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Mapping linkages between image and text:
An investigation of Willem Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* in relation to emergent Afrikaner identities

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is, apart from the recognised assistance, my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Technologiae (Fine Art), in the Department of Visual Art, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg. It has not been previously submitted by me for any other diploma or degree.

Adena Richardson

Twenty fourth day of November, 2014.
ABSTRACT

In this research, I map emergent female Afrikaner identities in relation to Willem Boshoff’s artwork *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, which acts as the central focus to this study and informs my own body of practical work.

In order to constitute a key to unlock questions regarding emergent female Afrikaner identities in a South African context from colonial to post-apartheid, the relationship between image and text in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* is investigated. The investigation of this relationship is interwoven with a discourse of an early form of the literary tradition that has come to be known as Arabic-Afrikaans script, a term used to describe the “literary work which is written in Afrikaans with Arabic letters” (Van Selms 1951).

This study adopts a qualitative methodological approach. The research incorporates textual analysis and visual analysis. The study presents a visual semiotic analysis of *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, in order to map possible links between this artwork and a literature review of an early form of Arabic-Afrikaans script, as a contextual framework in which to situate the study. Arabic-Afrikaans, in turn, acts as a link which forges a relationship between two kinds of identities: an Islamic influence on South African culture, and an Islamic influence on my life experience as an Afrikaans-speaking woman who lived in Egypt for four years. These two identities, represented by artist Lalla Essaydi in relation to an Islamic identity and artist Lizelle Kruger in relation to an Afrikaner identity, are investigated through a comparative visual analysis.

The study intends to show how Essaydi and Kruger form a link with Boshoff, where each of these three artists subverts, questions, and breaks down prevailing cultural and linguistic stereotypes, and in so doing operationalises the notion of an emergent identity. Identity construction, in the context of this study, is characterised by Stuart Hall’s (in Rutherford 1990:222) concept of identity being in a continual state of flux, identity as “a production, which is never complete; always in process and always constructed within, not outside representation”. I therefore map my Afrikaner identity, previously seen as fixed, unproblematic and in line with the national discourse under apartheid (Van Heerden 2006), but now seen as ‘becoming’ and ‘transitioning’, situated ‘betwixt and between’ (Turner 1969). This notion informs my own practical work, which becomes visual metaphors of maps, in order to navigate a sense of self. My practical work therefore attempts to embody a temporary space of an emergent identity. I
understand this in-between space (Bhabha 2004) as a liminal space, as a continuum of spaces in which my emergent female Afrikaner identity resides.

An important conclusion that I make from my research is that Boshoff’s conflation of image and text, which is consistent with Derrida’s (1981) deconstructive strategy, unhinges the conditions of the stereotype, which conventionally privileges a dichotomy in which different polar relations reside. Drawing a connection between Bread and Pebble Roadmap and Arabic-Afrikaans, and applying the conditions found in Bread and Pebble Roadmap to Arabic-Afrikaans, I view Arabic-Afrikaans as able to unhinge its own seeming dichotomies: between Arabic and Afrikaans, and thus between Islam and Christianity. In this way, I am able to argue that Arabic-Afrikaans is able to reverse stereotyping and point a way forward towards the construction of emergent non-racial stereotyping.

**Keywords:** mapping, image and text, Willem Boshoff’s Bread and Pebble Roadmap, emergent female Afrikaner identity, Arabic-Afrikaans, Lalla Essaydi, Lizelle Kruger.
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CHAPTER 1

Part 1

1.1 Introduction

[The impulse to preserve the past is the impulse to preserve the self. Perhaps people try and retain their sense of identity by maintaining their links with the past? Without knowing where they have been it is difficult to know where they are going. The past is the foundation of individual collective identity.]

Madan Sarup (1996:46)

The primary aim of this research is to map linkages between Willem Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* and an early form of Arabic-Afrikaans script. Arabic-Afrikaans\(^1\) woven into *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* constitutes a key to unlocking a notion of Afrikaner identities in a state of flux, and, in particular, my emergent female Afrikaner identity.

In order to achieve this aim, the first objective is to investigate the early roots of the relationship between Arabic script and the oral tradition of Afrikaans, through a literary review of the resultant Arabic-Afrikaans in textual form. This is done in order to clarify the development of the relationship between Arabic in its conventional written form and Afrikaans in its spoken form, as a conjoined script, and its particular cultural identity and contextual purpose. This relationship is discussed in the second part of chapter 1.

The second objective is to decipher the signification between image and text in Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, in order to interpret the meaning of the artwork. The two principal methods employed are a critical literature review and a visual semiotic analysis, with the intention of formulating linkages between Arabic-Afrikaans and Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* in chapter 2.

Based on the findings of these two objectives, the third objective is to locate and map my emergent female Afrikaner identity by means of a visual comparative analysis of the work of

---

\(^1\)Arabic-Afrikaans was the term used for the application of Afrikaans written in Arabic script. The term Arabic-Afrikaans was coined by Van Selms (he first presented this notion in 1951) as a convenient label to describe the literary tradition of the Cape Muslims of writing Afrikaans in Arabic script over a period of a hundred years (1815-1915) (Davids 2011:18).
artists Lalla Essaydi and Lizelle Kruger in chapter 3. I conduct this exploration through a relational lens provided by my analyses of Boshoff’s work, as well as Antjie Krog’s (2009) suggestion of ever-changing and unfixed positions of identity. This analysis, in turn, contextualises my practical work, as explicated in chapter 4.

1.2 Outline of chapters, and their associated literature

Chapter 1 is divided into two parts. In part 1, I introduce the study, by stating its aims and objectives, I provide a chapter outline and associated literature, I explain the rationale for the study, and I present the theoretical components of this research. In part 2, I investigate the early roots of the relationship between Arabic script and the oral tradition of Afrikaans through a literary review of these texts. A literature review of selected 20th-century Afrikaner scholars such as Achmat Davids’ (2011) *The Afrikaans of the Cape Muslims*, Suleman Dangor’s (2008) *Arabic-Afrikaans literature at the Cape*, and Muhammed Haron’s (2006) *Arabic-Afrikaans: A vehicle for identity formation rather than integration* clarifies the development of Arabic-Afrikaans script and its particular cultural identity and contextual purpose. My purpose then is, while maintaining a link with the past, to try to map an identity of the emergent female Afrikaner via the rich and complex history of the Afrikaans language.

In chapter 2, I decipher the signification between image and text in Willem Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*. My analysis suggests that the work is a ‘map’ of emergent Afrikaner identity from its Arabic roots. Ivan Vladislavić’s biography *Willem Boshoff* (2005) serves as a primary reference to analyse and describe Boshoff’s prolific output as an artist. Warren Siebrits’ (2007) catalogue, *Willem Boshoff: word forms and language shapes: 1975 – 2007*, represents another major source in which Boshoff’s own words accompany each example of his work. In addition, Boshoff’s (2004) comprehensive website provides detailed information on *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*. Katja Gentric’s description of the work on the artist’s website, as well as *I am against books*, a summary of a discussion that Gentric held with Boshoff in 2004 subsequent to his exhibition *NONPLUSSED*, are extremely valuable sources, since very few references exist regarding this particular work of art. Personal communication with Boshoff has also been important in understanding this work. A transcript of the interview conducted with Boshoff (2013) appears in Appendix 1.
In this chapter, an interpretation of *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* is undertaken from a visual semiotic perspective, with particular focus on the relationship between image and text, in order to decipher the signifiers that evoke a relationship between this work and Arabic-Afrikaans.

Apart from using Daniel Chandler’s (2007) and Sean Hall’s (2007) texts as introductions to semiotics, I also consult a more critical text, in order to facilitate a semiotic analysis of *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*. This text is Jacques Derrida’s (1981) explication of his strategy of deconstruction.

David Paton’s (2000) chapter of his Master’s dissertation on Boshoff, titled *Willem Boshoff and the book*, sheds light on a semiotic reading of Boshoff’s work, which is critical to the aim of my research.

W.J.T. Mitchell’s (1987) *Iconology: image, text, ideology* serves as a primary reference, with regard to the relationship between images and text, as well as in terms of understanding how semiotics as a discipline unhinges the seeming differences between image and text. This is done so as to contextualise and unpack Boshoff’s work. Nelson Goodman’s (1976) *Languages of art: an approach to a theory of symbols* and *Pictures and paragraphs* (cited in Mitchell 1987:53-74) serves as a secondary source to distinguish between images and text, by looking at the contrast between analogue and digital form. This text helps to position my study as a whole, which attempts to conjoin past (Arabic-Afrikaans) and future (emergent female Afrikaner identity) readings of identity construction.

In chapter 3, I locate and map an emergent female Afrikaner identity, via Arabic roots, through a comparative analysis of Muslim-born artist Lalla Essaydi and Afrikaner-born artist Lizelle Kruger. The study observes what is revealed and what is concealed, through the signification of images and text in the works of Kruger and Essaydi. What is revealed is that both artists subvert stereotypical views in their work and state alternative forms of intervention through the transitioning of an emergent female identity. In order to understand the complexities of Arab and Afrikaner identities, a brief exposition of the stereotyped image of each identity is supported by the literature, in particular Hopkins and Ibrahim’s (1997) *Arab society: class, gender, power and development* and Godlas’ (2008) *Islam and Islamic studies resources: women in Islam: Muslim women*, in relation to the Arab female identity. In relation to the Afrikaner female identity, Landman’s (2005) *Leefstyl-Bybelvirvroue: Afrikaans-speaking women amidst paradigm shift*, Conradie’s (1996) *Redefining identity: a survey of Afrikaans women writers*, and Griesel and
Kotse’s (2010) *The cultural identity of white Afrikaner women: a post-Jungian perspective* are consulted.

The literature informing the context of Essaydi includes Essaydi’s [sa] website, the Edwynn Houk Gallery (Lalla Essaydi Les Femmes du Maroc 2011) website and Caroline Vera Fox’s (2011) article written for the publication Artmarket about the artist’s profile, titled *The scapeland of Lalla Essaydi*.


Background information on Kruger and her work was obtained from the artist’s website, as well as from reviews of her exhibition titled *Karoo-Kado’tjies* in VISI magazine (Lizelle Kruger at Salon91 2011), Vansa (‘Karoo-Kado’tjies’ a solo exhibition by Lizelle Kruger 2012), and *The South African Art Times* (2011). This exhibition caused controversy because of its provocative imagery, and it was covered by the Afrikaans newspapers *Die Burger* (Jackson 2010:8), *Rapport* (De Villiers 2010:10), and *Beeld* (Pople 2010:12,19).

The notion of resisting stereotyping is explored through a relational lens provided by my analysis of Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, as well as by Antjie Krog’s (2009) suggestion, in *A change of tongue*, of ever-changing and unfixed positions within an Islamic and Afrikaner identity. Krog’s concept of transformation is further supported by Stuart Hall’s (1993) *Cultural identity and diaspora*, and operationalises the notion of emergent identity, which is central in this chapter.

I conclude by bringing together the seemingly disparate identities and artworks of Essaydi, Kruger, and Boshoff in relation to Arabic-Afrikaans script, as a context for an analysis of my own work in chapter 4. This bringing together and analysis is framed by Krog’s concept of transformation and adaptation. I visually explore how the transformation of materials in my work is a metaphor for the transitioning of my emergent female Afrikaner identity. This is operationalised through the concept of mapping with the use of coordinates.

I perceive my identity as operating betwixt and between, a theory of liminality formulated in Victor Turner’s (1967) “Betwixt and between: the liminal period in *Rites de Passage*”, from *The
forest of symbols: aspects of Ndembu ritual. Turner first formulated his theory of liminality in the late 1960s, and it continued to be a central theme in his work until his death in 1983. My art making therefore explores an identity in a constant state of flux, existing in a liminal space. This study produces, firstly, a productive analysis of my own identity position and secondly, suggests further research.

Chapter 5 serves as a reflection on the broader study. In order to connect the themes of this research I map out a visual representation of each chapter, using my back as the theoretical territory, and my moles as my coordinating foci, a set of images central to my body of practical work.

1.3 Personal context

The motivation for this research is a desire to get closer to a sense of where I have positioned myself in space and time. I reinterpret, through my own work, an ‘old self’ (an Afrikaans speaking white South African female who has lived in Egypt for four years) in the light of new knowledge and possibilities which inform my current personal identity. This shift of personal identity reflects the social changes that South Africa as a country has undergone during the past two decades.

I recently became aware of the fact that the first book to be written in the Afrikaans language was written in Arabic script by a Muslim² (Afrikaans in conversation 2009:[sp]). Historically, Islam was introduced to the Cape in the mid-17th century from the East Indies and the coastal regions of India, which were under Dutch occupation (Davids 1980:37). Dangor (2008:[sp]) describes this period as follows:

The genius of this nascent community manifested itself in various ways, including the generation of literature which came to be called ‘Arabic-Afrikaans’. This literature flourished briefly when it first emerged from 1868 to 1869 and later from 1906 to 1929. Since it was written in the Arabic script, it was naturally assumed to be in the Arabic language.

²The first printed Arabic-Afrikaans publication is believed to have been the AZ-Qawl al-Matin Fi Bayan Umur al-Din (The Book of the Firm Declaration regarding the Explanation of the Matters of Religion), written by Shaykh Ahmadul Ishmuniyu (Ahmad al-Ishmuni), and published in 1856 by M.C. Schonegevel in Cape Town. The subject matter was almost exclusively Islamic religious and teaching texts.
Afrikaner academics only became aware of the true nature of this literature in the mid-20th century, after Adrianus van Selms (1951) used the designation “Arabic-Afrikaans”.

When I read about this discovery, I asked myself the following questions: Why was I, as an Afrikaner, never taught about the linguistic genre of Arabic-Afrikaans before? Why was it excluded from my cultural history? It is, after all, culture that shapes our identity.\(^3\)

By memorialising Arabic-Afrikaans, a link between my past and my current personal identity is argued for within the complex and multi-layered experiences that I had while living in Egypt. Living in Cairo as a white Afrikaner female, I soon felt displaced, and language became my greatest barrier in coping with everyday life. Without language, meaning became lost in a city bombarded by billboards. These billboards have dramatically changed the landscape of a city once defined by mosques, domes, minarets, and historical architecture.

As the city of Cairo had to adapt to change, I found comfort in knowing that I was not the only one that was altered and displaced. Yet this displacement made me more aware of, and more critical about, my own cultural heritage. The experience that I had while living in an Arab country had a profound effect on me, and I am left with a dichotomous identity that will always be woven together through my lived experiences.

The relationship of *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* with Arabic-Afrikaans script opens up a new area of investigation and interpretation. The importance of this work lies in the viewer’s attempts to understand the hidden messages embedded in the multi-layered signs. This research is concerned with deciphering the signifiers that evoke linkages between an early form of Arabic-Afrikaans script and *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*. I envisage that a visual and semiotic analysis of *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* suggests that the work is a ‘map’ of emergent female Afrikaner identity via Arabic roots.

### 1.4 Theoretical framework

\(^3\)These questions point to the Afrikaner nationalists’ (notably the former National Party apartheid government) obfuscation of the history about and the facts pertaining to the deliberate elimination of Arabic-Afrikaans. The politicians (such as the former apartheid government) manipulated culture to preserve particular ideological or propagandistic goals. In this case, the goal of the National Party government was to try to convince Afrikaners that they are a superior ethnic group to the other ethnic groups in South Africa, so that Afrikaners would put their support behind the political system of apartheid, and continue to vote the National Party into power at every election.
Postmodern theorists postulate that many, if not all, apparent realities are social constructs, and that they are therefore subject to change (Sarup 1996). Identity construction theories propose that identity is fabricated, and that it is a non-essentialist construct in the process of becoming. Hall (1993:392) proposes the idea that identity is in constant flux: “Identity is a production; which is never complete; always in process and always constructed within, not outside representation.” In order to ‘map’ my Afrikaner identity, I approach identity as ‘becoming’, and also as ‘being’, and I maintain that it is influenced by past events or actions, and their consequences, and the retrospective interpretation of these events. White Afrikaner identity, previously considered fixed and unproblematic, in line with the discourse of the nation during apartheid, now finds itself in flux – it is being challenged, renegotiated, and possibly reconfigured (Van Heerden 2006).

Mitchell (1994:217) asserts that modernism’s resistance to language has been overturned by postmodernism’s “breaking down of that barrier between vision and language that had been rigorously maintained by modernism”. The appeal of language to postmodernism is not a literary one, but rather about another discourse, namely that of theory. At the same time, postmodernism also allows for the use of text to become any one of a number of possible vehicles of expression that can be used in the construction of meaning in a work of art.

The primary goal in a visual semiotic analysis is “to establish the underlying conventions, identifying significant differences and oppositions in an attempt to model the system of categories, relations, connotations, distinctions and rules of combination employed” (Chandler 2007:[sp]). An analysis of this specific work offers an interdisciplinary method of understanding and contextualising images, and deciphering the signifiers that evoke a relationship between Bread and Pebble Roadmap and Arabic-Afrikaans.

The application of semiotic analysis helps to deconstruct the communicative visual sign systems in an attempt to derive meaning. The problem, Derrida (1976:163) claims, is that meaning is always dependent on context, that is, “there is nothing outside the text”, which means that there is nothing outside the context, and that there is therefore no one correct interpretation. This claim contextualises my interpretation of Boshoff’s Bread and Pebble Roadmap in my study. I propose that a visual semiotic analysis of Bread and Pebble Roadmap demonstrates Boshoff’s application of deconstructive strategies, “by exposing and then subverting various binary positions, obsessive classifications and hierarchies that undergird any dominant ways of thinking” (Reynolds 2002:[sp]), as a core function in the meaning of this work.
Semiotics as a discipline unhinges the seeming differences between image and text. My investigation seeks to analyse the image-text relationship in Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, in order to reveal the hidden and obfuscatory qualities in this work. As Boshoff deliberately hides meaning from his viewers in his work, the study suggests ways to navigate and interpret Boshoff’s connoted meaning. It is critical to understand this relationship between image and text, in order to find the implied meaning beneath the obvious connotations embedded in the image. The title of the artwork *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* suggests a map, yet it is clear from looking at the work that it is not a conventional map; a semiotic slippage has occurred. When analysing this work by looking at the relationship between image and text, “shifting the tension to read the work as well as view it” (Paton 2000:18), *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* can be read as a map which Georges Jean (1999:64) describe as a “complex agglomerations of signs” as discussed in chapter 2.

Derrida (1981:42) argues that metaphysics creates dualistic oppositions, and establishes a hierarchy that privileges one term of each aspect of the dichotomy in which different polar relations reside. In deconstructive strategies, these dichotomies are reversed. If one applies the principle of reversal of dichotomies to the relationship between image and text, Mitchell (1987:30) states that Derrida’s response to the question “What is an image?” would be[nothing but another kind of writing, these complex signs, maps, texts and images are discussed more fully in chapter 2.]

Semiotics seems to promise a new, more scientific understanding of the boundaries between painting and poetry or image and text. We now speak of the difference between image and text in terms such as the analogical and the digital. Goodman (1976:226) differentiates between images and text by looking at the contrast between analogue and digital. Mitchell (1987:68) states: “The picture is, in Goodman’s words, syntactically and semantically ‘continuous,’ while the text employs a set of symbols that are ‘disjunct,’ constituted by gaps that are without significance”.

