Press.

Drucker, J. 1994. 'Sense and Sensibility', Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture. 27: Summer 103-107.

Dubow, N. 1990/1. 'Irma Stern: Africa and the Other', Artworks in Progress: The Yearbook of the Staff of the Michaelis School of Fine Art, UCT. 2: 5-9 University of Cape Town.

Ferguson, R., M. Gever, T. Minh-ha and W. Cornel eds. 1990. Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures. Massachusetts: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Ferguson, R., W. Olander, M. Tucker and K. Fiss (eds). 1990. Discourses: Conversations in Postmodern Art and Culture. New York: The Museum of Contemporary Art.

Flower, J. 1990. The Other Perspective in Gender and Culture: Rewriting Women and the Symbolic. New York: Columbia University Press.

Foster, H. (ed). 1987. Postmodern Culture. Britain: Pluto Press Ltd.

Foucault, M. 1972. Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings. Gordon, C. (ed). 1980. Brighton: Harvester Press.

Freire, P. 1972. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Friedman, H. 1990. 'Siopis Fans May be Shocked by New Exhibition', The Star. 4: 14 Dec.

Friedman, H. 1991. 'History of Art - Or the Art of History', The Star. 15: 24 Oct.

Friedman, H. 1993. 'Paying Homage to the San', The Star. 8: 21 Sept.

Friedman, H. 1994. 'Bodily History', The Weekly Mail. 36: 23 Sept.

Frueh, A. and A. Raven. 1991. 'Feminist Art Criticism: Demise and Resurrection', Art Journal. 50: Summer.

Galla, A. 1995. 'Arts, Culture, Human Rights and Democracy', Africus. Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 30-35.

Geers, Kendell. 1990. 'This Exhibition Engages Viewers on Every Level', The Star. 15: 13 Dec.

Geers, Kendell. 1993. 'Culture Reduced to Illustration', Business Day. 14: 10 Sept.

Gilman, S. 1985. 'Black Bodies, White Bodies: Towards An Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth Century Art, Medicine, and Literature', Critical Inquiry. 12: Autumn 204-242.

Gilman, S. 1995. 'Truth Seeking Memory and Art: Comments Following Four Weeks of Life in the New South Africa', Africus, Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 36-38.

Godby, M. 1993. Pippa Skotnes: In the Wake of the White Wagons. South Africa: Standard Bank Young Artist Award.

Gordon, R.J. 1992. The Bushman Myth: The Making of the Namibian Underclass. Colorado: Westview Press, Inc.

Goverider, S.P. 1992. A Critique of the Racist and Sexist Bias in the Standard 10 Cirriculum. Thesis (MA - Women's Studies). Durban: University of Natal.

Guha, T. 1994. 'Double Dutch', Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture. 27: Summer 87-90.

Handley, T. 1988. 'Pippa Skotnes in a Southern Wonderland', ADA: Art, Design, Architecture. 5: 6-10.

Harasym, S. 1990. The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues, Gayatri, Chakravorty and Spivak. London and New York: Routledge.

Hartley, M.A. 1993. 'Visual Feast at Enigmatic Exhibition', The Natal Witness. 7: 15 Oct.

Hayt-Atkins, E. 1991. 'The Indexical Present: A Conversation With Adrian Piper', Art Magazine. 29: March 48-51.

Hennessy, A. 1992. 'Chiaroscuro of Prejudice', Art History. 15: September 374-378.

Holtzhausen, E. 1991. 'New Lease of Life for Extinct Bushmen', Sunday Times. 39: 29 Sept.

Jacobsen, C. 1991. 'Redefining Censorship: A Feminist View, Art Journal. 50: Winter 42-55.

Jameson, F. 1981. The Political Unconscious: Narrative As A Socially Symbolic Act. London: Methuen.

Jeppson, P.L. 1989. 'Historical Archaeology and "Method": Alternative Cultural History Interpretation in South African Museums', South African Museum Association Education Officers Conference. Cape Town.

Johnson, K. 1989. 'Colescott on Black and White', Art in America. 77: 149-152.

Johnson, K. 1990. 'Being and Politics', Art in America. 78: Sept. 155-160.

Jones, A. 1992. 'Artful Rewriting and Interpretative Repression's in New Feminist Art Histories', Art History. 15: 253-262.

Jones, K. 1990. 'In Their Own Image', Artforum. 29: Nov. 133-138.

Klinger, L. 1991. 'Where's The Artist? Feminist Practice and Post-Structural Theories of Authorship', Art Journal. 50: Summer 39-47.

Klopper, S. 1995. 'The Art of Transformation: Iimbongi and the Transition to Democracy in South Africa', Africus. Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 42-47.

Koch, E. 1996. 'An Obsession for Khoisan Genitalia', Mail and Guardian. 15: 16 Feb.

Krauss, R. 1993. 'Cindy Sherman's Gravity: A Critical Fable', Art Forum. 32(1): Sept. 163.

Kruger, B. and P. Mariani (eds). 1989. Rethinking History. Seattle: Bay Press.