Applying this theory to *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, I show that the relationship between image and text unhinges the conditions for stereotyping. Drawing a connection between and applying these conditions found in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* to Arabic-Afrikaans points a way forward towards my own emergent identity in a state of transitioning, found in a liminal space. I use Krog’s (2009) conception of transformation to frame my transitioning identity. Krog (2009:126)

4This phrase becomes a key concept and will be threaded throughout this research.
suggests that the word “transformation” means: to form the other side, to start creating where you are going, as discussed more deeply in chapter 3.1.

The word “liminal” first appeared in publication in the field of psychology in 1884. Later, in 1909, the idea was introduced to the field of anthropology by Arnold Van Gennep in his seminal work, Les rites de passage. The words “liminal” and “liminality” gained popularity during the second half of the 20th century through the writings of Victor Turner. Turner borrowed and expanded upon Van Gennep’s concept of liminality, ensuring widespread usage of the concept in fields other than anthropology.⁵

In relation to the above concepts of transformation and liminality I contend that a nuanced understanding of Bread and Pebble Roadmap reveals connective threads between image and text and Arabic-Afrikaans, in order to unpack issues of emergent female Afrikaner identity. In the following section I discuss the history of Arabic-Afrikaans and argue for its relevance.

⁵The word “liminality” is not found in many dictionaries. It is not found in the Oxford Dictionaries online (2014); this dictionary does, however, have an entry for “liminal”, the adjectival form of the word, which it defines as “relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process”, or “occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold”. Both the words “liminal” and “liminality” are derived from the Latin word limen, which means “threshold”, that is, the bottom part of a doorway that must be crossed when entering a building.
CHAPTER 1

Part 2

1.5 Arabic-Afrikaans: History, heritage, identity

And among His Signs
Is the creation of the Heavens
And the earth, and the variations
In your languages
And your colours: verily
In that are Signs
For those who know

*Al-Qur'ān* 6:30:22 (cited in Davids 2011:8)

Figure 1.1: An Arabic-Afrikaans manuscript from a private collection, Cape Town. (Jappie 2011 [sp])

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6The Oxford English Dictionary gives three spellings for the title of this book: "Qur'ān" (the ancient spelling), "Quran" (the modern Arabic spelling), and "Koran" (the English spelling). For the purposes of this study the English spelling, "Koran", will be used.
Davids’ (2011) ground-breaking work, *The Afrikaans of the Cape Muslims*, is a result of his Master’s study, completed several years earlier at the then University of Natal. He focuses on the Arabic-Afrikaans literary tradition of the Cape Muslim community. He investigates the emergence of this tradition at the Cape of Good Hope, as well as the social vehicles through which it emerged and through which it was perpetuated. Haron’s article (2006) *Arabic-Afrikaans: a vehicle for identity formation rather than integration*, delivered at the Afro-Arab Cultural Centre (in Bamako, Mali) and at the African-Arab Research Centre (in Cairo), demonstrates the Cape Muslims’ use of this literary tradition as a vehicle for identity formation. It investigates the fact that very little is known about this literature in the broad Afrikaner community (Haron 2006:2).

The main objective of this section of my study is to investigate the early roots of the relationship between Arabic script and the oral tradition of Afrikaans. I will make this link in order to facilitate the mapping of my own emergent female Afrikaner identity in a state of flux in chapter 4. My position questions the secrecy and obfuscation of this literary tradition considered by the Afrikaner nationalists as a source of shame alluding to prejudice between the Afrikaner and Muslims. By analysing aspects of the Arabic-Afrikaans script, I render what was once invisible as visible, in order to celebrate it as a potential key to ‘mapping’ contemporary identities.

The Arabic writing system was brought to the Cape by slaves, exiles, and convicts that came from areas around the Indian Ocean Basin. At least some of these people were Muslim and came from a region where Arabic was the dominant mode of literacy, for instance the islands of modern-day Indonesia, where Arabic-Malay was used.
The map in Figure 1.2, which shows the origins of the slaves that came to South Africa, indexes not only the geographic origins of these slaves, but also the religious and linguistic culture that they brought with them to the melting pot of the Cape, resulting in changes to the original cultural patterns of these groups. This has happened in virtually every aspect of South African life since contact with Europeans at the Cape from 1488 onwards, including the creolisation of Dutch.

Because the Malay language was one of the main lingua francas at the Cape, particularly among the Muslim slaves, exiles, and the free black population, Jawi\(^7\) (a process of adapting the Arabic alphabet to Malay) naturally came to be used as its written counterpart. However, creole Afrikaans later replaced Malay as the lingua franca, and, by the mid-19th century, Jawi was replaced by Arabic-Afrikaans. Both of these scripts were taught through the madrasah (Muslim

\(^7\)Jawi was initiated by Sultan Muhammad Shah (ascended to the throne of Malacca) in 1276 (Dangor 2008:sp)).
school) education system, which was one of the only forms of education available to Muslim children at the time. Madrasah education at the Cape emerged in 1793, with the establishment of a religious school in Dorp Street,\(^8\) the same premises that two years later would double as the first mosque,\(^9\) namely the Auwal Mosque, in the southern hemisphere\(^{10}\) (Davids 2011:66). The Auwal Mosque was founded in 1794 by Imam Abdullah Kadi Abdus Salaam (popularly known as Tuan Guru, meaning “mister teacher”), who was the first Muslim cleric at the Cape. He died in 1807, and was buried in the Tana Baru Muslim graveyard at the crest of the Vlaeborg.\(^{11}\)

The teaching method used was essentially a rote-learning process, where students would be taught the consonant and vowel sounds of the Arabic alphabet, from a book called the *koplesboek* (student notebook). The purpose was to teach the Arabic script for the reading and writing of Malayu,\(^{12}\) so that the religious concepts could be remembered in a language known to the students (whatever Arabic they learned in the process was a bonus).

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\(^{8}\)The building still stands today alongside the Auwal Mosque, although it is now the home of the Ahmed family, descendants of Saartjie van die Kaap, the original owner of the land on which the madrasah and the mosque was erected (Van Bart 2011:14).

\(^{9}\)A mosque, in its traditional role, has a dual function. On the one hand, it is a place of worship, a sanctuary, and a spiritual retreat. On the other hand, it is a space for social and political organisation.

\(^{10}\)It is also the first and oldest built in South Africa.

\(^{11}\)On his death, there were 372 pupils. By 1825, the number of Catechumens had grown to 495, and by 1838, with the official emancipation of the slaves, the Dorp Street Madrasah had 1,069 registered pupils (Davids 2011:68).

\(^{12}\)The Eastern slaves had a diversity of languages known as Malayo-Polynesian. Malayu is one language of this family. The term “Malay” is used in the generic rather than the specific sense (Davids 2011:52).
Davids (2011:67) explains the process as follows:

The student is required to transcribe a lesson from either a chalkboard or dictation by a teacher into a book called the *koplesboek*. The student is then required to memorise it at home (getting the lesson into his head (kop) in the literal sense) and recite it from memory to the teacher on the next occasion. If his/her retention is good, the student is given a new lesson and the process is repeated.

From 1815 onwards, the children copied their lessons (in the *koplesboek*) in Creole Afrikaans. From these student notebooks the change in medium of instruction from Malayu to Afrikaans can be traced (Davids 2011:67). After the emancipation of the slaves in 1838, Cape Muslim Afrikaans flourished as a spoken language. Afrikaans was already an established language in the Cape Muslim community when Arnoldes Pannevis started to contemplate the use of Afrikaans for a Bible translation in 1872 (Davids 2011:85). Cape Muslim Afrikaans was being...
used as a medium of communication in social and economic life,\textsuperscript{13} as well as being used as a language of instruction in religious schools and as the language for translation of the Muslim holy sermons. This dialect of Afrikaans had an important cultural function among Muslims at the Cape, as the Koran was read in Arabic-Afrikaans, and worship was conducted in the same language. Afrikaans was rapidly replacing Malayu, so much so that Malayu was no longer a spoken language in Cape Town by 1903 (Davids 2011:56).\textsuperscript{14}

Dongor (2008:[sp]) states that Cape Muslims were familiar with the Arabic script, which was essential for the purpose of reciting the Koran in the original language, but they did not understand Arabic. This meant that they could not access the Islamic texts in Arabic, which were prescribed for the madrasah. Learners were conversant with Cape Muslim Afrikaans; therefore the logical thing to do would be to translate the Koranic text into Cape Muslim Afrikaans. Learners were not allowed to attend state schools, and therefore could not read Roman script. Consequently, transcribing the translated texts into Latin would not have been a solution to the problem.

A novel way in which to communicate these texts to learners was discovered by the religious scholars at the Cape. They combined students’ ability to read the Arabic script with their ability to speak Afrikaans, to create a new medium to produce texts that were accessible to learners. The challenge encountered by Arabic-Afrikaans writers was phonetically transcribing Afrikaans words in the Arabic script, since the Arabic alphabet was not adequate to convey all the sounds of Afrikaans in writing.

Davids (2011:25) explains this process (which he refers to as “innovative orthographic engineering”) as follows:

The approach of the Arabic-Afrikaans writers was essentially a phonetic analytic one. The writer was first required to determine and analyse the Afrikaans sound. Then had to manipulate the vocalic and lettering symbols of the Arabic phonetic script. This manipulation, however, had to be done in such a way that the

\textsuperscript{13}By the late 19th century Afrikaans written in Arabic script was applied extensively and included messages, letters, and shopping lists (Davids 2011:297).

\textsuperscript{14}The formation and evolution of Afrikaans cannot be attributed to a single factor, such as Dutch. It is composed of a variety of dialects, as well as varieties of indigenous languages, which gives modern Afrikaans a richness that is not always appreciated. The rich range and varieties of Afrikaans, some of which were not included in the first edition of the \textit{Woordelys en Spelreëls} (word list and spelling rules) in 1915, as they were regarded as inferior, are spoken today in all corners of the country. Many ethnic groups, including indigenous Khoekhoe, VOC (Dutch East India Company \textit{Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie} subjects (Dutch, French, German, and Scandinavian), as well as ‘Orientals’, Portuguese, and English-speaking people, have all contributed to this rich language (Van Bart 2011:14).
emerging created lettering cluster could be read to produce (within the constraints of the rules of *tajwīd*\textsuperscript{15}), a sound that resembled the Afrikaans sound intended as accurately as possible.

This gave rise to a distinct Arabic-Afrikaans alphabet consisting of 29 letters, which was adopted to transcribe Afrikaans sounds.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1.png}
\caption{An example of text from the *Bayān al-Din*, undated. The Afrikaans is read from right to left: “En was sy linker sy van nek tot voet tot water raak onder sy regter sy”. [And wash his left side from neck to foot until water touches below his right side] (Die Afrikaanse Taalmuseum, permanent exhibition, photograph by the author.)}
\end{figure}

But why would Muslims choose Cape Muslim Afrikaans as their means of communication, and, more importantly, what is the explanation for their willingness to translate their sacred text from

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{15}Arabic phonetic science (Dongor 2008:[sp]). In terms of dictionary meaning, *tajwīd* implies the art of reciting the Koran. The word *tajwīd* is a verbal noun derived from the verb *jawwada*, which literally means to make better or to improve. The function of *tajwīd* is to preserve the meaning of the revealed words of the Koran, to preserve their sounds and expressions, and to protect these words from any alterations in utterance and pronunciation (Davids 2011:20). To determine how the Arabic lettering symbols of the Afrikaans sounds of 19th-century Cape Muslim Afrikaans were created, it was necessary to examine the use and manipulation of the rules of the Arabic phonetic science of *tajwīd* by the Arabic-Afrikaans writers. Therefore the Arabic phonetic scripts are almost audiotape-like recordings of the spoken Afrikaans of the Cape Muslim community (Davids 2011:17).
\end{footnote}
Arabic into Afrikaans, and then transcribe the Afrikaans via *tajwīd* into their sacred script, Arabic? Davids (2011:86) provides the answer:

The Cape Muslims did not view Afrikaans as a language of inferiority or coin its negative names of *kombuistaal* (kitchen language) or *hotnotstaal*. They saw Afrikaans as an inherent part of their psyche and were prepared to transmit it in writing, using their sacred script.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Afrikaans</th>
<th>Cape Muslim Afrikaans</th>
<th>Arabic transcription</th>
<th>Phonetic transcription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>matches</td>
<td>vuurhoutjies</td>
<td>metjie</td>
<td>ميدج</td>
<td>[met'či]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garlic</td>
<td>knoffel</td>
<td>konofloko</td>
<td>كنوفلك</td>
<td>[konofloko]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rabbit</td>
<td>konyn</td>
<td>kanaintjie</td>
<td>كدينيج س</td>
<td>[kanainči]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onion</td>
<td>uī</td>
<td>aiwe</td>
<td>أوي</td>
<td>[aiwe]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.5: Words from Sheikh Abdurahim’s five-language glossary. (Davids 2011:140).

No fewer than 11 works in Arabic-Afrikaans had been published by the end of the 19th century. Abubakr Effendi’s *Bayân al-Din* is credited with the distinction of being the first Arabic-Afrikaans work to have been published in 1877 (although it was previously circulated in manuscript form for 12 years) (Davids 2011:81, 87). By 1991, 74 such works had been found, where the last book using this writing style was published in 1957 (Davids 2011:103). When handwritten books were replaced by printed ones – initially in Arabic script, and soon after in Roman script – the *kietaabs* ceased to be used, except as heirlooms.

Davids (1991:103) attributes the subsequent demise of Arabic-Afrikaans literature to two factors, namely the emergence of Afrikaans religious texts in Roman script, and the emergence of Muslim mission schools. Dongor (2008:6) states that, in addition to the two factors that Davids cites, two other important factors are the gradual switch from communicating in Afrikaans to using English as the preferred medium of communication, and the fact that students started to travel to Arabic-speaking countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia to attend Islamic studies.

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16 74 Arabic-Afrikaans manuscripts had been prepared and commented upon by individuals such as Hans Kähler and Achmat Davids in 1971 and 1990 respectively (Haron 2006:10).
17 The word *kietaab* is derived from the Arabic word *kitāb*, which means “book”.

which meant that Arabic came to hold a place of eminence among these graduates. These factors rule out the possibility of Arabic-Afrikaans being revived as a medium of instruction.

In fact, the Afrikaner community that established the Afrikaanse Taalmonument (Afrikaans Language Monument) in the town of Paarl has acknowledged the critical contribution of the Cape Muslims to Afrikaans; they have earmarked a wall on the main steps of the monument that connects ‘Western Europe’ and ‘Africa’. The wall is constructed in such a way that it metaphorically links Western Europe and Africa as the foundation of Afrikaans. The contribution of the Cape Muslims was only acknowledged after Davids argued strongly with monument promoters in the late 1980s about the remarkable and unique input of the Cape Muslims (Haron 2006:10).

1.6 Arabic-Afrikaans and identity formation

Cape Muslims creatively applied themselves to preserving their identity by reinforcing Arabic-Afrikaans script, a script that was largely employed in the home-based and mosque-based madrasah, as well as in the growing number of masjids (mosques) that emerged throughout the 19th century. They invested their energy in this pursuit, because they desired to remain loyal to their faith and affirm their religious identity in a predominantly hostile environment.

Reflecting a pervasive European mentality, white colonial authorities and settlers at the Cape continually viewed Islam as the 'other'. In Euro-Christian terms, Islam was a heresy and the very antithesis of Christendom (Moosa 1995:135). Instead of using the Afrikaans language to integrate and assimilate, Cape Muslims employed it to maintain their distance from the colonial authorities, so as not to be integrated and absorbed into the dominant and imposing white secular culture that had effectively separated religion from public life. According to Haron Arabic-Afrikaans literature was thus used for identity formation at the Cape (Haron 2006:2).

According to Hein Willemse, interviewed by Corina van der Spoel (RSG 2013), for the past 35 years or more, the idea has grown that Afrikaans has not one but multiple histories, and that it is therefore a mistake to think that there is only one way of looking at the world. The idea that Afrikaans is a ‘pure’ language is no longer valid. This does not deny the role that Afrikaner nationalism has played. After the South African War of 1899-1902, in which Britain crushed the two Boer republics (the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State), language played an important role in the rise of Afrikaner nationalism. The promotion of Afrikaans became an important means
to emancipate the Afrikaner from British economic and cultural domination. But Afrikaner nationalists emphasised the history of Afrikaners, their culture, and their language, to the exclusion of the other ethnic groups in South Africa (Afrikaans in conversation 2009:[sp]).

Nationalism may be viewed as a duality. On the one hand, it has contributed to a feeling of unity, and, on the other hand, it had a devastating effect on perceptions of the Afrikaans language, which was considered an agent of oppression during apartheid. Arabic-Afrikaans is part of the broader history which one should strive to understand. The idea of the history of Afrikaans is that of a multiple history. How do we re-contextualise our knowledge of this information? Willemsen (RSG 2013) states that the problem with a nationalist way of thinking is that nationalists want to tell one history and make it the only history, while what actually happened was that Afrikaans is South Africa’s most non-racial achievement, it is an important thing to celebrate in terms of what Afrikaans is. The future of Afrikaans depends essentially on the degree of loyalty that the language enjoys from all of its speakers, their support for the reconstruction of a non-racial Afrikaans social identity through a shared commitment towards protecting, promoting, and empowering communities through Afrikaans (Afrikaans in conversation 2009:[sp]).

In chapter 2, I form linkages between this history of Arabic-Afrikaans within the notion of Afrikaans as a richly layered, complex, and multicultural language and Boshoff’s Bread and Pebble Roadmap. Boshoff has a particular stance on the potency and layering of Afrikaans. Boshoff takes Afrikaans’ complexities and makes them part of his life’s work and his own presence in the world. Vladislavić (2005:46, 64) states that “Boshoff is well aware that this language [Afrikaans] has both oppressive and revolutionary potentials”; he continues by saying “Boshoff the activist is interested in the power relationship inscribed in and through language, in the way languages privilege or exclude”. By memorialising Arabic-Afrikaans, a link with the past and a sense of emergent identity construction is argued for. Arabic-Afrikaans, woven into Bread and Pebble Roadmap, constitutes a key to unlocking a notion of Afrikaner identity in a state of flux, and, in particular, as I will argue in chapter 3, emergent female Afrikaner identity.
CHAPTER 2

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I interpret *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* from a visual semiotic perspective. This work is selected because of its complex interplay between image and text, and its association with Arabic and Islam, which helps form linkages with the history of Arabic-Afrikaans. I attempt, on the basis of this analysis, to unpack the image-text relationship, in order to unlock the work’s obfuscation and dichotomies. This is done with the aim of liberating a relationship to the past (Arabic-Afrikaans) and the future (my own emergent female Afrikaner identity).

The dichotomies that I unpack in this visual analysis are the seeming differences between bread and pebble, map and territory, and Islam and Christianity, as operationalised through the seeming difference between image and text. For the purposes of my argument, I attempt to show how Boshoff collapses the dichotomous differences of these binary oppositions via obfuscated meanings, but also to complexify these issues.

I aim to show that if *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* can be interpreted as a dichotomy: the work functions as an unhelpful map to get lost by, yet, together with Arabic-Afrikaans, it can also serve as a potential latter-day Rosetta Stone,\(^\text{18}\) unlocking a link to the past, which may help in mapping an emergent Afrikaner identity in a state of flux. Arabic-Afrikaans helps understand some of the complexities of *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, and, together, Arabic-Afrikaans and *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* produce a route through to identity formation, supporting the purpose of this research which is ultimately to shed light on identity formation in terms of my emergent female Afrikaner identity, as discussed in chapter 3.

As explained in chapter 1, part 1, the application of semiotic analysis helps to deconstruct the communicative visual sign systems operating in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, in an attempt to derive at a meaning. As stated, Derrida claims the problem is that meaning is always dependent on context, that, there is nothing outside the context, and therefore no one correct interpretation. According to Sylvan Barnet (1997:13), Foucault’s (1984) view is that “the work does not belong

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\(^{18}\)The analogy of the Rosetta Stone is a useful one because the stone has multiple readings for the text translated, and therefore becomes a signifier for the way in which part of this work is translated. For example, the bread in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* unlocks the pebble, which, in turn, unlocks the meaning of the work.
to the alleged maker; rather, it belongs - or ought to belong - to the *perceivers*, who of course interpret it variously, according to their historical, social, and psychological circumstances”.

What follows is a comprehensive analysis of the integrations of the structure, medium, and use of text to understand the hidden messages embedded in the multi-layered signs connected to *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*.

### 2.2 Willem Boshoff: A context

Boshoff had a traditional Christian Afrikaner education. As his father was a carpenter, Boshoff developed a love for wood and an eye for technical precision. At the age of 15, he decided he was going to be an artist. After he had completed his schooling, he enrolled at the Johannesburg College of Art (later the Witwatersrand Technikon), where years later he completed his Master’s Diploma in 1984, became a staff member, and later its director.

According to Vladislavić (2005:10), Boshoff went through a radical spiritual change – “his upbringing had been rigidly, unquestioning Calvinist” – during his second year of tertiary study. This “religious experience” (Vladislavić 2005:10) caused him to drop out of college in his final year to become a street preacher. He returned later to complete his course. This testifies to the fact that the majority of Boshoff’s early works had a strong Christian motivation.

Boshoff later renounced his strong Christian beliefs. According to Vladislavić (2005:109), “he now regards organized religion as a dangerous folly”. Yet Biblical and spiritual connotations persist in most of his works. Boshoff’s religious beliefs can be seen as a dichotomy: “He still believes in God, but only as a headword in the dictionary” (Vladislavić 2005:109).

Boshoff found himself in a peculiar place in the 1980s concerning language. While some prominent writers were increasingly writing in English, for political and other reasons Boshoff was “up to his neck in Afrikaans” (Vladislavić 2005:46). He had just published his book *KykAfrikaans* in a language that, according to Antjie Krog (cited in Christianse 2000:11), was made “merciless” by its association with power and paranoia. Boshoff was raised with a deep

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19He was born in 1951 and grew up in Vanderbijlpark, a town on the Vaal River, 75 km south of Johannesburg in the Gauteng province of South Africa. Christian Afrikaner education in a small town such as Vanderbijlpark meant that the responsibility of the individual to practise his or her faith was taken over by the power of the state and the church (Oliver 2010).
“mistrust and disliking for the English” (Vladislavić 2005:48) and felt judged and ridiculed by his English-speaking colleagues at the technikon. According to Vladislavić (2005:48), Boshoff felt that

English was being used as a weapon against him and he decided to take up the weapon himself. He began working through the dictionary, noting words he did not understand and formulating his own definitions. Ammunition. […] Soon he was in a position to turn the tables on his colleagues, to correct them when they made a mistake, to pepper them with etymologies, to use words they did not understand.

The result was Boshoff’s *A Dictionary of Perplexing English*. Boshoff used subsets of this dictionary to produce various works, the best known of these being *The Blind Alphabet* (1991-2000).

Most images have multiple meanings, visual and symbolic, conventional and arbitrary. *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* is filled with types of signification that hold double meanings: visual expression needing a linguistic explanation to interpret its meaning. A visual description of the work follows, as well as an attempt to analyse the title, as it opens up several possible meanings.

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20 Both his grandmothers had been held in British concentration camps during the South African War of 1899-1902.
21 He spends much of his time compiling dictionaries, and his first, *A Dictionary of Colour*, was written in 1977. These dictionaries often form the basis for his artworks. Some of these dictionaries are *A Dictionary of Perplexing English* (1999), *Beyond the Epiglottis* (2000), *What Every Druid Should Know* (nd), *Dictionary of Manias and Phobias* (nd), the *Dictionary of Morphology* (nd), the *Dictionary of-ologies and -isms* (nd), *A Dictionary of Beasts and Demons* (nd), as well as the *Dictionary of Winds* (nd) and the *Dictionary of Obscure Financial Terms* (nd) (Boshoff 2004:sp).
22 This work is described as “readable wood, a book, a dictionary, which simultaneously reveals and conceals its contents […] an English dictionary written in Braille” (Vladislavić 2005:54).
2.3 Visual description of *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*

*Figure 2.1: Willem Boshoff, *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, 2004. Stone, bread rolls, wood, sand, paint, and glass. 40 panels – each 100cm (length) x 40cm (width) x 7cm (height). (Boshoff 2004: [sp]).*

*Bread and Pebble Roadmap* consists of 40 shallow whitewashed boxes (100 x 40 x 7cm) within which hundreds of fist-sized stones and bread rolls have been mounted in sand. These panels are evenly spaced and hang in a haphazard vertical row to produce a continuous pattern with no discernible differences in colour or texture in the sand, the size of the stones, the bread rolls, or even the spaces between them. Boshoff (2013) states that the pebbles were collected from the hills around Johannesburg, and that they were chosen for their resemblance to the size, colour, and texture of bread rolls.

A special dough was made containing a large quantity of salt, to be able to preserve the bread rolls. The shaping and baking (done by Boshoff’s assistants at the time, Katja and Aymeric Gentric from Paris) was done to make the bread rolls look exactly like, or resemble as closely as
possible, the pebbles collected. Despite Boshoff’s presentation of pebbles as pebbles and bread rolls as bread rolls in a number of these panels, there is also a transmogrification, where what is purported to be pebbles are, in fact, bread rolls, and what is purported to be bread rolls are, in fact, pebbles. Boshoff disguises the bread as pebbles and the pebbles as bread. Boshoff’s act of obfuscation, folding the bread into the pebbles, and vice versa, camouflages the terms of the other.

The bread and the pebbles were attached first, wet glue was then painted on the backing board, around the bread and the pebbles, and sand was then sprinkled on the wet glue, layer by layer.

Each panel is framed with a whitewashed wooden frame and stabilised, so as to facilitate a roughly vertical hanging. The stones and bread are marked with transliterated Arabic names and their English translation, applied with a small brush and tempera paint, and they refer to abstract concepts, for example Anwar, meaning “light”, or Yasser, meaning “wealth” or “ease”. Boshoff made a large number of pebbles and bread rolls, to show the multitude of the descendants of Ishmael, and so also their names. Boshoff wrote the English translation of the Arabic names because he wanted the names to be understandable to a Western audience, as he believes that Arabs are victimised most by Westerners, notably in action films from Hollywood, which Boshoff claims are guilty of ‘Arab-trashing’ (Boshoff 2013).

Figure 2.2: Willem Boshoff, Bread and Pebble Roadmap, detail, 2004. Stone, bread rolls, wood, sand, paint, and glass. 40 panels – each 100cm (length) x 40cm (width) x 7cm (height). (Boshoff 2004:[sp]).
Boshoff (2013) explains that the 40 wooden boxes are of a cheap pinewood, alluding to the coffins that Jewish children are buried in. The custom of Jews is to bury their dead in a modest coffin. In Islam, the custom is to bury the dead in a calico wrapping on the same day that the death occurs. Boshoff’s boxes/coffins are an ironic allusion to Arabs being buried in Jewish coffins. Boshoff again (as with the bread and the pebbles) folds one into the other; he camouflages the terms of the other.

These boxes are to be read as potential coffins, as metaphors and references to mortality, metaphorical of death and potential rebirth, of bread and pebbles, life and death, sustenance and weapon, transience and permanency – dichotomous relationships. The work could thus be metaphorical of a potential rebirth of cultural and political issues. These signifiers are discussed in chapter 3.

2.4 Semiotic analysis of the title

Semiotically speaking, a signifier is any material thing that signifies, for example words on a page, a facial expression, or an image. The signified is the concept to which a signifier refers. Together, the signifier and the signified make up the sign, which is interpreted as the message or the meaning. The title is and consists of symbolic (arbitrary) signs. In other words, they are signs where the relationship between signifier and signified is purely conventional and culture-specific. I analyse the signifiers set up by the title, in order to build an interpretation of the work.

What follows is a textual unpacking of a range of meanings associated with each of the words of the title, sourced from two dictionaries, namely the Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), and the Collins New English Dictionary (Irvine 1956).

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23 As is explained in section 2.4.2, “Semiotic analysis of the title”, the title of the artwork is derived from the phrase “Roadmap to Peace”, which refers to the then United States President George Bush’s proposed plan of peace for Palestine (linking with the Jewish coffin) during the 2003 invasion of Iraq (linking with Islam) (another obvious link to Islam is the Arab names referencing Ishmael’s descendants).
2.4.1 *Bread and pebble*

Conventionally, a pebble is a natural raw material that resists the elements, while bread is manmade and transient. There is in this analysis of the title some semiotic interpretation operating, because bread is not necessarily transient. If the bread gets eaten, it is transient, but
if it is put into an artwork, it is no longer transient. This is especially the case in this artwork, as the bread has been baked with a large quantity of salt.

A pebble can be seen as a weapon (if the pebble is of the right size and weight), while bread is food – properties which are normally irreconcilable. Derrida (1981:42) argues that “metaphysics creates dualistic oppositions and installs a hierarchy that privileges one term of each dichotomy”. Yet the title says Bread and Pebble Roadmap; the word “and” is used to connect two words that are to be taken together, thus Bread and Pebble together, equally, with all their similarities and differences. Boshoff has deconstructed and reversed these dichotomies by making stone and bread interexchangeable; the bread rolls look like stones, and as many round stones resemble bread rolls (the bread is now as hard as rock), they are placed next to each other, and become indistinguishable. In the process, their individual characteristics become conjoined.

Boshoff states (2013) that

the bread and pebbles, at a glance, look like stones on the desert floor, stones of such a suitable size that they will fit comfortably in one’s hand and of such a weight that should one use them in a stoning, they will be effective in killing. The names written on the bread and pebbles are small and sometimes innocuous, as if the stones are marked by their various owners. If one writes one’s own name on one’s own stone/bread-roll, one is saying that the stone/bread-roll will not get lost – this stone is mine, it has my name on it. If one writes the name of one’s enemy on a stone one projects the intention to do harm. One is in effect saying: this stone has your name on it, I am going to use it on you.

In the story of “Hansel and Gretel”, the children’s own father acted with much the same motives as Abraham did in the Old Testament in Genesis. Like Abraham, he twice tried to get rid of his two children. Boshoff (2013) states that “[i]f one were to choose pebbles to stone someone, then the size of bread-rolls would ironically be ideal”. The bread and pebbles now both have connotations of weapons.
2.4.2 Roadmap

Diagram 2.3: Words specifically chosen from diagram 2.1 in order to build an interpretation of the work. Created by author.

A road is a wide way leading from one place to another, especially one with a prepared surface which vehicles can use. A map is a diagrammatic representation of an area of land or sea showing physical features, such as cities, roads, etc. A roadmap is a map, especially one designed for motorists, showing the roads of an area (Oxford Dictionaries online 2014).

A map must be designed principally with consideration of the user and his or her needs (Robinson 1953). From the very beginning of the practice of mapmaking, maps “have been made for some particular purpose or set of purposes” (Robinson 1982). If the user is unable to identify what is being depicted in a reasonable way, the map may be regarded as useless. Maps are worlds represented by signs. A map is a diagram, not of a place, but of a conceptual representation of that place, a picture seen at a glance, a text read quickly. The relationship between image and text (ut pictura poesis) is a dualistic opposition which has been debated throughout the ages. As Mitchell (1987:8) explains, one needs to keep in mind that “images, in fact, […] must be understood as a kind of language”, and “a word is an image of an idea, and an idea is an image of a thing” (Mitchell 1987:22).

24 Roads and their maps are particularly important in desert areas.
If, as Derrida (1981:42) argues, metaphysics creates dualistic oppositions and installs a hierarchy that privileges one term of each dichotomy in which different polar relations reside, the deconstructive strategy is to reverse or unhinge the hierarchy of privilege. When applied to the relationship between image and text, Mitchell (1987:30) states that

Derrida's answer to the question 'What is an image?' would undoubtedly be: ‘Nothing but another kind of writing, a kind of graphic sign that dissembles itself as a direct transcript of that which it represents, or of the way things look, or of what they essentially are’.

Texts define different sorts of meanings when they interact with images, as is evident in maps. Georges Jean (1999:64) states that

[m]aps are complex agglomerations of signs, conveying concrete information about a place in abstract terms. Our approach to them is twofold and even contradictory: we both look at them as visual objects and read them as text.

Some people first see a map as a picture, and then read it as a text. Other people first read the data on a map, and then decipher the map's image. Reading a map is not linear, where one word or sentence follows another. The written code is spatial; words are read in relation to their position on the page and their proximity or pictorial features. As with reading a text, we need to learn the conventions of ‘reading a map’.

When analysing this work by looking at the relationship between image and text, shifting the tension to read the work as well as view it (Paton 2000:18), *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* can be read as a dichotomous map. The title suggests a map, yet looking at the work it is clearly not a conventional map; a semiotic slippage has occurred. How can a roadmap consist of bread and pebbles? The codes and conventions used are not what we expect when reading a map. The work does not contain conventional signs or symbols representing specific directions; rather, it contains actual constituents of territory, as it is composed of soil and stones. Part of the function of a paper-based map is to be opened and folded closed, for it to be carried. A roadmap only has a function if the destination is a possibility; in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, the conventional map is disguised as a physical road, instead of being printed on paper. A map, being a set of conventional signs, is manmade and abstract, as is an artwork; even though the artwork in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* consists of natural materials, it is still a completely manmade and abstract conventional set of signs. The map and the territory have been conjoined; the space between the conventional signs, signifying territory, has been collapsed, just as image and text has been collapsed. The territory is the map, and the map is the territory.
The geography of this region is not depicted in this work, as is expected of a map, which leaves the user of this map lost within an abstract territory.\textsuperscript{25}

Boshoff’s roadmap refers to a plan or strategy intended to achieve a particular goal: a roadmap for peace in the region. According to Boshoff (2013), (as previously mentioned in footnote 23) this work is inspired by his sense of indignation at the unfairness in which the Palestinian people exist, and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. At the time of the invasion of Iraq, the then US president, George Bush, proposed a plan of peace for Palestine. He called it the “Roadmap to Peace”, and the title of this work is derived from this phrase.\textsuperscript{26}

The territory being mapped in \textit{Bread and Pebble Roadmap} is a physical territory consisting of pebbles and sand gathered from around Johannesburg. As is the case in many of Boshoff’s works,\textsuperscript{27} geo-political complexities have been grafted onto the South African political situation, using local materials.

Through analysis, it is clear that the title is meant to be read as a point of departure from which to interpret the artwork. In this way, the title can be seen as the map’s index. If the bread and the pebbles themselves collapse (becoming interchangeable), I argue that they hide in each other’s terms, they camouflage themselves. The notion of a roadmap is that the map directs you nowhere outside of itself; it directs you into itself, because the map becomes the territory. This title-as-index helps us to extract some of the key issues in the work that I have chosen to analyse.

Although the panels hang equidistant from each other, they do not form a straight horizontal and vertical grid: Boshoff does not promise a straight answer to any question. Although it is generally accepted that a map promises direction to lead a traveller to a destination, the viewer of this work is deprived of this certainty. As Gentric (2004:[sp]) asserts, “Boshoff has

\textsuperscript{25}Several of Boshoff’s artworks may be seen to articulate a position of ‘being lost’. Stephan Erasmus (2007:4) cites Ashraf Jamal (1996:4), who says the following about this aspect of Boshoff’s work: “Being lost is a discipline. Therein one discovers the limits of received sense, the frontier of the possible”.

\textsuperscript{26}This work was first shown at the Goodman Gallery in 2003, immediately after the American invasion of Iraq. The Goodman Gallery was then owned by Linda Givon and Linda’s husband, who was a fighter pilot in the Israeli army. Boshoff saw his stance on Israel in his work as potentially a source of tension between himself and Goodman, who is Jewish as this work might be read as anti-Semitic. However, Goodman was tolerant of the work (Boshoff 2013).

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Gaia Index 1991} is such an example. The work consists of 190 bottles of South African soils, displayed in a wooden cabinet, reflecting a contemporary South African social landscape (Siebrits 2007:68).
constructed, as many times before, a map to get lost by”. It is as if Boshoff intentionally sets intellectual traps through the use of paradoxes, deliberately under-mining the viewer’s expectations. Since the beginning of his career, his work has shown an interest in the tension between revealing and concealing. Boshoff shifts the balance of power: a balance between certainty and uncertainty, between image and text, and between the two poles of each dichotomy for which I argue in this chapter. Shifting the balance of power is evident in Boshoff’s approach to language. As stated in chapter 1 part 2, Boshoff is well aware of both the oppressive and the revolutionary potential of Afrikaans, and he shows his interest in the power relationship inscribed in and through language, in the way language privileges or excludes.

2.5 Material and intertextuality as meaning

I argue that the work’s physical materials and their intertextuality support and unpack the above analysis. Boshoff’s chosen materials reveal themselves as a significant part of the meaning of this work. A key code for the interpretation of *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, which is essential to the material elements, is intertextuality. Hall’s (2007:110) terms of intertextuality operate in the following way: “Intertextuality describes how works of various kinds (books, paintings, sculptures, adverts, etc.) make reference to other works. It also describes how various meanings that these works create are interrelated. The references that works make to one another are often exemplified in terms of structure or content”.

In *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, Boshoff’s use of bread and pebbles makes reference to the story of “Hansel and Gretel”, while bread and sand are referenced in the Biblical story of Ishmael and Hagar (both discussed in the following section). The integration of text in the form of Arabic names (the descendants of Ishmael) on the bread and the pebbles acts as a signifier pointing towards Islam, as one of the poles of the dichotomy. Both the chosen materials and their intertextuality lead the viewer on a pathway. On this pathway I examine the work’s depiction of stereotyping.

Mitchell (1987:43) asserts that “[t]he dialect of words and images seems to be a constant in the fabric of signs that a culture weaves around itself”. He continues, by saying that

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the suspicion that beneath words, beneath ideas, the ultimate reference in the mind is the image, the impression of outward experience printed, painted, or reflected in the surface of consciousness. [...] the relationship between word and images reflects, within the realm of representation, signification, and communication, the relations we posit between symbols and the world, signs and their meanings. (Mitchell 1987:43)

What follows is an investigation of how the relationship between image and text in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* explores and resists stereotyping. For the purposes of this research, the political, racial and religious stereotyping by many Westerners of Muslims, and, of course, our own South African history of stereotyping through race and prejudice, are explored.

2.5.1 "Hansel and Gretel" and Genesis: Two tales of bread, pebbles and sand

Boshoff’s roadmap links two well-known tales, the first being “Hansel and Gretel”, a fairy tale of German origin, recorded by the Brothers Grimm, and first published in 1812.