Lambrecht, B. 1990. 'Aanklag Teen Patriargale Samelewing'. Beeld. 2: 13 Dec.

Langer, C.L. 1991. 'Feminist Art Criticism', Art Journal. 50: Summer 21-26.

Laurence, J. 1979. Race Propaganda and South Africa. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.

Lavers, A. 1983. 'Rethinking History', History and Theory. 22(3): 328-334.

Leitch, V.B. 1983. Deconstructive Criticism. London: Hutchinson.

Lentricchia, F. 1983. Criticism and Social Change. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Levi-Strauss, C. 1975. Myth and Meaning. London: Routledge.

Lewis, M. 1992. Natal Women's Art in a Feminist Frame. Thesis (MA - Women's Studies). Durban: University of Natal.

Lingard, B. and F. Rizvi. '(Re)membering, (Dis)membering', Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture. 26: Spring 75-89.

Lippard, L. 1976. From the Centre: Feminist Essays on Women's Art. New York: E.P. Dutton.

Lorde, A. 1978. Movement in Black. Oakland: Diana Press.

Mac Crone, I.D. 1937. Race Attitudes in South Africa: Historical Experimental and Psychological Studies. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

Marquard, L. 1968. The Story of South Africa. London: Faber and Faber Limited.

Martin, J.H. 1995. 'Art in a Multi-Ethnic Society', Africus. Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 49-52.

Martin, M. 1996. Foreword. In Skotnes, P. (ed). 1996. Miscast: Negotiating The Presence of the Bushmen. South Africa: University of Cape Town Press.

Marshall, J. and C. Ritchie. 1984. Where Are The Ju/Wasi of Nyae Nyae? Changes in a Bushman Society: 1958-1981. Cape Town: Centre for African Studies University of Cape Town.

Mc Clelland, L. and L, Alexander (eds). 1985. Women Artists in South Africa. Cape Town: Published by the South African National Gallery.

Mc Evilley, T. 1995. 'Here Comes Everybody', Africus, Johannesburg Biennale [Catalogue]. 53-57.

Mc Houl, A. and W. Grace. 1993. A Foucault Primer - Discourse, Power and the Subject. Australia: Melbourne University Press.

Mc Neill, W. 1983. 'Myth History', The American Historical Review. 91: Feb. 1-19.

Memmi, A. 1965. The Colonizer and the Colonized. Boston: Beacon Press.

Merewether, C. 1995. 'The Promise of Community', Africus, Johannesburg Biennial [Catalogue]. 58-62.

Milner, A. 1994. Contemporary Cultural Theory. London: University College London Press.

Moxey, K. 1995. 'Motivating History', Art Bulletin. LXXV11 (3): Sept. 400.

Narrandes, N. 1996. 'Confronting SA's Own Holocaust', The Natal Witness. 13: 20 June.

Nead, L. 1986. 'Feminism, Art History and Cultural Politics', In Rees, A.L. and F. Borzello (eds). 1986. The New Art History. 121-124.

Nederveen Pieterse, J. and B. Parekh (eds). 1995. The Decolonization of Imagination: Culture, Knowledge and Power. London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd.

Nelson, C. and L. Grossberg (eds). 1988. Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. University of Illinois Press.

Nettleton, A. 1995. 'Collections, Exhibitions and Histories: Constructing a New South African Art History', Africus. Johannesburg Biennial [Catalogue]. 65-69.

Nieves-Falcon, L. 1980. 'The Oppressive Function of Values, Concepts and Images in Children's Books'. In Preiswerk, R.(ed). The Slant of the Pen: Racism in Children's Books. Geneva: World Council of Churches.

Norris, C. 1986. Deconstruction: Theory and Practice. London and New York: Routledge.

Oliphant, A.W. 1993. Culture and Empowerment. Johannesburg: COSAW Publishing (Pty) Ltd.

Owens, C. 1992. Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture. USA: University of California Press.

Papastergiadis, N. 1994. The Complicities of Culture: Hybridity and 'New Internationalism'. Manchester: University of Manchester.

Parker, G. and P. Pfukani (eds). 1975. History of Southern Africa. London: Collins Educational.

Parry, B. 1994. 'Signs of Our Times: Discussion of Homi Bhabha's The Location of Culture', Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture, 28(29): Autumn/Winter 5-24.

Pinkey, T. 1989. The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists. London: Verso.

Powell, I. 1995. 'Heroic Eccentricity', The Weekly Mail. 5: 3 March.

Powell, I. 1987. 'So Who Wants Politics on the Lounge Walls?', The Weekly Mail and Guardian. 25: 25 Oct.

Pretorius, E. 1982. 'Textually Intertwining The Idea of Woman With Deconstruction', SAAAH Conference paper from Department History of Art and Fine Art, UNISA.

Rand, E. 1991. 'Women and Other Women: One Feminist Focus For Art History', Art Journal. 50: Summer 29-34.

Rando, F. 1991. 'The Essential Representation of Woman', Art Journal. 50: Summer 49-68.