The following summary is based on an 1853 edition, translated by Iona and Peter Opie (1980:308-312):

*Hansel and Gretel are the young children of a poor woodcutter. When a great famine settles over the land, the woodcutter’s second abusive wife decides to take the children into the woods and leave them there to be by themselves, so that she and her husband will not starve to death, because the children eat too much. The woodcutter opposes the plan but finally, and reluctantly, submits to his wife’s scheme. They are unaware that in the children’s bedroom, Hansel and Gretel have overheard them. After the parents have gone to bed, Hansel sneaks out of the house and gathers as many white pebbles as he can, then returns to his room, reassuring Gretel that God will not forsake them.

The next day, the family walk deep into the woods and Hansel lays a trail of white pebbles. After their parents abandon them, the children wait for the moon to rise and then they follow the pebbles back home. They return home safely, much to their stepmother’s horror. Once again provisions become scarce, and the*

29In the Grimm tale, the woodcutter and his wife are the children’s biological parents and share the blame for abandoning them. In later editions, some slight revisions were made: the wife is the children’s stepmother, the woodcutter opposes his wife’s scheme to abandon the children, and religious references are made (Tatar 2002:45). The fairy tale may have originated in the medieval period of the Great Famine (1315-1321), which caused people to do desperate things, such as abandoning young children to fend for themselves, or even resorting to cannibalism.
stepmother angrily orders her husband to take the children further into the woods and leave them there to die. Hansel and Gretel attempt to gather more pebbles, but find the doors locked and find it impossible to escape from their parents’ house.

The following morning, the family treks into the woods. Hansel takes a slice of bread and leaves a trail of bread crumbs to follow home. However, after they are once again abandoned, the children find that birds have eaten the crumbs and they are lost in the woods. After days of wandering, they follow a beautiful white bird to a clearing in the woods and discover a large cottage built of gingerbread and cakes, with window panes of clear sugar. Hungry and tired, the children begin to eat the rooftop of the candy house, when the door opens and a very old woman emerges and lures them inside, with the promise of soft beds and delicious food. They comply, unaware that their hostess is a wicked witch who waylays children to cook and eat them.

In the end, the children outwit the witch and return home safely to their father, who had spent all his days lamenting the loss of his children, and is delighted to see them again, unharmed.

On his first attempt, Hansel is able to retrace his steps, following the pebbles. The second trail is lost, because the birds have eaten the bread that marked it. The dichotomous relationship between bread and pebbles gets folded and camouflaged, because the breadcrumbs, which are food, a symbol of life, a sign of substance, are the very thing which leads Hansel and Gretel to what might have been their death. Yet, the pebbles, which, as mentioned in section 2.4.1, have the potential to be read as a weapon, help them to find their way back home. Thus the symbol of a weapon is ironically folded into a symbol of salvation. In the “Hansel and Gretel” story, the children’s salvation comes not from the sign of food and substance of life, but from a sign of the weapon, a counter-sign to the sign of food. This collapsing and camouflaging of one sign into the other in this story is exploited by Boshoff.

The second tale to which Boshoff’s roadmap links is an allusion to the way in which Ishmael and his mother Hagar survived their expulsion to the desert. According to Boshoff (2013), his use of the natural materials of bread and sand is a biblical reference to Genesis 21:1-20, and may also refer to Matthew 4:3: “And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread”.

Abraham’s wife, Sarah, was jealous of Hagar and Ishmael, and she wanted to get rid of them at all costs: “Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac” (Genesis 21:10). When Abraham sends Hagar with the infant
Ishmael into the desert, he gives her bread and water. After Hagar and Ishmael had used up their last food and water in the desert, relief came their way. The story (related in Genesis 21:16-18) reads as follows:

16 Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, “I cannot watch the boy die.” And as she sat there, she began to sob. 17 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, ‘What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.’ 18 Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation’.

The boy (Ishmael), rejected by his own father (Abraham), faces certain death because his stepmother (Sarah) acts in hatred and wants him out of her life. Racial stereotypes cause hatred and rejection, but religious stereotypes can likewise cause highly condemnable behaviour. In Genesis 22, Abraham also tries to kill Sarah’s own son, Isaac. Ironically, both sons came close to dying at his hand, but both multiplied and became “as the sand which is upon the seashore” (Genesis 22:17).

2.5.2 Textual integrations

Like the river Jordan, Boshoff’s ‘roadmap’ winds its way through the desert. The stones and the bread are marked with Arabic names and their meanings in an attempt to put the full register of Arabic names at risk [of being stereotyped]. Each pebble may fill the fist that holds it, big enough to be a deadly weapon. Are these names the claim to the land they lie on? Are they the names of the victims aimed at? Are they the name of the carrier of the weapon? Might anybody follow this trail home? Where is peace? Why did we come here in the first place?

(Gentric 2004:[sp])

Because of stereotypes, terror is often considered synonymous with fundamentalist beliefs and the belief that the Islamic religion and the Middle East are indeed a major threat to peace for many Westerners. By writing Arabic names on the bread and the pebbles, geographical context is highlighted, namely the areas in which the events related in the Old Testament occurred, the desert land of Arabia – Ishmael’s country.

30 The origins of Islam, as with Christianity and Judaism, are from a journey out of Egypt, the birthplace of monotheism. Islam shares a common forefather with Christianity and Judaism in Abraham, who is revered as both the founder of the people of Israel, via Sarah, his wife, and the patriarch of the Arab people, via Hagar, Sarah’s handmaiden.
Boshoff (2013) states in this regard that “[m]any westerners find Arab names offensive, because they are prejudiced towards Arabs. My work demonstrates the exact opposite”. Boshoff resists stereotyping by adding the English translation, enabling the viewer to understand what is being signified.

Political and religious tension between Christians and Muslims was also evident in South Africa during the 17th and 18th centuries (Moosa 1995:135). Freedom of religion for Muslims was not tolerated. White colonial authorities and settlers at the Cape continually viewed Islam as the ‘other’. In Euro-Christian terms, Islam was the very antithesis of Christendom. The colonial authorities desired that slaves become literate, in order for them to become ‘civilised’. What the authorities had in mind was European literacy and alphabetisation, but what was initiated and promoted, however, was Arabic alphabetisation and literacy in a hybrid language, namely Arabic-Afrikaans.

The handwritten Arabic names on the bread and the pebbles reference the genealogy of Ishmael and, by extension, Islam. Arabic-Afrikaans can be seen as a kind of Afrikaans genealogy of understanding language, silence, and the secrecy surrounding Arabic-Afrikaans which through this research I hope to reveal.

In many of Boshoff’s works, he uses language, words, and text in a very specific way; they have always had a very particular presence. A case in point is KykAfrikaans, in which he uses a typewriter to deliberately conceal and reveal words and word-forms, where texts lose their legibility, but in which his strategy is, ironically, clearly discernible. In Bread and Pebble Roadmap, his use of text is different: it is handwritten. Here, his use of text seems to be an odd departure from his previous work (the only other work that uses handwritten text is Ostrakon 2003).

These handwritten Arabic names refer to abstract concepts, such as light, wealth, or ease, which raises the question: are these names perhaps suggested destinations, and, if so, where to, and for what purpose are they given?

I am also interested to know why Boshoff chose not to write these names in Arabic with English translations. For others, Arabic might seem to read as a sign that needs to be decoded in order to know what each character represents. Might this have been too abstract on top of the abstract concepts signified by each name? Boshoff states (2013) that he wanted the names to be readable to a Western audience, as he believes that Arabs are victimised most by
Westerners. As with all cultures, one’s name signifies a link to one’s parents, one’s family, and the people one loves. Arab names, albeit innocent and well-meaning in themselves, are at risk of being feared, hated, and victimised, such is the strength of Western propaganda, particularly in politics.31 The work looks at the innocence intended in giving well-meaning names to Muslim children, and the feelings of animosity that these names sometimes evoke between Jews and Muslims.

Boshoff states that these names often indicate a philosophical direction in which one hopes the child will develop. He is fascinated by words/names and their meanings. The name “Ishmael”, for example, means “God has listened”. Boshoff is fascinated by the fact that some mention of names can conjure up intense hatred among those who do not know the true meaning of those names. According to Boshoff (2013), “[n]ames can easily enforce stereotypes”. Boshoff continues by stating that:

> when [parents] name their children, they want only the best for them. Naming a child is sometimes an affirmation of what has occurred at birth. For example, a third child might be named “Tertia”. A name can also be seen as a prophetic gesture: “Sophia” means “truth”, and a mother projects a future of honesty and integrity onto her daughter by giving her such a name. The name “Ishmael” (as the small child saved from dying in the desert, and as the father of Arab descendants) affirms that “God has listened”.

As I mentioned in section 2.3, Boshoff made the bread look like stones and the stones look like bread. This transformation made the bread as hard as rock, and all that is left is a stone pathway leading inwards. The Arabic names constitute abstract destinations. Erasmus (2012) states that one of Boshoff’s favourite aphorisms is “Jy moet jouself verloor om jouself te kry” (“You have to lose yourself to find yourself”). Boshoff’s intention is perhaps that of a spiritual journey of self-discovery. The Arabic names can thus be interpreted as states of being, or phases that one has to go through. By considering the oppositions between different faiths, the dichotomous positioning of Islam versus Christianity is deconstructed.

31 Boshoff’s work Crusade (2011) draws attention to the fact that so-called Christians have waged terrible wars as crusaders against Arabs since the Middle Ages. The more recent American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are examples of how modern-day crusaders want to, in Boshoff’s phrase (2013), “sort the Arabs out”. 
2.6 Past, present, future

Goodman (1976:160) differentiates between images and text by looking at the contrast between analogue and digital forms. Goodman insists that we approach any symbol system by asking what difference is made by its constitutive differences. I refer to Hall's (2007) explanation of the differentiation between images and text by looking at the contrast between analogue and digital forms in order to formulate a relationship between the past and the future.

The difference between analogue and digital is explained through two different types of watches, that of watch-face and a digital clock.

The [...] watch-face represents time in analogue form [...]. With the watch-face we can see time passing as the hour, minute and second hands move around. Moreover, if we are timing something we may also see how much time has been used up and how much time is left. However, with the clock there are only a number of quite sudden changes that happen. With a numerical display such as this we are only able to see exactly what time it is now.

The basic differences between the two forms if represented is that the analogue form of time (i.e., the watch-face) gives more of a sense of continuum as the present is represented as having a relationship to the past and the future. With the digital form of time (i.e., the clock) there is an exact representation of the time in the present moment, but as there is a jump when the numbers change time can appear to be composed of units that seem discontinuous. (Hall 2007:65)

Mitchell (1987:68) states that “[t]he picture is, in Goodman’s words, syntactically and semantically ‘continuous,’ while the text employs a set of symbols that are ‘disjunct,’ constituted by gaps that are without significance”.

Applying this theory to Bread and Pebble Roadmap, the image/picture employs an analogue form, a continuous movement of 40 whitewashed boxes, filled with sand, bread, and pebbles. The text functions as the digital form, working by stops and jumps in order to read the Arabic names. Yet, and for the broader purpose of my research, only when image and text are apprehended as a unity, can there be a relationship between the past and the future as shown in the following diagram:
Diagram 2.4: The unhinging of dichotomous relationships through the application of analogue and digital forms. Created by author.

According to the diagram, it can be shown that in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, Boshoff's relationship between image and text unhinges the conditions of stereotyping which are conventionally associated with a dichotomy. Likewise I view Arabic-Afrikaans as an unhinging of the dichotomous relationship between Islam and Christianity through language. Arabic-Afrikaans (as mentioned in chapter 1, part 2) is South Africa's most non-racial achievement (RSG 2013), and can be seen as a way forward for all South Africans.

Boshoff applies deconstructive strategies by exposing and then subverting various binary oppositions, obsessive classifications, and hierarchies (bread and pebble, map and territory, Islam and Christianity, image and text) that undergird our dominant ways of thinking, as a core function in the meaning of his work. Form and content work together to formulate a visual text of 'being lost', and image and text are united as co-agents to try and confuse the viewer. Where do we then go after realising 'we are lost'? Where does Boshoff want us to go? The rhetoric and challenge in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* lies in the unravelling of the multiple questions raised, rather than the concreteness of a final answer, "by making the viewer work for enlightenment
and understanding him/herself, thus counteracting the passive acceptance typical of spoon-fed education" (Erasmus 2007:21).

I propose that the work is a response to the comfortable confidence that exists in structures of knowledge. *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* speaks of a sensitive and critical awareness of socio cultural structures that exert a grip on local communities. On the basis of my analysis, *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* is an example of a visual representation whose contents are metaphorical of a potential rebirth for cultural, religious and political concerns.

Where do we go from here? How do we transform? How do we change our comfortable confidence in our structures of knowledge, and still maintain an understanding of ourselves? Gerhard Marx (interviewed by Snyman 2008:sp) states, in this regard, that growing up in the 1980s in South Africa, he, like many others, received “a peculiar map by which to live”.

In chapter 3 I explore how both Lalla Essaydi and Lizelle Kruger subvert stereotypical views through their work.

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32Arabic-Afrikaans is a case in point of how conceptual literacy and knowledge can become a pathway to freedom. Through the process of empowerment – knowledge and literacy – the slaves at the Cape produced their inevitable liberation. To ‘know’ was not only to control, but to put slavery to death (Moosa 1995:28).
CHAPTER 3

3.1 Introduction

In chapter 2, I explored in Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* how this work specifically unhinges and resisted social, historical, political, cultural and religious stereotyping and blind acceptance. Boshoff does this by encouraging the viewer to work for enlightenment and understanding of themselves, thus counteracting the passive acceptance of typical spoon-fed education. *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* is an example of a metaphorical rebirth of particular cultural, religious and political concerns. In order to know where we are going, in terms of cultural or personal identity, we have to know where we come from (Sarup 1996:46).

In my study I look back at history through the lens of Arabic-Afrikaans script. This, in turn, acts as a link which forges a relationship between two kinds of identities: the roots of an Islamic influence on South African culture, and my life experience as an Afrikaans woman who lived in Egypt. In this chapter, I critically explore the way in which these two identities are represented in the works of two contemporary female artists.

I have become aware of women artists of Arabic descent across the world, such as Shirin Neshat, Shirazeh Houshiary, Ghada Amer, and Shadi Ghadirian, who are grappling with issues of Arabic female identity. Closer to home, women of Afrikaner descent, such as Rosemarie Marriotte, Celeste Coetzee, Naretha Pretorius, and Antoinette Murdoch, are grappling with issues of Afrikaner female identity. For the purpose of focusing my study, however, I refer to specially chosen works of Lalla Essaydi and Lizelle Kruger.

The artist that I discuss first is Essaydi, a Moroccan-born artist who addresses contemporary cultural identity and representations of the Middle Eastern female as a way to subvert stereotypical conceptions of Islamic women, by providing alternative forms of representation which reconstruct these female identities. I then discuss Kruger, a South African-born artist who questions and breaks down stereotypical notions of the ideal conservative Afrikaner woman, and, in turn, explores and re-evaluates her own identity as an independent and confident young Afrikaner.

Thus, in this chapter I explore how both Essaydi and Kruger subvert stereotypical views in their work. I conduct this exploration through a relational lens provided by my analysis of Boshoff’s
work, as well as Antjie Krog’s suggestion of ever-changing and unfixed positions within Islamic and Afrikaner identities. As I discuss in section 3.4 and in order to understand the concept of transformation, Krog (2009:126) suggests:

[that the word] transformation consists of two parts: the prefix ‘trans’, which is the Latin for across, the other side (as in Transkei, Transvaal); and ‘form’, which means to give structure to, to create, to bring forth. In its deepest structure, then, the word ‘transformation’ means: to form the other side, to start creating where you are going. But ‘trans’ also appears in words like transfigure, transfer, transcend, transaction, transgress, transience. And it is embedded in the Dutch hemeltrans, where it means ‘firmament’. One could say that in order to create the other side, one has to remake the firmament – no mere change of structure or exterior, but of the guiding essence.

To transform, one has to “create the other side”, and in order to do this, one has to remake the “guiding essence”. Thus, transforming one’s essence seems necessary in order to move forward. One of the objectives of this research is to get closer to a sense of understanding where I position myself in space and time. I reinterpret an ‘old self’ in the light of new knowledge (Arabic-Afrikaans script made me dig into the history of the Afrikaner, which caused me to change my perspective of my own culture) and possibilities (the possibility of a defined position for young Afrikaans women in the ‘new’ South Africa), expressed through my body of artwork, which informs my current emergent female Afrikaner identity. The terms of emergent female Afrikaner identity for which I argue in section 3.4 are provided by Krog (2009:129), when she states “no longer only white but South African and African”. I align myself with Krog’s views on transformation, which I also argue operationalise the notion of emergent identity. I conclude this chapter by bringing together the seeming disparate identities and artworks of Essaydi, Kruger, and Boshoff in relation to Arabic-Afrikaans script, as a context for an analysis of my own work. This analysis and synthesis is framed by Krog’s notion of transformation and adaptation. This is done in order to position a ‘new self’ in the light of the states of flux, change, morphing, and transformation of the two identities, namely Arab and Afrikaner.

### 3.1.1 Female identities

Arab and Afrikaner identities are seemingly polar opposites, yet similarities can be identified. Both the Arab veil and the Voortrekker bonnet are symbols of identity formation. Both identities are seen as inferior to men, conservative, confined to the home, and rooted in religion, and both
identities are seen through the lens of their recent histories. In order to understand the complexities of the Arab and the Afrikaner identities, I briefly refer to the stereotypical image of each of these two identities.

3.1.2 Arab female identity

Arabs inhabit mainly Western Asia, North Africa, and parts of the Horn of Africa. People identify themselves as “Arabs” to varying degrees. They are identified as such on genealogical, geographical, linguistic or cultural grounds, with tribal affiliations and intertribal relationships playing an important part in Arab identity (Hopkins and Ibrahim 1997). Arab identity is defined independently of religious identity, and it predates the rise of Islam. Today, however, most Arabs are Muslim, with a minority adhering to other faiths. Language is the main unifying characteristic among Arabs, where Arabic has become the lingua franca of the Islamic world.

Essaydi is of Moroccan descent, and it is from this view that I look at Arab female identity in terms of a feminist approach, with specific reference to the Arab veil. The veil has become one of the most contested and symbolic motifs in Western imagery of the East and of Islam. Until the 1980s, feminists in the Muslim world were generally upper-class women, and their feminism was modelled on that of the West. Feminism in the Muslim world began to take on Islamic forms after the colonial period ended, in the 20th century, in line with shifts away from Western models of society and government. Having “thrown off the shackles of colonial imperialism”, women became increasingly resistant to the cultural imperialism marketed by the West, even in the form of feminism (Godlas 2008:[sp]). Consequently, Muslim women have developed a distinctly Islamic feminism. The issue of veiling is one example of the differences between Western feminism and Islamic feminism. The *hijab*, or veil, is a form of scarf or hair covering commonly worn by Muslim women. According to Godlas (2008:[sp]), Western feminists have always seen the veil as oppressive, and as a symbol of a Muslim woman’s subservience to men. Godlas (2008:[sp]) states that, as a result, it often comes as a surprise to Western feminists that the veil has become increasingly common in the Muslim world, and is often worn proudly as a symbol of an Islamic identity, freeing Muslim women, symbolically, from neo-colonial Western cultural imperialism and domination.33

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33In relation to this complex notion of emergent or re-emerging identity, the Arab Spring can be seen as a symbol of an emergent liberation from political oppression, as well as identity formation of and for a new generation.
Given that the veil has become a weighty and contested symbol, its use in art requires careful decoding. In my experience of having lived in Egypt, veiling, however, seems to be a personal choice: some women wear a veil with pride, as a symbol of Islam, while others take pride in liberating themselves by not wearing a veil. Veiling is generational; it is also ‘about fashion’ and convenience, it is an identity marker, and it desexualises and represents a shrinking of personal space, conceding to traditional culture. The veil can be seen as an unfixed symbol within Islamic feminism, reflective of an ever-changing identity.