Rankin, E. 1992. 'The Baby and the Bathwater: Motif, Medium and Meaning in the Work of Penelope Siopis', Catalogue from Work in Progress, Grahamstown.

Rees, A.L. and F. Borzello (eds). 1986. The New Art History. London: Camden Press.

Rich, P. 1983. White Power and the Liberal Conscience: Racial Segregation and South African Liberalism. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Ricard, R. 1985. 'An Art of Regret', Artforum. 23: Summer 86-90.

Richard, E. 1982. Oppression and Resistance: The Struggle of Women in Southern Africa. USA: Greenwood Press.

Richards, C. 1986. 'Excess as Transgression: Reducing Surface to Depth in the Still-Life Painting of Penny Siopis', 1-9. SAAAH (Wits) Conference.

Richards, C. 1994. For Want of an Other Wor(l)d. The essay in this publication was written in response to Penny Siopis's exhibition 'Private Views' held at the Standard Bank Centre Gallery. 1-14: 8-28 Sept.

Roof, J and R. Wiegman (eds). 1995. Who Can Speak? Authority and Critical Identity. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Roos, B. 1988. Women and the Word: Issues of Power, Control and Language in Social and Religious Life. Thesis (MA - Religious Studies). Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Runciman, S. 1989. 'The Missing History', The Times Literary Supplement. 499: June 23-29.

Sarup, M. 1993. An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism. Great Britain: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Schor, M. 1991. 'Patrilineage', Art Journal. 50: Summer 58-63.

Schrire, C. 1996. 'Miscast', Southern African Review of Books. 44: July/Aug. 13-14.

Shillington, K. 1987. A History of Southern Africa. United Kingdom: Longman Group UK Limited.

Sims, L.S. 1990. 'The Mirror The Other: The Politics of Aesthetics', Artforum. 28: March 111-115.

Siopis, P. 1990. 'Some Thoughts on Women Representing Women', Women And The Visual. SAAAH (Tvl) Conference. South Africa: University of the Witwatersrand.

Siopis, P. 1991. 'Patience on a Monument - A History Painting'. An unpublished paper obtained from the S.A. National Gallery Library. 4-7.

Shohat, E. and R. Stam (eds). 1994. Unthinking Eurocentricism. London: Routledge.

Skotnes, P. 1983. Imprints: Man's Impact on the South African Landscape. Thesis (MA - FA). Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Skotnes, P. 1992/3. 'White Wagons', Art Works in Progress: The Year Book of the Staff of the Michaelis School of Fine Art UCT. 3: 50-57.

Skotnes, P. and M. Godby (eds). 1993. In The Wake of the White Wagons. Exhibition catalogue from the Standard Bank Young Artist Award.

Skotnes, P. (ed). 1996. Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen. South Africa: University of Cape Town Press.

Sooful, A. 1992. The Relationship Between Current Feminist Theory and Contemporary South African Women's Art: A Preliminary Investigation. Thesis (MA - FA). Durban: University of Durban-Westville.

Sutcliffe, M. 1996. 'Images of Consciousness', University of Natal Focus. 7(2): 9.

Thomas, B. 1991. The New Historicism. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Thomas, N. 1994. 'Colonial Surrealism', Third Text; Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture. 26: Spring 25-32.

Thomas, S. 1994. Race and Culture: A World View. USA: Basic Books, A Division of Harper Collins Publisher, Inc.

Thompson, L. 1990. A History of South Africa. USA: Yale University Press.

Todorov, T. and L. Mack. 1986. '"Race", Writing and Culture', Critical Inquiry. 13: Autumn 171-181.

Trewhella, C. 1986. An Illustrated History of South Africa. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers.

Von Veh, A.G.M. 1995. Making A Difference: A Postcolonial Reading of Postmodernity and Some Implications for Post-modern Education Theory. Natal: University of Natal (Thesis).

Wallace, M. 1990. 'Defacing History', Art in America. 78: Dec. 121-129.

Weintroub, G. 1991. 'History in Her Hands', Argus. 9: 10 July.

Wesley-Smith, A.E. 1990. Problems of Identification and Definition of a Feminist Vision in the Visual Art, With Particular Reference to 20th Century Painting. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal (Thesis).

Williams, R. 1983. Towards 2000. London: Chatto and Windus.

Williamson, S. 1989. Resistance Art in South Africa. United Kingdom: Catholic Institute for International Relations.

West, J.D. 1994. 'Aquellos Ojos Verdes', Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture. 26: Spring 33-42.

Young, G. 1990/1. 'Fetching Europe', Artworks in Progress: The Yearbook of the Staff of the Michaelis School of Fine Art. 2: 34-38. University of Cape Town.

Zagorin, P. 1990. 'Historiography and Postmodernism: Reconsiderations', History and Theory. 29(3): 263-296.

Zavarzadeh, M. and D. Morton. 1991. Theory, (Post) Modernity,Opposition: An "Other" Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory. Washington D.C.: Maisonneave Press.