### 3.1.3 Afrikaner female identity

Identified stereotypes and ideologies that are markers of Afrikaner culture and of what the ‘ideal’ Afrikaner used to be before the abolition of apartheid in 1994 include *Die Groot Trek* (or “The Great Trek”) (which started in 1835), the strong Calvinist faith of the Voortrekkers (which was vitally important to their philosophy of life and outlook on the world), and the Afrikaans language (which later became associated with apartheid). Influenced by Dutch devotion to Calvinist religion, the Afrikaners (based on their own interpretation of their culture) believed themselves to be ‘the chosen people’ of God, and that therefore they had the right to rule the nation. The role allocated to women in Afrikaner society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was bound to the notion of *Volksmoeder* (“mother of the nation”). Women were seen as inferior to men, and a belief in this as a ‘truth’ became entrenched as a stereotype of the Afrikaner woman (Landman 2003). The notion of the self-sacrificing *Volksmoeder* was an integral element in the nation’s ethos, by plying an active supportive role in the promotion of wider Afrikaner nationalist politics. During the 1980s, Afrikaans literature began to reflect the progressive way in which individual identities among women began to evolve. After the 1980s, Afrikaans women authors consolidated a space for their own individuality and identity, breaking away from their stereotypical and ‘ideal’ roles (Conradie 1996:71). The political power held by the Afrikaner was removed in 1990, and South Africa’s first democratic elections were held in 1994. The political powerbase that had kept the Afrikaner culture intact was eroded during the CODESA

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34 Fashion is intertwined with the debate about what Islam prescribes for women’s clothing. Most Muslim women want to dress modestly in public, as Islam prescribes. But increasing numbers want to be fashionable, too. That is partly because of the relative youth and rising prosperity of the Islamic world. A growing sense of religious identity also boosts Islamic style.

35 The notion of *Volksmoeder* (“mother of the nation”) refers to an Afrikaner woman who is conservative, submissive, inhibited, and conforming, and who placed perceived familial and social needs before her own needs (Roberts 1984:203).
negotiations, and subsequently a hybrid identity within Afrikaner culture was created. Griesel and Kotse (2010:81) state that

Afrikaner women, in particular, seemed to develop an identity crisis during these post-apartheid years, since the traditional religious values, embodied in the Dutch Reformed Church, and on which women based their roles as women and wives, became questionable.

The idealised and stereotypical Afrikaner woman was seemingly no longer submissive or obedient, as she started to search for her own identity and self-determination.

3.2 Lalla Essaydi: A context

Lalla Essaydi was born in 1956, outside Marrakech, Morocco, and lived in Saudi Arabia for many years. She now lives in New York City. Her art, which often combines Islamic calligraphy with representations of the female body, addresses the complex reality of Arab female identity from the unique perspective of personal experience. Exploiting her perspective as an Arab woman living in a Western world, Essaydi attempts to re-examine Arab female identity. In much of her work, she returns to her Moroccan girlhood, looking back at it as an adult woman caught somewhere between the past and the present, and as an artist exploring which language to speak in from this uncertain space.

Essaydi’s photographic series Les Femmes du Maroc (2005-2009) speaks to 19th-century Orientalism, returning an ‘Eastern’ gaze from inside the conventions of the West, while at the same time addressing the status of women within Islam. French painters such as Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Eugéne Delacroix, and Jean-Léon Gérôme paint images of the Middle Eastern harem and the eroticised Arab female body.

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36 The convening of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in December 1991 brought together various political, civil, religious and community organisations to chart the future for a new and democratic South Africa (The CODESA negotiations [sa]).
37 Essaydi expressed her multicultural experience as a woman from an in-between space. According to cultural theorist Homi Bhabha (2004), the individual can begin to question notions of identity and the collective self from the liberating flux of such a space: to have voice.
38 Orientalism is the presentation of Asia [Middle Eastern, Asian and North African societies - “the East”] in a stereotyped way that is regarded as embodying a colonialist attitude (Oxford Dictionaries online 2014). The theory of Orientalism was presented in Edward Said’s eponymous book Orientalism (1978), and later expanded in his book Culture and Imperialism (1993). A pioneer in the field of postcolonial studies in literary criticism, a field that Homi Bhabha has built upon, Said analysed the “discursive mechanisms in text and images forming groups of statements that constituted the European imperial discourse about the ”Orient” (Tenreiro [sa]), and which supposedly defined it (Said 1978, 1993).
Perhaps the most celebrated harem-inspired Orientalist work is the famous painting by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque* (1814). This painting portrays a nude model, lying on her side, her back to the viewer, and her head turned to the audience, with eyes staring seductively. The clue to her function as odalisque is primarily revealed by the title.

![La Grande Odalisque](image)

**Figure 3.1: Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, La Grande Odalisque, 1814.**

Oil on canvas, 88.9cm x 162.56cm. (*Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, La Grande Odalisque, 1814 [sa]*)

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39The origin of the word “odalisque” is Turkish, from odalik, from oda (“chamber”) and lik (“function”). The word refers to a female slave or concubine in a harem, especially one in the seraglio of the sultan of Turkey (Oxford Dictionaries online 2014).
Essaydi borrows Ingres’ Orientalist pose, transforming the original paintings while revealing the colonial and gendered perspective of historical and contemporary Orientalism (Caruana [sa]). Essaydi describes as follows the origin of her fascination with Orientalist imagery, in an interview conducted with Ming Lin (2013:[sp]): “I was born in a harem, so I knew the reality of women just lying around naked like that was pure fantasy. It bothered me, but I was fascinated because the paintings were so exquisite. I had a love-hate experience with them.”

Unlike Ingres, however, Essaydi clothes her figure in a way that conceals most of the body, and the uncovered skin is decorated in calligraphic hennaed script. The subject is staring defiantly at an audience that cannot but notice her dirty feet.  

According to Manuela Tenreiro ([sa]), her dirty feet are a sign of her true condition of servitude as an odalisque, the servant of servant

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40 A parallel with ‘the common person can be drawn with Caravaggio’s (1571-1610) depiction of dirty feet, seen in *Madonna di Loreto* (1604-6), as a strategy of the Counter Reformation Roman Catholic Church, a strategy to re-embed Catholicism in ordinary people.
women.⁴¹ According to Abraham Ritchie ([isa]), “the image of her dirty feet is in contrast to the idealised and sterilised woman of Ingres, resulting in an unbalancing of the power dynamic between the viewer and the subject, diffusing the fetishisation of the Orient, and upsetting the assumptions of a male viewer. Essaydi reclaims history and directs our attention to historical inaccuracies and fantasies”. Dirty feet, or even showing the sole of your shoes, are forbidden in Islamic countries (as I discovered during my stay in Egypt).⁴² Her dirty feet could perhaps be representative of a woman’s freedom of expression and individuality, since it indicates that she ventured ‘outside’ with bare feet. The feet of Essaydi’s odalisque are not just dirty, but purposefully hennaed. Hennaing of feet has been practised for over 5,000 years in Pakistan, India, Africa, and the Middle East.⁴³

3.2.1 Space and time
Essaydi’s use of text-covered images contributes to the idea of an overwhelmingly tight enclosure; there is no sense of escape from the space in these photographs, as the background, which appears to be an unending wall of text, layers the entire composition. Caroline Vera Fox (2011:68) describes Essaydi’s domesticity as symbolic, stating that there is no sense of time and place. Essaydi does not give us a ‘domestic Orientalism’. Essaydi presents us with a different story, the ‘inside story’, as opposed to Ingres’ Orientalist gaze.⁴⁴ This ‘internal gaze’ stems from her own childhood memories, within the thick walls of her family

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⁴¹Essaydi’s odalisque is, then, according to Tenreiro, not just a servant or an ordinary woman; she is the servant of servant women. Essaydi has taken this servant of servant women, and has elevated her to an artwork. This elevation unrhinges any class hierarchies that might exist within feminism itself.

⁴²Scholars have differed in their views with regard to the exposure of women’s feet. Shaykh Muhammad ibn Adma al-Kawthari ([isa]) states the following with regard to covering one’s ‘nakedness’ (Awra):

The covering of one’s nakedness (Awra) is of utmost importance for a male and female in Islam, thus the Quran and Sunna have laid great emphasis with regards to this. […] Awra is an Arabic term the plural of which is Awrat. Linguistically, it means a hidden and secret place, and a person’s Awra is that which must be kept hidden […]. In the terminology of Islamic Jurisprudence, Awra refers to the area or part of the body that must be covered with appropriate clothing. In the English language, it is normally translated as nakedness or [the] area of the body that must be concealed. […] The feet, according to the more correct opinion, is not regarded as part of Awra. However, due to the difference of opinion with regards to it, it would be more precautious and advisable to cover them […].

⁴³People living in desert areas have been using henna for centuries to cool down their bodies, because henna has natural cooling properties. People soak their palms and the soles of their feet in henna to derive an air-conditioning effect. The cooling sensation remains for as long as the henna stain remains on the skin. Initially, as the stain faded away, it left patterns on the skin surface, which led to ideas to make designs for decorative purposes. In ancient Egyptian times, mummies wore henna designs, and it is documented that Cleopatra herself used henna for decorative purposes. Henna was not a popular adornment for the rich only, but also for the poor, who could not afford jewellery, and so used henna to decorate their bodies (About Henna [sa]).

⁴⁴Jonathan Schroeder (1998:208) notes that “to gaze implies more than to look at – it signifies a psychological relationship of power, in which the gazer is superior to the object of the gaze”.

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harem. The landscape of her image is one of solitude. Within this place of solitude she successfully constructs scenes that deny the *voyeuristic gaze*.\(^{45}\)

Essaydi’s photographs are set within an unoccupied house, owned by the artist’s family, a place to which Essaydi was sent as a form of punishment when she was disobedient; this is a practice that has only recently been abandoned. Women were often required to spend periods as long as a month inside otherwise uninhabited homes, kept by some families specifically for this purpose (Lalla Essaydi Les Femmes du Maroc [sa]).\(^{46}\) The physical location of these photographs becomes an important component in Essaydi’s examination of Orientalism. In Arab culture, gender traditionally defines the function of architectural and social space; the presence of men has defined public spaces: the streets, meeting places, and places of work. By contrast, women have been confined to private spaces, the architecture of the home (Essaydi [sa]). Inverting the meaning of these spaces, Essaydi and the women in her photographs use them instead as a place where women are seen, not hidden.\(^{47}\)

### 3.2.2 Image and text

Essaydi drains colour from her version of the original painting, she removes all male figures, and she drapes the women and all surfaces in white fabric inscribed with Arabic calligraphy. These texts are subversive on several levels. In Islamic culture, calligraphy is a male art form, used primarily to transcribe the Koran and other sacred literature; however, in Essaydi’s work, the text, which reflects on personal freedom, cultural and individual identity, memory, and communication taken from her personal journals, is applied with henna, where hennaing is a tradition associated with women. An example from Essaydi’s personal diaries, translated from the original Arabic reads as follows: “I am writing. I am writing on me, I am writing on her. The story began to be written the moment the present began” (Lalla Essaydi Les Femmes du Maroc

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\(^{45}\) Laura Mulvey, a British feminist film theorist, best known for her essay *Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema* (1975), argues that classical Hollywood cinema put the spectator in a masculine subject position, with the figure of the woman on the screen being the object of desire and ‘the male gaze’. According to Mulvey (1975), cited in Chandler (1998), Hollywood women characters of the 1950s and 60s were coded with ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’, while the camera positioning and the male viewer created the ‘bearer of the look’. Mulvey suggests two distinct modes of the male gaze, one of which is the voyeuristic gaze (seeing women as an image to be looked at). John Burger (cited in Chandler 1998), insisted in *Ways of Seeing* that women are depicted in a different way to men, because the ‘ideal’ spectator is always assumed to be male, and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him.

\(^{46}\) According to Fox (2011:68), we need to understand that in Essaydi’s culture, living within the private spaces reserved for women is natural; it is not enslavement. The women are not subservient; mothers and children lead normal lives. We also need to understand that Western feminists have often misunderstood this cultural hierarchy and notion of segregated space.

\(^{47}\) Women in the Islamic world would not be accessible to European eyes, except when they are confined to the exotic world of the harem (as depicted in Western paintings) – a space somewhere between the real and the imaginary.
2011). The text becomes so overwhelming that it takes on a decorative aspect, and becomes a veil with which she clothes her models. She conceals flesh, but at the same time reveals her inner thoughts through her texts. Thus the henna/calligraphy can be seen both as a veil and as an expressive statement, both silencing and liberating, imprisoning and empowering.

Darrow (2011) states that a Western viewer becomes an outsider when viewing these photographs, as he or she generally does not have the ability to dissect the language within them, thus putting the knowledgeable Middle-Eastern audience, who can read them, in a position of power (a position of power similar to that of Arabic-Afrikaans). This illiteracy becomes another symbolic veil that exists between a Western audience and Arabic artists. Essaydi ([sa]) asserts that this textual veil serves as a form of empowerment for the women in her photographs.

Essaydi ([sa]) states the following in this regard:

> The ‘veil’ of decoration and concealment has not been rejected but instead has been integrated with the expressive intention of calligraphy. Although it is calligraphy that is usually associated with ‘meaning’ (as opposed to ‘mere’ decoration), in the visual medium of my photographs, the ‘veil’ of henna in fact enhances the expressivity of the image. By the same token, the male art of calligraphy has been brought into a world of female experience form which it has traditionally been excluded. [...] Through these images I am able to suggest the complexity of Arab female identity – as I have known it – and the tension between hierarchy and fluidity at the heart of Arab culture.

Essaydi relates that at a certain point, she realised that in order to go forward as an artist, it was necessary to return physically to her childhood home in Morocco: “[I]n order to understand the woman I had become, I needed to re-encounter the child I once was” (Essaydi [sa]).

Essaydi finds it necessary to return to her childhood in order to move forward. Boshoff, too, looks back by inscribing the bread and pebbles (the descendants of Ishmael) with text. Through the lens of Arabic-Afrikaans, I, too, in my own work inscribe bodies with text, drawing from this notion of looking back in order to move forward by incorporating Arabic-Afrikaans texts from old *koplesboeke*.

### 3.3 Lizelle Kruger: A context

Lizelle Kruger was born in Humansdorp in the Eastern Cape. Kruger’s work reflects her identity as an Afrikaner woman in terms of her subject matter. The central elements in her body of work
for the series titled *Karoo-kado'tjies* are *Die Koup* and *Tanqua Karoo* landscapes, with their vegetation, cement dams, stone kraals, windmills, and ‘kado'tjies’, such as eroded enamel bowls, a multicoloured knitted patchwork quilt, a rustic turquoise cabinet, a rusted bucket, and, finally, the image of the “Voortrekker nude”, or “Boerenimf” (*Karoo-Kado'tjies* a solo exhibition by Lizelle Kruger 2011:[sp]).

The need to reconnect with the past, as for Essaydi, Boshoff, and myself, is also evident in Kruger’s work. This series is essentially the product of a nostalgic pilgrimage to Sutherland and Merweville in the Karoo. Kruger (quoted in Lizelle Kruger at Salon91 2011:[sp]) explains:

> After visiting my uncle Willem and aunt Jenny, who reside in Sutherland, I discovered a world that for a long time was buried under the dust in the attic of my memories. [...] It’s only in the Karoo that I can become myself again. The Karoo is full of ‘kado'tjies’. The dry, outstretched plains unfold to expose their ‘kado'tjies’ to you in a silent manner, whether hidden away in a beautiful sunset that vanishes over Windheuwel’s koppies, or a ‘koesnaatjie’ [a succulent] that can feed your soul with its succulent beauty.

### 3.3.1 Space and time

The Karoo holds memories for Kruger, in which she is able to explore and re-evaluate her own identity. Kruger (*Kruger:*sa) explains that

> [t]he Karoo has transformed and healed me, both physically and spiritually. Karoo herbs such as ‘dawid-worteltjies’, and ‘slanghoutjies’, ‘verpis’ and ‘willekeur’ are responsible for my physical healing, while its silence and desolation forced me to introspection & meditation.

To Kruger, the landscape symbolises the heritage and identity of the Afrikaner culture, and it captures stories and memories of an older generation that laid claim to the land, while the nude is seemingly suggestive of a symbolic newer generation (*Karoo-Kado'tjies* a solo exhibition by Lizelle Kruger 2011:[sp]). Kruger’s work expresses postmodern Afrikaners’ concern for their

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48. The title of Kruger’s series, *Karoo-kado’tjies*, means “small gifts from the Karoo”. The word *kado* is derived from the French word *cadeaux*, which means “present”. Kruger ([sa]) states that these *‘kado’tjies’* form part of the objects from her past, with which she likes to surround herself, as they connect her to childhood memories.

49. These are indigenous plants. *Dawid-worteltjies*, in particular, are a creeper with red berries that are used medicinally. *Slanghoutjies* are a type of flowering plant species that is endemic to certain areas in South Africa, and it was once used as a remedy for snakebites (Odendal, Schoonees, Swanepoel, Du Toit & Booysen 1981: 137, 1004).
homeland, and, by extension, a concern for their culture and their language. Wessel Visser ([sa]:16) asserts that

    it is evident that the debate on the re-negotiation of a cultural identity for Afrikaners is still a very dynamic and on-going process which is bound to continue generating interesting and lively responses from the Afrikaner community as the creation of a post-apartheid heterogeneous and multicultural South African society unfolds further.

3.3.2 Image and text

In Essaydi’s work, the viewer is confronted with text as image. In Kruger’s work, the image is a text: texts of alienation, of transformation, and also a text of liberation. Kruger’s work depicts a liberated young woman surveying her world, her land. Mulvey (1975), as with Berger (1972), believes that the one who looks has the power. Kruger positions the viewer to take a place in the landscape of the subjects in her work; we observe the subject, observing her land, her country, her space. In this way, Kruger redirects the position of power.
These Karoo landscapes form the backdrops to the nude figures (the figure that appears in almost every painting is either completely or partially nude, or is wearing a corset), but from behind, her face is hidden, her identity is hidden, and also her emotions; we have no idea whether she is standing there in terror or in glee. Kruger plays a visual game of obfuscation with the viewer. What is revealed is a provocative nude female body. Kruger paints herself as a beautiful, sexy character with traditional clothes, and always wearing a Voortrekker bonnet. The Voortrekker bonnet is a signifier of a history: the idealised notion of the conservative
Volksmoeder, a very particular historical moment, versus the contemporary in Kruger’s work, as a new form of Volksmoeder. The nudity of the figures perhaps suggests Kruger’s desire for a new freedom for a new generation of confident and independent Afrikaner women.

There is a sense of us watching the figure. Thus, an interesting transition in terms of composition occurs, in which we are changed from passive viewers to active viewers; because the artist places us there, we observe a figure observing. But there also seems to be a sense of loss in Kruger’s work. The subjects in her works are always on their own, except for the Karoo landscape, and the ‘kado’tjies’ that it offers. There is no sense of community; only the subjects. Could it be a case of “Look at what I own as a woman?”, “Look what I can do on my own”, “This is my domain”? Such ownership comes at a price. Kruger’s work speaks of the feminist landowner, but in that gain there is a potential loss of family, a loss of engagement with other women, and even loss of a possible husband or admirer. In transforming one’s identity, there are perhaps losses. Kruger is transforming the view of the conventional Afrikaner woman by depicting the subject of her work alone, half naked, and with tattoos (which can be seen as a contemporary symbol, and thus an index of a new Afrikaner identity which is rebelling against the conservative stereotype of the ideal Afrikaner woman).

50 As mentioned in section 3.1.3, the idea of Volksmoeder (“mother of the nation”) is an Afrikaner woman who is conservative, submissive, inhibited, and conforming, and who placed perceived familial and social needs before her own needs (Roberts 1984:203). The new-generation Volksmoeder is on her own, removed from the community, friends, and her husband, a marginalised figure dislocated from the volk. The current feeling, perhaps, in relation to my possibility of a shifting state of identity, is that the personal or social group identities of this current state of marginalisation which Kruger is looking at are, in fact, also potentially in a state of flux, and they are also an area of potential change. So even this new form is not fixed, and is also in a state of becoming something else of which this image is strongly metaphorical.
In *Voortrekker Recline*, there seems to be plant life growing onto the skin of the subject, marking the body in an almost tattoo-like manner. It looks as if the subject is becoming part of nature, part of her surroundings. The figure seems to have taken control of her land; the land that was fought over by men now belongs to women. As an Afrikaner woman, the Karoo, and, by implication, South Africa is Kruger’s home. Essaydi also marks the body, but with calligraphic text, suggesting the complexity of owning a new Arab female identity and the tension between hierarchy and fluidity at the heart of Arab culture. In my work, I mark my own body with projected photographic images, in an attempt to map aspects of my Afrikaner heritage and my emerging identity.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Stuart Hall (1993:21) asserts that identity is “not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture [but that it undergoes] constant transformation”. Could the key to
unlocking identity formation perhaps be in the concept of transformation? The Cape Muslims transformed Arabic script into Arabic-Afrikaans script, not to integrate or assimilate, but to maintain distance from the colonial authorities, and they thus used Arabic-Afrikaans script as a means of identity formation. In *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, Boshoff transforms the bread into pebbles and the pebbles into bread, thus reversing binary oppositions. Essaydi’s textual veil achieves something similar, becoming a means for revealing and concealing, silencing and liberating, imprisoning and empowering. Essaydi transforms Ingres’ original painting into sacred writings in visual form. Kruger transforms the view of the conventional Afrikaner woman. Through this I asked myself what transformation means in the South African context: what does transformation mean to me as a white Afrikaner female, and what does transformation mean for the people of South Africa, especially considering that the word “transformation” is, in my opinion, one of the most used words in our public consciousness?

As mentioned in section 3.1, according to Krog (2003:16), “in order to create the other side one has to remake the guiding essence”, thus transforming one’s personal identity in order to move forward. Psychiatrists, Krog (2003:129) explains, do not use the word “transformation” in psychology. She continues as follows:

> We talk of personal growth or development. We assume that a person cannot transform, actually should not transform, or change his essence. That would make him no longer himself, make him lose his sense of self and disintegrate, fall apart. Accommodate a variety of identities, yes. Transform, no.

Our essence is our personal identity: according to psychiatric approaches, we cannot and should not transform our personal identity, but should transition from one state to another, as opposed to a complete change of identity. By applying these ideas people are thus ‘emergent’ (in the process of becoming). Both Essaydi and Kruger address their own respective cultural identities and the representation of women. They subvert stereotypical conceptions of women and state alternative forms of intervention, through the transition of emergent female identities. In my own work, I unpack this notion of the emergent identity, by understanding where I come from in terms of my language and the influence of Arabic-Afrikaans script, interwoven with my study of Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*. These act as a map and a guide to a potential rebirth of my Afrikaner identity. Natasha Distiller (2008:273-283) states in this regard that

> [s]ince liberation in 1994, the meaning of ‘South African’ has undergone change. […] A South African cultural studies vocabulary has to negotiate the difference which is the primary building block of the ‘new’ South Africa and the sameness which is being projected onto the identities under construction as South Africans
renegotiate their relationships with Africa, and with each other in the context of ‘nation building’.

Transformation in South Africa ‘happened to us’, and 20 years later we are still transforming and trying to make sense of it. So, where does such transformation start, and into what are we transforming? Krog (2003:129) suggests that institutions, or a country, can be transformed only by changing their essence. People in institutions and places cannot transform, but they can “alter as a transition”, by integrating several social identities. For me, I am “no longer only white, but [also] South African and African” (Krog 2003:129).\footnote{In terms of positioning my emergent female Afrikaner identity, I look within the boundaries of where I was once defined as European, and therefore not African. Now I can view myself not as a European, but an African who is white, removed from the context of skin colour, shifted in an unfixed way to being African. Thabo Mbeki’s \textit{I Am an African} speech in 1996 lays claim to this statement: “[W]e refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, gender or historical origins. […] It is a firm assertion made by ourselves that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White” (Mbeki 1996).}

Krog’s concept, for which I argue, that I am no longer only white, but also South African and African, contextualises my analysis of my own work in the following chapter. I suggest links between the work of Essaydi and that of Kruger, through my own relating of key pieces of my own work to that of Boshoff and Arabic-Afrikaans. This leads me to a conclusion and findings about my own emergent identity being in a state of flux and being found in a liminal space.
CHAPTER 4

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is an explication of my body of work, titled teRUG, in which I visually explore how transformation manifests through material, transforming my back into a map, my moles into coordinates and pins, from rock to sand, from height to depth, and from 'here' to 'there', as an indicator of a metaphorical transitioning of my emergent female Afrikaner identity as my overarching theme. In order to do this, I use Krog’s concept of transformation to frame my exploration: namely that I do not see myself only as white, but also as South African and African, thereby contextualising my transitioning identity. This is primarily achieved by acknowledging two signifiers: the back of my body, and mapping. These signifiers help to create new coordinates. I have used themes as a way to organise my coordinates in order to map the structure of this chapter. These coordinates are: text, the Arabic-Afrikaans language, historical and cultural reference points (as physical and cultural artefacts), the gaze (as bodily agency), as well as transformation/transition and liminal space (as theoretical positions). These coordinates were established in previous chapters, where I identified them as being critical in the mapping of my emergent identity by means of my artworks. As mentioned in chapter 3, in terms of positioning my emergent female Afrikaner identity, I look within the boundaries of where I was once defined as European, and therefore not African. I now view myself not as European, but as African, one who has been removed from the context of skin colour, and who is being shifted towards being African. In this chapter, I argue for the liminal space as the space in which my identity resides. From these critical coordinates I am able to map my identity as operating “betwixt and between” two or more fixed coordinates, which is a concept defined by Turner (1967:95), as stated in chapter 1, and that I am therefore in a liminal space (relating to a transitional process). The coordinates map, direct, and guide the viewer to signifiers of my emergent identity.

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52 This idea is reconstituted in the writings of Homi K. Bhabha’s (2004:55) Third Space theory which explains the uniqueness of each person or context as a 'hybrid' in The location of culture.
4.2 Back

The title of my exhibition, teRUG, was chosen for its play on words in the Afrikaans language. Firstly, the title can be interpreted as a looking back at history in terms of Arabic-Afrikaans, reinterpreting an old self in the light of new knowledge and possibilities; secondly, the title also focuses on the word rug (the back of the body), while, thirdly, it refers to Krog’s concept of transformation: “in order to create the other side one has to remake the guiding essence” (Krog 2003:16). The “other side” (my back) then becomes the object of the gaze; thus, the physical back of my own body becomes the facing surface of many of the artworks to be gazed at by the viewer, in an attempt to answer the question of what the “back”, or the “front”, of Afrikaner identity might be.

Here, I discuss three particular artworks. The first of these artworks has the same title as that of the exhibition, namely teRUG. The second is titled 4 Generasies, vasgespeld vanaf 1815, and the third is titled Pseudo weg.

53 The body of work will be presented in the form of a solo exhibition at the FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg, in 2015, and will be submitted for the practical component of my Master’s degree.
4.2.1 *teRUG # 1-40 (2013-2014)*

The work *teRUG # 1-40* consists of three parts, namely 40 photographic prints which are banked on a wall, signifying links throughout the research, a postcard booklet, signifying a journey and a set of photographic prints in a triad relationship of backs, signifying past, present, and future.

- Forty individual images banked on a wall, signifying links throughout the research

![Image of the artwork](image_url)

*Figure 4.2: Adena Richardson, *teRUG # 1-40* series, installation view, 2013-2014. Photographic print on poster paper. 42cm x 59.4cm each. Collection of the artist.*
Each of the three parts has its own particular content. When juxtaposed, they provide layered meanings reflective of my varied history and identity(ies). There is no particular order in which these parts have to be viewed, and they are therefore indicative of the state of flux and ‘unfixedness’ in which my emergent identity finds itself. These images represent shifts between ‘here’ and ‘there’, or ‘geographical’ shifts, and shifts through time, or ‘historical’ shifts, shifts ‘betwixt and between’ the location and the time of these images, as well as their conventions.

- A postcard booklet, signifying a journey

![Figure 4.3: Adena Richardson, teRUG # 1-40 series, postcard booklet, 2013-2014. Photographic print on poster paper. 105 x 147mm. Collection of the artist.](image)

54I acknowledge that the image of “Auwal Mosque” on the back of a nude figure might be considered provocative and haram by Muslim viewers. My intention here is not to be provocative but to acknowledge that the Mosque is part of both my own lived experience and linguistic history as well as South Africa's complex and broad cultural history.
A triad relationship, signifying past, present, and future

Figure 4.4: Adena Richardson, teRUG# 1-40 series, triad relationship, 2013-2014. Photographic print on poster paper. 124.5cm x 61cm. Collection of the artist.

Figure 4.5: Adena Richardson, teRUG # 1-40 series, triad relationship, 2013-2014. Photographic print on poster paper. 124.5cm x 61cm. Collection of the artist.
In *teRUG# 1-40*, I claim the body, with reference to Judith Butler (1988), as cited in Darrow (2011):

as a historical idea as a means to mediate and concretize its expression in the world. The body is capable of bearing meaning that is ‘fundamentally dramatic’ and can exist as a dynamic embodiment of identity through the re-enactment of an historical situation present within that body.

Bhabha (1994) wrote in his seminal work *The Location of Culture* that contemporary identity exists in a liminal space where “complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion” exist as dynamic elements subject to continual renegotiation. I reconcile disparate elements of my identity to create a revised and envisioned identity with both Afrikaner and Arab influences, through cultural and historical references. In these images I reference the Afrikaner culture through, for example, monuments and the Voortrekkers (an Afrikaans youth movement), and I reference Arabic-Afrikaans through scripts from *koplesboeke* and exhibitions such as the permanent exhibition at the Afrikaanse Taalmuseum in Paarl and the non permanent exhibition titled *Afrikaans in conversation* at the Iziko museum in Cape Town. The works of Boshoff, Essaydi, and Kruger, are also referenced in the images presented on my back: Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* (referencing Ishmael and Hagar being cast out into the desert by Abraham, and the story of Hansel and Gretel), Essaydi’s *The Grand Odalisque*, and Kruger’s *Sunset over the Tanqua Karoo*, as well as geographical and celestial maps.

Both Essaydi and Kruger mark the body of the females depicted in their work. Kruger’s body is marked with a tattoo and plant life which seems to be growing onto her skin in a tattoo-like manner. Essaydi marks the body with calligraphic text applied with henna, a less permanent state than Kruger’s tattoo. I mark my own body by means of projected images. These projected images become tattoo-like, an embodiment on the skin, yet they are not permanent, reflective of the state of flux and the state of emergence in which my identity finds itself. These images reflect layered histories and identity(ies). The idea of the history of Afrikaans is that of a multiple history. By banking these images next to each other, I demonstrate my commitment towards the construction of non-racial stereotyping.
Part of the origin of *teRUG# 1-40* is the exposed female body, as represented by Essaydi and Kruger. In the case of recorded text, such as Essaydi’s photographs and Kruger’s paintings of the female body, a key feature is the gaze. Viewing such recorded images gives the viewer’s gaze a voyeuristic dimension. As stated in chapter 3, Jonathan Schroeder (1998:208) notes that “to gaze implies more than to look at – it signifies a psychological relationship of power, in which the gazer is superior to the object of the gaze”. The most obvious typology is based on “who is doing the looking” (Chandler 2007).

![Figure 4.6: Adena Richardson, *teRUG # 1-40* series, instillation view, 2013-2014. Photographic print on poster paper. 42cm x 59.4cm each. Collection of the artist.](image-url)
In viewing *teRUG# 1-40*, the spectator gazes at a photograph of my back, imbued with cultural and historical significance. According to Schroeder (1998:208), the gazer is superior to the object of the gaze, thus implying that the spectator is superior to me, as the object. Yet, what does it mean to gaze at someone who’s presenting you their back, and not seeing the gaze? Schroeder states that to gaze signifies a psychological relationship of power. By presenting the spectator my back, I redirect the position of power. In visual art, when you turn your back on your audience, there is an ironic inclusion of the audience to gaze with you at something else, as opposed to turning your back on someone, and thereby cutting them off, thus subverting social conventions. Inclusion, rather than exclusion, of the viewer and the subject (in that the subject is gazing at the same thing as the viewer, thus identifying with the viewer) features strongly in Kruger’s work. We are shown what the subject is looking at, namely a Karoo landscape in *Sunset over the Tanqua Karoo*. My back is like a page that conveys visual information and references. My back can also be seen as a mirror, a reflection which becomes a substitute for what it is that I am looking at, or projecting, and thus redirecting the gaze. I am the agent of the gaze by projecting my gaze onto my body, so that the viewer can see what I am contemplating through a thoughtful gaze (or what it is that I am contemplating in my mind’s eye).

The projected images act, as in Essaydi’s work, as a protective veil to shield my body from the gaze of the audience. There is also the gaze implied by the medium of photography: the photographic lens suggests the manipulation and construction of an image, as separate from reality. Thus, the image taken exists as a projection of reality seen through my mediation, as opposed to a completely natural account of what is being shown.

The same images are printed and bound as a booklet of postcards. On the back of the postcard is a handwritten explanation of the origin of and history connected to the image. Postcards locate a particular place, and are, in fact, a map of a particular cultural practice and place, locating the reader of the postcard in a game of ‘wish you were here’. Postcards indicate a journey an individual has experienced. Essaydi’s odalisque has dirty feet, indicating that she has ventured outside. Just as Essaydi journeying a great distance in order to understand the woman she has become. Kruger journeyed back to Sutherland in order to understand the woman she has become, and I journeyed to Cairo and back to Johannesburg in order to locate an emerging self: these postcards are thus a representation of my journey.

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55 Handwriting is an index of a person’s personality and identity.

56 Boshoff’s Druid Walks help him to understand the spirit of a place (Boshoff artist 2013). For Boshoff, as for Kruger and Essaydi, the journey is a fundamental part of his work.
In today’s technological era of social media, postcards seem to be relics of a bygone era, representing the past. I address these postcards to my niece as a recording of my history, and I journey ‘betwixt and between’ places to enable my niece to map her own future.

4.2.2  *Pseudo weg (2013-2014)*

This work consists of three canvases. The first depicts a pixelated Ingrid Jonker (Fig. 4.8: left front panel), with a light coloured background and a ‘halo’, in the form of a doily. Stitched with embroidery thread is an inverted map of the slave route to South Africa; a mirror system is applied, where the correct view of the map is seen on the back of the canvas (Fig.4.9: left back panel). The second canvas is painted in flat grey (Fig.4.10: middle front panel). The word *vrou* (“woman”) is pricked out in Arabic-Afrikaans over the canvas. This canvas acts as a screen on which a video is projected. The third canvas depicts a pixelated Antjie Krog (Fig. 4.12: right front panel) with a black background and ‘halo’ in the form of a doily. Stitched with embroidery thread is an inverted map of *Die Groot Trek* (the Great Trek); the correct side of the map is seen on the back of the canvas (Fig.4.13: right back panel).

Figure 4.7: Adena Richardson. *Pseudo weg*, instillation view, 2013-2014. Acrylic, embroidery thread, and acrylic gel on canvas. 91cm x 122cm. Collection of the artist.
Figure 4.8: Adena Richardson. *Pseudo weg # 1 of 3* (left front panel, Ingrid Jonker), 2013-2014. Acrylic, embroidery thread, and acrylic gel on canvas. 91cm x 122cm. Collection of the artist.
Figure 4.9: Adena Richardson. *Pseudo weg # 1 of 3* (left back panel, map of the slave routes), 2013-2014. Acrylic, embroidery thread, and acrylic gel on canvas. 91cm x 122cm. Collection of the artist.
Figure 4.10: Adena Richardson. *Pseudo weg # 2 of 3* (middle front panel, 'vrou'), 2013-2014.

Acrylic on canvas, with video projection. 91cm x 122cm. Collection of the artist.
Figure 4.11: Adena Richardson. *Pseudo weg # 2 of 3* (middle, back panel, ‘vrou’), 2013-2014. Acrylic on canvas, with video projection. 91cm x 122cm. Collection of the artist.
Figure 4.12: Adena Richardson. *Pseudo weg # 3 of 3* (right front panel, Antjie Krog), 2013-2014. Acrylic, embroidery thread, and acrylic gel on canvas. 91cm x 122cm. Collection of the artist.
Figure 4.13: Adena Richardson. *Pseudo weg # 3 of 3 (right, back panel, a map of Die Groot Trek)*, 2013-2014. Acrylic, embroidery thread, and acrylic gel on canvas. 91cm x 122cm. Collection of the artist.
The title was inspired by Gentile da Fabriano’s Pseudo-Kufic script\textsuperscript{57} halo of the Virgin Mary, in which the script/text is not meant to be read, but viewed decoratively. Figure 4.15 is presented as an example of Kufic script, to facilitate an image of the text as a signifier of that culture. Within the context of my artwork (\textit{Pseudo weg}), the use of Arabic Kufic script is representative of the Arabic influence on Afrikaans, and the word Pseudo (meaning “not genuine”) is representative of the artificial socio political system of apartheid which the Afrikaner nationalists imposed.

[Image: Gentile da Fabriano, detail of \textit{Adoration of the Magi}, 1423. Tempera on panel, 203cm x 282cm. (Pseudo-Kuffic [sa]).]

[Image: Eighth-century Koran. (Res Obscura 2010)]

Figure 4.14: Gentile da Fabriano, detail of \textit{Adoration of the Magi}, 1423. Tempera on panel, 203cm x 282cm. (Pseudo-Kuffic [sa]).

I adapted the idea of Pseudo-Kufic script into halo doilies placed behind two influential female Afrikaner literary figures: Ingrid Jonker, and Antjie Krog. The doilies were created with a piping bag, normally used for icing a cake, referencing female domesticity. Shonisani Maphangwa (2010) analyses how Dutch lace shifts meaning within a colonial and a postcolonial context, and she proposes that doilies signify a middle-class representation of Dutch lace. For me, a doily is an index of what I found in a typical Afrikaner household of my grandmother’s generation, a signifier of my cultural identity, just as the Pseudo-Kufic script is a signifier of Islamic influence.

\textsuperscript{57}Pseudo-Kufic, also called “Pseudo-Arabic”, refers to imitations of the Arabic Kufic script, made in a non-Arabic context during the Middle Ages or the Renaissance. The European artists who imitated the style usually had no knowledge of Arabic writing, and their ‘Pseudo-Kufic’ imitations were thus purely abstract decorations bearing only a visual resemblance to Arabic script. It is an example of Islamic influence on Christian art.
on Christian art during the Renaissance. It is highly unusual to have Kufic script in Christian iconic art, which points towards a cross-cultural splicing that occurred from the Byzantine empire to the Renaissance. I view doilies as a cross-cultural splicing. All objects have cultural meaning. Cultural meaning is “bestowed upon an object found within a specific culture; thus the object will only have a relatively stable meaning within the culture in which it is found” (Maphangwa 2010).

Through painterly alteration and transformation, shifts can occur in the meanings of patterns derived from the identity of another culture. In my own work I link doilies, as geometric patterns, with the foundation of all Islamic art, where repetition of elements, such as the use of geometrical, floral or vegetal designs, is known as arabesque (Fleming & Honour 1977). I attempt to make subtle links between Islamic art and Western art in order to emphasise the relationship between Arabic and Afrikaans. I painted both Jonker’s and Krog’s images in pixelation, to reference the fact that for many Muslims, depiction of the human form is idolatry, which is forbidden in the Koran (Esposito 2010:42). The pixelation is also an index of censorship, which was enforced by the apartheid system, on both Jonker and Krog.

Jonker and Krog reinforce the Afrikaner woman’s break away from the stereotype of the Volksmoeder. Former President Nelson Mandela, in commenting on Jonker’s poem “Die Kind (The Child)”, which he read out in full in his inaugural State of the Nation address to Parliament in May 1994, said, “in this glorious vision, she instructs that our endeavours must be about the liberation of the woman, the emancipation of the man and the liberty of the child”. Of Jonker herself, Mandela (1994) said that “[s]he was both a poet and a South African. She was both an Afrikaner and an African”. Mandela’s reference to Jonker is an example of the poet’s transition from white Afrikaner to an Afrikaner and an African, a shift in position which underscores my own work.

58Human portrayals however can be found in all eras of Islamic art, and particularly in the more private form of miniatures, where their absence is rare (Esposito 2010).
The maps embedded within the pixelated faces are stitched with embroidery thread, just as the piping bag references female domesticity (which historically was expected of Afrikaner women).

The inverted map placed on Jonker’s face is of the slave routes to South Africa. The Cape Muslim community has its origins in the slaves brought to this southern tip of the African continent from five main regions of the world. These regions are the Indonesian archipelago, Bengal, the South Indian coast and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Madagascar, and the East African coast (as indicated in Figure 1.2.).
The inverted map manifested on the back of Krog’s face is of *Die Groot Trek*, an eastward and north-eastward emigration by Boers (Dutch/Afrikaans for “farmers”) away from British control in the Cape Colony during the 1830s and 1840s. *Die Groot Trek* itself led to the founding of numerous Boer republics, of which the most notable were the Natalia Republic, the Orange Free State Republic, and the Transvaal Republic (Davids 2011). I engage in a visual game of obfuscation with the viewer by inverting these maps, thus concealing the correct view. The correct view of the map is only revealed when the viewer engages with the back of the canvas.
This mirror system is used as a method of obfuscation, and, as with Boshoff’s work, is an allusion to the right and the wrong side of the spoon-fed and propagandistic education given by the Afrikaner nationalists including the disillusionment that some Afrikaners still have about the genesis of the Afrikaans language. What I was brought up to believe by Afrikaner nationalists in support of the system of apartheid I now know was, in fact, wrong and indefensible. Inverting the maps is about righting the wrong. In these works the dichotomous relationship between right and wrong, is an inversion which is a critical theme in my research, confronting back and front, right and wrong, past and present.
On the centre canvas, in Arabic-Afrikaans, is the pricked-out word *vrou* (woman). Projected onto this canvas is a video of my niece playing ‘connect the dots’ on my back. She creates her own imagined maps by using my moles as the dots, connecting them in any way she chooses.

The light projects the word onto the wall behind the canvas. As the viewer passes behind the canvas, the word *vrou* is projected onto them. Another set of information, with shifting potentials, lives in this space behind the canvases.
By projecting the word *vrou*, a sense of identifying someone by projecting a gender statement onto the body of the visitor—whether this person is male, female, or even a child—is constructed. The implication is that there is a shifting of identity, and thus a shift of coordinates. The coordinates are not fixed, the perforated canvas and projection of light onto the people passing by indicates a transitional shifting identity. Feminist philosopher Butler (2004) argues that gender performativity should be seen as a fluid variable which shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times, rather than being a fixed attribute. Yet, the word *vrou* is specifically loaded, as it is a fixed coordinate, projected onto anyone who ventures into the liminal space behind the canvas. The inverted maps, the space behind the canvas, and the use of light are all representational of an in-between space, a space of realisation that the dots (which represent coordinates) can be connected in any way, and therefore are not fixed.

### 4.2.3 4 Generasies, vasgespeld vanaf 1815 (2013-2014)

A horizontal band contains painted images of the backs of four generations of women: my grandmother, my mother, myself, and my niece. Each person’s moles are replaced by mapping pins. Surrounding these are Arabic-Afrikaans and English texts (copied from an 1815 *koplesboek*), which are applied to the canvas with acrylic gel, suggesting a blackboard.

![Image of 4 Generasies, vasgespeld vanaf 1815](image)

*Figure 4.24: Adena Richardson, 4 Generasies, vasgespeld vanaf 1815, 2013-2014. Oil, acrylic gel, and mapping pins on canvas. 50 x 102cm. Collection of the artist.*
This work references knowledge being passed down from generation to generation, in order to pin down my emerging female Afrikaner identity, as situated in both Arabic and Afrikaans influences. Knowledge is represented by four generations of Afrikaner females, gazed at from the back through a slit that represents a liminal space, just as the space behind the canvases in *Pseudo weg* and the vertical gap in *Kramats* can be seen as liminal spaces.\(^{59}\)

Initially, when I asked my grandmother, Maria Petronella Mears (née Prinsloo), to participate in this artwork, I could feel her unease at being photographed naked.\(^{60}\) I explained to her that nakedness is simply the state of having no clothes on, and nudity is a form of artistic representation. According to Berger (2011), being naked is just being yourself, while being nude, in the artistic sense of the word, is being without clothes for the purpose of being looked at. A naked body has to become an object of the gaze in order to become a nude representation. Berger contends that the humanist tradition of European painting holds a contradiction: on the one hand, there is the painter’s, the owner’s and the viewer’s ownership, and, on the other hand, there is the object, the woman, which is treated as an abstraction. These unequal relations between men and women are, in Berger’s view, deeply assimilated in European culture and in the consciousness of women, who do to themselves what men do to them, namely objectify themselves. However, here, the viewer’s gaze is contradicted by me, in that we (the female figures) gaze away from the viewer, thus redirecting the position of power.

Being naked can also be interpreted as meaning being without any costume that you put on, while being nude means that you become your own costume. The mapping pins symbolically become our costume that we put on. The mapping pins replace our moles; our moles are then transformed into mapping pins. The image of the body becomes a map of emergent female Afrikaner identity, and the pins become coordinates of this active territory. The mapping pins are indexical of my pinning my identity in a painful way. By this statement, I refer to the painful history of apartheid, and the difficult task of ‘pinning down’ my identity as an Afrikaner.

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\(^{59}\)As discussed in chapter 1, part 1, the terms “liminal” and “liminality” gained popularity through the writings of Victor Turner during the second half of the 20th century. Turner perceives liminality as a “midpoint of transition […] between two positions” and as a temporary phase rather than a permanent state, where one’s sense of identity dissolves to some extent, bringing about disorientation, but also the possibility of new perspectives. In *Liminality and communitas*, Turner (1969:95) begins by defining liminal individuals or entities as “neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony”. For the purposes of this chapter, the liminal space is a physical space; it is a slot that appears ahead of, behind, and between works, or between sections of works, as a space where these slippery coordinates are to be found, and where a map of my identity is trying to be created (La Shure 2005).

\(^{60}\) My grandmother’s unease as a member of an older, more conservative generation is reflective of the more Afrikaner culture, within which my research is situated.
Surrounding the female figures, and represented as a blackboard, are English and Arabic-Afrikaans texts copied from a *koplesboek* from 1815. As *Koplesboeke* were used as a teaching method to teach the Arabic script in Creole Afrikaans, the incorporation of these texts into the artwork conveys the notion of passing down of knowledge.\(^{61}\) By adding the Arabic-Afrikaans, I counteract the passive acceptance that Afrikaans is a ‘pure language’, not a creolised language (Haron 2006:1). Semiotically, the Arabic cannot be read as a text; most viewers see the text as an image of a text, as another form of Pseudo-Kufic script. The English text acts as a coordinate by which to understand the Arabic text. The image of the Arabic script thus also becomes a coordinate, which points towards an elusive, transforming, and liminal identity.

### 4.3 Mapping

As mentioned in chapter 2, a map is a diagram, not of a place, but of a conceptual representation of that place, a picture read as a text. Reading a map is not linear, with one word or sentence following another. The written code is spatial; words are read in relation to their position on the page. As with reading a text, we need to learn the conventions for ‘reading a map’.

In both *Bewaarde KlipTaal* and *Kramats*, the codes and conventions are not what we expect when reading a map. The works do not contain conventional signs or symbols representing specific directions; rather, they contain actual constituents of territory, as they are partly made of soil and stone, as is the case with Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*. Part of the function of a conventional paper-based map is for it to be opened and folded closed, to be carried. Neither my work nor Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* adhere to these conventions. Yet a map, being a set of conventional signs, is manmade and abstract, as is an artwork. Even though the artworks (both Boshoff’s and my own) consist of natural materials, they are still completely manmade sets of abstract conventional signs. The map and the territory have been conjoined; the space between the conventional signs, signifying territory, has been collapsed, just as image and text have been collapsed. In these works, the territory is the map, and the map is the territory.

I recently had the opportunity to revisit Cairo. I had to refamiliarise myself with this space, walking in the streets, interacting with the people, comparing this visit to my initial experience. I

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\(^{61}\) Both my mother and I are teachers.
was left with a dichotomous sense of not belonging, of still being an outsider, or a traveller, and yet feeling like I was coming home. It was an experience of past and present, of what was, but no longer is, a shift back into a space that was once familiar, but is now alien and distant. Physical shifting occurred: moving from South Africa to live in Egypt, moving back to South Africa, then back to Egypt for a visit, and then returning to South Africa. This physical shifting is an index of movement to and fro, between states of being. I can thus identify with Kruger’s and Essaydi’s preoccupation with returning home.

Kruger found it essential to return to Sutherland and Merweville in the Karoo, to reappraise her identity. As the Karoo is geographically isolated, Kruger’s paintings map the ideological state of distance, proximity and of isolation: to ‘find’ oneself, one has to remove oneself from society. Essaydi, now living in New York, reveals that at a certain point she realised that in order to go forward as an artist, it was necessary for her to return physically to her childhood home in Morocco. This act is also an act of mapping oneself within a territory, not in the cartographic sense, but in the mapping of space, memory and identity formation.

My artworks are an attempt to update a map of the territory that I understood as a child (and also an attempt to understand Afrikaner cultural identity). When I was a child, the map looked different to the map that I now look at as an adult (facilitated through the realisation of Arabic-Afrikaans’ importance in my identity formation). Territory is understood when one explores it as an adult, where one understands ‘there’ by being ‘here’, where one maps a place by leaving it, where one knows a place by coming back to the place.

4.3.1 Bewaarde KlipTaal: aia, amok, amper, baadjie, baba, baie, baklei, baljaar, bamboes, bandolier, blatjang, bobotie, bredie, brinjal, doepa, froetang, jammer, kabaai, kalja, kampong, kaparrings, katel, katjiepiering, kiepersol, kierang, koejawel, koelie, kombers, konkel, koperkatel, kraal, laksman, lemoen, mandjie, maskie, mielie, nartjie, nooi/nonnie, oor’krabbetjie, oorlams, outa, paljas, piekel, pieker, piering, piesang, pondok, ramkie, rampok, rissie, rottang, saam-saam, sambal, sambok, sambreel, soebat, soewaar, sosatie, spanspek, tamaai, tarentaal, tata, tjakki-tjakki, tjalie, tjap, tjommel, trompet, trunk, uiwe, ver-affe (2013-2014).

The work consists of a large quantity of different-sized\textsuperscript{62} rocks covered with doilies. Some of these doily-covered rocks are tied with leather straps, and map a territory on the floor of the exhibition space. This work has its origin in the creolisation of south-east Asian languages with European and local African languages inherent in the development of Afrikaans. Davids (2011:33-34) makes the following assertion with regard to the creole origins of Afrikaans:

\begin{quote}
I am convinced that Cape Muslim Afrikaans, which is an important component of Cape Afrikaans, emerged from the creolised Dutch spoken by the Free Blacks, the Khoekhoen, the slaves and the lower classes in Cape Town, as well as the farmers, slaves and Khoekhoen in the immediate interior, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This creolised Dutch in turn resulted from the social relations between master and slaves, colonists and Khoesan during the early years of white settlement. Social, cultural and historical factors thus played an important role. I am, therefore, not convinced that Afrikaans was a transplant or genetic extension of the dialects of southern Holland during the seventeenth century, as some Afrikaans academics maintained.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{62}The rocks are no bigger than what I can comfortably carry or move around.
The title *Bewaarde KlipTaal* signifies the protection and preservation of Afrikaans, a language that reflects my Afrikaans ancestry where Dutch, German, French, Khoi, Malay, Portuguese, Arabic, English, and indigenous South African languages have been maintained. The influence of these languages on Afrikaans is represented by selected words from each language, which make up the title of the artwork, as a reminder of the origin of Afrikaans as a creolised language. The title is meant to be read as a point of departure from which to interpret the artwork. In this way, the title can be seen as the map’s index. These selected words are assigned to the doily-covered rocks. Some, not all of these word-assigned rock doilies have handles in the form of leather straps; the handles are therefore linking to a title.

This work references Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, which alludes to the “Hansel and Gretel” story as a way to get lost or be found. Ultimately Boshoff wants to obfuscate; he wants his viewer to get lost. I want to clarify; I want to be found by this map, to discover an emergent identity as a journey transitioning from one state to another, or one place to another. Boshoff and I have different objectives in mind for the journey that the pebbles will take. The territory being mapped in this work (as in Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*) is a physical territory consisting of rocks gathered from the koppies surrounding my house, and doilies which I had crocheted and which I collected in Cape Town and Johannesburg. There is a range of shapes and sizes of doilies used in this project. The doilies can be divided into two groups: the first group consists of traditionally crocheted, mostly white and pastel-coloured doilies, and the second group consists of simply-patterned, mass-produced, loud multi-coloured doilies. It was a conscious decision to include a combination of kitsch and non-kitsch doilies, tasteful and non-tasteful doilies, pale and colourful doilies. The doilies, as mentioned in section 4.2.2, signify a middle-class representation of Dutch lace, and, by extension, my Afrikaner heritage. However, the doilies also cross boundaries, as doilies are found in all households in South Africa. Each family lays claim to doilies as a symbol of their heritage, and they are thus also a symbol of Afrikaner history. The doilies in *Bewaarde KlipTaal* are symbolic of the Afrikaans language having developed from social relations between different cultures. I cover the rocks and, by extension, the units (words) which make up the Afrikaans language with doilies, as a protective

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63 These selected words are sourced from: Van Rensburg (2010), Davids (2011:35) and The Roots of Afrikaans (sa).
64 Over 400 words have been identified but not all will be used in the final installation.
65 The individuals involved in the crocheting of the doilies are: Tannie Marie Koekemoer, from Klein Helderkruiin retirement village, Roodepoort, Tannie Marlou Lombard, from Cape Town, and Violet Ngwenya.
layer, symbolising the preservation of my language, almost like a *baadjie* (jacket) being pulled over them.

Leather straps were historically tied around books to enable one to carry them. The leather straps tied around some of the doily-covered rocks imply that these rocks can be carried around. Throughout the exhibition, these rocks can be moved around, creating new coordinates, underpinning the idea of the state of flux, change, and transformation. It also underpins the transitioning from displacement to placement of my identity.

The Russian linguist Mikhail Bakhtin, who published his theory in English under the title *Discourse in the novel* (1934), argues for heteroglossia (multi-voiceness), which, in his terms, means that we speak with a particular voice in a particular context: when we are at home we speak with a particular voice, at work we speak with a particular voice, at church we speak with a particular voice, and even when we speak to ourselves we speak with a particular voice, which creates a continual shift and change in context. Thus, we all wear our *baadjies* differently. The multiple doilies (baadjies) therefore represent multi-voiceness, and can be seen as a metaphor for understanding the Afrikaans language as complex and fluid.

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66 The work maps a territory on the floor of the exhibition space, which the viewer or visitor to the space will have to traverse, making it tricky to see the work. There is potential for a difficult terrain to be established in the exhibition space, which itself can be moved and shifted from day to day.

67 Bakhtin describes heteroglossia as a blending of world views through language, which creates a complex unity from a hybrid of utterances (Bakhtin and the authoritative word: Monoglossia [sa]).
4.3.2 Kramats (2013-2014)

Figure 4.27: Adena Richardson, Kramats, instillation view, 2013-2014. Wood, pebbles, sand, tubing, and photographic prints. 30cm x 42cm x 98cm. Collection of the artist.
Figure 4.28: Adena Richardson, *Kramats*, detail side 1, 2013-2014. Wood, pebbles, sand, tubing, and photographic prints. 30cm x 42cm x 98cm. Collection of the artist.

Figure 4.29: Adena Richardson, *Kramats*, detail side 2, 2013-2014. Wood, pebbles, sand, tubing, and photographic prints. 30cm x 42cm x 98cm. Collection of the artist.
Figure 4.30: Adena Richardson, *Kramats*, detail, 2013-2014. Wood, pebbles, sand, tubing, and photographic prints. 30cm x 42cm x 98cm. Collection of the artist.

My work *Kramats* plays with how we ‘read’ a map, whether horizontally or vertically,68 and the work therefore consists of vertical and horizontal wooden panels sized in relation to my own measurements. An engraved panel of a map of Cape Town which plots the positions of *kramats* and a blank surface upon which a new sand map is created constitute the two horizontal panels. Two vertical panels run parallel to each other, with a space between them. Each outer vertical panel is covered; one of the surfaces contains an image of my back, and the other contain a celestial map of the constellation Corona Borealis. All the images are engraved using a laser printing machine that ‘burns’ the image into the wood panels. The vertical panels have been

68 Paper maps are an example of maps that are either held upright (vertically) or placed on a table, for example, to be read horizontally.
pierced with aluminium tubes. Hanging from the tubes on either side of the vertical panels are rocks and cotton parcels containing sand, respectively, and these rocks and parcels are linked by cords, which allow them to be handled.

This work has its origin in the kramats of the Cape.\textsuperscript{69} I visited these kramats (Fig 4.31) during a December holiday, and collected a rock and a handful of sand from each of them.

The rocks indicate, on the map of Cape Town, the exact location of the kramats (Figure 4.29). Today these kramats form a circle of protection around the Cape, as a symbol of their commitment to the preservation of Islam and their struggle for liberation against the colonialist power of their time.

Tuan Guru (cited in Moosa 1995:134) is reported to have said the following:

\begin{quote}
Be of good heart, my children, and serve your masters; for one day your liberty will be restored to you, and your descendants will live within a circle of karamats (shrines) safe from fire, famine, plague, earthquake and tidal waves.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{69} Kramat is the name commonly used in the Cape for the tomb of a saint, but they are also shrines of Islamic holy men, who were mostly brought to the Cape as political prisoners and slaves. It is said that approximately 250 years ago a prophecy was made that there would be a “circle of Islam” around the Cape. According to local beliefs the circle is now complete, comprising the tombs of Auliyah (friends of Allah) who were brought as slaves to the Cape. The circle starts at the old cemetery on the slopes of Signal Hill, just above the quarry in Strand Street, where two saintly men lie buried, and it then continues to two graves on the top of Signal Hill. It then continues to a grave much revered, situated above Oudekraal, beyond Camps Bay, and sweeps around the mountain to a kramat at Constantia, on the Tokai road. The circle proceeds to the most important and widely known of all tombs, the Kramat of Sheikh Yusuf, at Faure, on the farm Zandvliet. The circle is completed by an old tomb on Robben Island (Mansoor 2010:10-11).
The exact index of the *kramats* is also reflected on my back, locating physical features such as my moles. Corona Borealis (Corona Borealis [sa]), depicted in the celestial map, is a small constellation in the northern sky. The major stars forming Corona Borealis (Latin for “northern crown”, inspired by its shape) form a semicircular arc (just as the *kramats* do). In Arabic mythology, this constellation is known as “the bowl of the poor people” (Kunitzsch & Smart 1986). The stars form an asymmetrical pattern, with an indent in one side, similar to the bowl of the poor. Arabs also refer to this constellation as a loose string of jewels. I found this an interesting relationship between Eastern (a poor man’s bowl) and Western (a crown) interpretations, which is reflective of different cultural perspectives and creates a dichotomous relationship between East and West, poor and rich.

Given the importance of the *kramats*, the sand pockets are symbolic of all of us one day returning to dust. This is an interactive artwork; the rocks are intended to be lifted up, so that the sand pockets drop onto the blank surface, creating small sand marks on the blank surface. The sand then forms a new, tentative, emergent map without any known territory. Such participation by the viewer of the artwork could and would be experienced differently for each person, in the way that they engage with the artwork (the engagement could be aggressive or subtle; the action could be understood symbolically, or be just a game). This act encapsulates the larger project in the way I am thinking about emergence. What happens on the blank surface, in many ways, is contingent, is emergent, is in a state of becoming.

The gap in between the vertical panels is indexical of both the absence and the presence of knowledge of Arabic-Afrikaans, and it is also reflective of what happens in the space between obfuscation and revelation. This gap is a liminal space, “a midpoint of transition [...] between two positions [...] neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between” (Turner 1969). Just like the space behind the canvas and the use of light in *Pseudo weg*, and the way the backs are viewed through a slit that interrupts the Arabic script in *4 Generasies, vasgespled vanaf 1815*, something similar is intended here; all three instances are representational of an in-between space. These slits and the gap in *Kramats* are physical manifestations of this kind of ‘in-betweenness’ in language or concepts, and thus they become a metaphorical space of becoming. I have consistently constructed these spaces in my work. I have stated that the panels in *Kramats* are sized to my own dimensions. The gap between the vertical panels is a slipway into which I am potentially able to move through or occupy (even though the space is interrupted by aluminium tubes). These metal tubes are able to metaphorically pass through my body, linking one space to another, a liminal space that my body could potentially occupy.
4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I mapped the content of my practical work by referring to coordinates – historical and cultural reference points, the gaze, text, the Arabic-Afrikaans language, transformation and transition, and liminal space – which help to visually explore the transitioning of my female Afrikanerness. This transition is achieved by two key signifiers: the back of my body, and mapping. I have also argued that both signifiers link with aspects of the three artists discussed in my study, namely Boshoff, Essaydi, and Kruger. The back of my body is a personal territory, and the moles on my back coordinate this personal territory. Mapping therefore becomes a visual metaphor for my practical work, in order to navigate a sense of self.

*teRUG # 1-40* reflects a layered history and multiple identities, through the projected images on my back. The triad relationship of *teRUG # 1-40* signifies past, present, and future, by means of both Arabic and Afrikaner influences. I retain a sense of identity by maintaining a link with the past, through my Afrikaans language. The postcard booklet signifies a journey that an individual has experienced, and, by extension, the journey of my lived experience. In *Pseudo weg* I refer to inverted maps that unhinge the conventional spoon-fed education of the Afrikaner and the disillusionment some Afrikaners still have about the genesis of the Afrikaans language. This work is reflective of my initial question “Why was I, as an Afrikaner, never taught about the literary tradition known as Arabic-Afrikaans? Why was it kept out of my cultural history?” The work *4 Generasies, vasgespeld vanaf 1815* is a result of knowledge being passed down from generation to generation, in order to pin down my emergent identity, which is situated in both Arabic and Afrikaans influences. *Bewaarde KlipTaal* reflects on the creolisation, protection, and preservation of the Afrikaans language. The idea of the Afrikaans language being stable and pure is subverted by the leather straps which are tied around some of the doily-covered rocks, which imply that these rocks can be shifted, carried, or moved around. The *kramats* of the Cape area are symbols of the Cape Muslims’ commitment to the preservation of Islam, and the struggle for liberation from the colonialist power of their time, just as *Bewaarde KlipTaal* is a symbol of the preservation of the creolised Afrikaans language. Thus, in my work *Kramats*, I argue for a metaphorically constructed liminal space that is a physical manifestation of a kind of ‘in-betweenness’ (as seen in *Pseudo weg* and *4 Generasies, vasgespeld vanaf 1815*), which is a representation of my emergent identity as “a new form of imagining in South Africa, where creolised construction of identity challenges the fixity of old apartheid identities” (Nuttall & Michael 2000:16).
The cultural and historical images used throughout my artworks are reflective of my Afrikaner culture, which has been influenced by my language and my life experiences. Boshoff’s concept of mapping directly influenced my art making, and it forms a link with Essaydi and Kruger’s personal journeys that they embarked on in order to locate a sense of self. Mapping becomes a primary metaphor for my artworks, and it is embedded in all of them. I map my journey of becoming. This journey has created a territory through which I travel. Some parts of the territory I know well; other parts are speculative. Through my artworks I have, like Boshoff, unhinged what I consider to be the stereotypical conditions of conventional Afrikanerness. This unhinging of the stereotypical Afrikaner is reflective of my practice as an artist, as well as a response to an awareness of my emergent identity, an awareness that is becoming. My art making therefore probes an identity which is in a constant state of flux, and which exists in a liminal space of past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion.
5.1 Reflections

I have used mapping throughout my research. Mapping the relationship between image and text in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* forms a relationship between the past (Arabic-Afrikaans) and the future (emergent female Afrikaner identity). Mapping also depicts a personal journey, navigating a territory of self-discovery in my practical work. In order to reflect on what has emerged from this process, I expand on the concept of mapping, by deploying strategic coordinates as a way of locating and organising my findings. In this chapter I draw a link between the moles on my back and the coordinates and stars of the Southern Cross constellation. By way of illustration, if one looks for the Southern Cross in the night sky, one is able to identify the constellation by locating its fixed coordinates or stars. We are able to perceive that the constellation has the shape of a cross, because we are able to connect the coordinates by filling in the gaps between them.

![Diagram 5.1: The Southern Cross. Created by author.](image)

The particular coordinates or stars of the Southern Cross cannot be moved, but the way in which I ‘connect the dots’ is subject to change, and so, any interpretation of the relationship
between the coordinates is also subject to change. If I assign different themes to different coordinates of the Southern Cross, then a number of possible relationships exist, and there are then multiple ways of reading these relationships. The coordinates operate in relation to one another, and are therefore fixed. What is not fixed, however, is the liminal space created within these coordinates, no matter how they are joined or read. Even if the positions of these coordinates are fixed, I can rename them and in changing the terms of my coordinates my emerging identity can then be seen as the imagined liminal space which is created within these coordinates. I understand this liminal space as a continuum of spaces in which my identity as a female Afrikaner is in a constant state of becoming and transitioning.

I have used mapping throughout my research as a way of organising and structuring complex relationships. In order to connect the themes of this research, I have mapped out a visual representation of each chapter, using my back as the theoretical territory of my research, and my moles as my coordinating foci. Given that the focus in the practical work is on the back as personal territory, and that my moles coordinate this personal territory, such a visual representation seems to be a suitable strategy to use to summarise the entire project.

What follows are maps that I have constructed from a photograph of my own back, inserting key themes as coordinates to guide the reader in navigating each chapter. I have used the chapter divisions and key themes to plot an organising structure, thereby mapping a path of connections for myself and the reader. However, in order to conclude, my maps plot the territory of my study from my practical work (as discussed in chapter 4) back to the origins of my study (discussed in chapter 1).
5.2 Reflecting on chapter 4

Figure 5.1: Mapped-out visual representation of chapter 4. Created by author.
I start with chapter 4, describing my own practical work by means of the theme of ‘terug’, which is a constant practice-led thread that connects my practical art making and its associated theory. I attempt to map the content of my practical work by acknowledging two signifiers, namely my back, and mapping, which helped to create new coordinates, namely text, Arabic-Afrikaans, historical and cultural reference points, the gaze, transformation/transition, and the liminal space in which I might locate my Afrikanerness.

The exhibition *teRUG* can be summarised as an internal reflection that visually explores my transition from knowing myself in a particular way while growing up, and then acquiring new knowledge as I grow and develop, thereby changing how I think about my world. This realisation of temporality is sourced from my lived experience as a female Afrikaner who grew up under apartheid, and it has been filtered through the creolisation of the Afrikaans language and the stereotyping of the Afrikaner culture and heritage. My practical work is visualised as map metaphors, in order to navigate a sense of self. My practical work thus attempts to embody a temporary space of an emergent identity. I understand this in-between space as a liminal space, as a continuum of spaces in which my identity as a female Afrikaner is in a state of becoming and constant transitioning.
5.3 Reflecting on chapter 3

Figure 5.2: Mapped-out visual representation of chapter 3. Created by author.
The map I have constructed for chapter 3 attempts to mark and join coordinates that link a key theme of emergent identity with the artists and authors mentioned in my study. I have done this by means of a visual comparative analysis of the work of artists Lalla Essaydi and Lizelle Kruger. This analysis has been conducted through a relational lens provided by my interpretation of Boshoff’s work, as well as Antjie Krog’s suggestion of ever-changing, transitioning and unfixed positions of identity.

Essaydi represents an Islamic identity, and Kruger represents an Afrikaner identity, and through these artists and their work, I am able to create links with Arabic-Afrikaans. Essaydi uses text as image; her textual veil serves as a form of empowerment for the women in her photographs. Kruger uses image as a text, where she is able to position the viewer in her particular landscape, and redirect positions of power. This notion of redirecting power is also evident in these artists’ use of the back and the gaze. Essaydi and Kruger also create a link to Boshoff, in that each of these artists subvert, question, and break down prevailing cultural and linguistic stereotypes, and thereby operationalise the notion of an emergent identity: a ‘new self’ in a state of flux, change, emergence, and transitioning.
Figure 5.3: Mapped-out visual representation of chapter 2. Created by author.
The aim of chapter 2 is to decipher the signification between image and text in Boshoff’s *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, in order to interpret the meaning of the artwork. The two principal methods employed are a critical literature review and a visual semiotic analysis, with the intention of formulating linkages between Arabic-Afrikaans and Boshoff’s artwork. What has emerged from this analysis is that in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, Boshoff applied deconstructive strategies by exposing, and then subverting, various binary oppositions, obsessive classifications, and hierarchies, such as the seeming difference between image and text, bread and pebble, map and territory, as well as Islam and Christianity, that undergird our dominant ways of thinking.

The map that I have constructed for chapter 2 therefore draws links between image and text and *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*. Boshoff’s conflation of image and text unhinges the conditions for the stereotype which conventionally privileges a dichotomy. Drawing a link between and applying these conditions found in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* to Arabic-Afrikaans, I view Arabic-Afrikaans, too, as able to unhinge its own seeming dichotomy, the dichotomy between Arabic and Afrikaans, and therefore also the dichotomy between Islam and Christianity. In this way I am able to argue that Arabic-Afrikaans is able to reverse stereotyping and point a way forward towards the construction of emergent non-racial stereotyping. Another link between *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* and Arabic-Afrikaans is that the Arabic names in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* refer to the genealogy of Ishmael and, by extension, Islam, suggesting a kind of Afrikaans genealogy, which facilitates an understanding of language, and perhaps even the silence and secrecy surrounding Arabic-Afrikaans itself. Through this research, I attempt to clear some of the obfuscation surrounding Arabic-Afrikaans and our connected histories.

Drawing a link between *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* and mapping reveals that the work functions as a dichotomous map. The work is clearly not a conventional map, and yet, through analysis, it becomes evident the application of deconstructive strategies conjoins map and territory, collapsing the spaces between conventional signs of map, territory, image, and text. The map becomes the territory, and the territory becomes the map. *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* promises no direction, as a conventional map does. It is a map to get lost by; this roadmap directs you into itself. Boshoff makes the viewer work for enlightenment and understanding himself or herself, counteracting the passive acceptance which is typical of spoon-fed education that leads to stereotyping and prejudice. On the basis of my analysis, *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* is metaphorical of South Africa’s goal of cultural, religious and political transformation and potential rebirth pointing a way forward to an emergent identity.
5.5 Reflecting on chapter 1, part 2

Figure 5.4: Mapped-out visual representation of chapter 1, part 2. Created by author.
I have ended with chapter 1, in order to bring the reader back to the context and rationale for this study.

The aim of chapter 1, part 2 is to investigate the early roots of the relationship between Arabic script and the oral tradition of Afrikaans, through a linguistic review of the resultant Arabic-Afrikaans in textual form. This is done in order to clarify the development of the relationship between Arabic in its conventional written form and Afrikaans in its spoken form, as a conjoined script, and its particular cultural identity and contextual purpose.

I started this research because I wanted to explore the relationship between my Afrikaner identity and the complex multi-layered experiences that I had while living in an Arab country. I found this relationship within Arabic-Afrikaans script, which opened up, for me, a new area of investigation and interpretation.

The map I have constructed for chapter 2, part 1 therefore draws connections between image and text, and Arabic-Afrikaans and emergent identity. Researching the relationships between Arabic script and the oral tradition of Afrikaans prompted an investigation into the image of the Afrikaner culture, as projected by the Afrikaans language, as well as the image of Islam, as projected by Arabic script.

What has emerged from this section is that Afrikaans was historically viewed as a ‘pure’ language, used exclusively by Afrikaners. Yet Cape Muslims used Afrikaans as a means to both create and preserve their identity, an Islamic identity that was viewed by white colonial authorities as the ‘other’. Herein lies the first dichotomy. The second dichotomy is that history has shown that Afrikaans has both oppressive and revolutionary properties. I have shown in chapter 2 how Boshoff, in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap*, unhinges dichotomous relationships. Applying these conditions found in *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* is reflective of the unhinging of my confidence in the structures of knowledge situated in my own historical and conventional Afrikaner cultural identity, previously considered fixed and unproblematic, in line with the national discourse under apartheid, and which now finds itself in flux. By memorialising Arabic-Afrikaans, both a link with the past is made, and a way forward is mapped. My back forms a 'map', which serves as the matrix to navigate these links, indicating my own personal awareness and path, as parallel with that of a nation in transition, post-apartheid.

To conclude my study, what has emerged from these multiple links are the spaces in between, which remain liminal spaces in which my female Afrikaner identity resides. My identity is not
one-dimensional and fixed, but in a state of flux. Through this study, I realised how my Afrikanerness is, in a sense, also realising my creolisation, as a composite of complex languages, identities, and histories, and that none of us are of pure blood. We are all in some way creolised, combinations of experiences of our culture, of our people, and others, which then no longer constitute ‘the other’, but constitute the core of our identity. The heritage of Arabic-Afrikaans has already hybridised me; it has created a composite greater than that of any ‘pure’ Afrikaner heritage, which all of my ancestors would have wanted for me. If it is already creolised for me, any current identity that I recognise for myself cannot be considered an ‘ideal identity’. My Afrikaans language has Malayan roots; even the language that I take as being mine is, in fact, a creolised language. I am in the process of transitioning from a sense of knowing myself in a particular way ‘then’ to knowing myself in a particular way ‘now’. I am transitioning away from the stereotyping that I inherited as an Afrikaner.

Paradoxes abound in my research and through my artwork, I am able to embrace and acknowledge them as a way of mapping my emergent identity as contingent, becoming, and still to be finalised.
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Willem Boshoff Big druid in his cubicle. 2013. [O]. Available:
APPENDIX 1: Email interview with Willem Boshoff about his work titled *Bread and Pebble Roadmap* (10 July 2013).

1. Theme: Material as meaning

Could you take me through each stage of the creation process of this work?


1.1 Where does the chosen material – sand, bread, pebbles, and wood – come from?

*The material is Biblical – from Genesis 21:1-20, although I am not at all religious*

The boy (Ishmael), rejected by his own father (Abraham), is facing certain death because his stepmother (Sara) acted in hatred and wanted him out of her life. Racial stereotypes cause hatred and rejection, but religious stereotypes can likewise cause highly condemnable behaviour. In Genesis 22 Abraham also tries to kill Sara’s own son, Isaac. Ironically both his sons came close to dying at his hand, but both multiplied and became as the sand of the sea (Gen. 22:17).

*The bread-rolls are chosen because they look like pebbles. In the story of Hansel and Gretel their very own father acted with much the same motives as Abraham. Like Abraham he twice tried to get rid of his two children. Hansel used pebbles to find his way back and it worked the first time, but when he used bread-crumbs the birds ate them. If one were to chose pebbles to stone someone, then the size of bread-rolls would ironically be ideal.*

1.2 How is the sand attached? With glue?

*Alcolin cold wood glue.*

1.3 How are the bread and pebbles embedded in the sand?

*The bread and pebbles were attached first, wet glue was then painted on, stage for stage, around them and sand sprinkled on the wet glue.*

1.4 What process did you use to transform the bread into pebbles, and vice versa, and what is the significance to this transformation?

*The pebbles are from the hills around Johannesburg. They are imbedded in boulders and lie about in the gullies. They looked very much the size, colour and texture of bread-
rolls. We made a special dough containing lots of salt to be able to preserve the bread-rolls. The shaping and baking was then used to make the bread-rolls look exactly or as close as possible to the pebbles we had picked up. – My assistants at the time were Katja and Aymeric Gentric from Paris. Aymeric baked the bread-rolls. Katja recently completed her doctorate on my work.

1.5 What medium did you use to write the Arabic names? Are they painted on, or engraved?

_Painted with a small brush and tempera._

1.6 Why the wooden boxes, and what do they signify?

_The wooden boxes are of a cheap pinewood in allusion to the coffins that Jewish children are buried in. The custom of Jews is to bury their dead in a modest coffin. In Islam, the custom is to bury the dead in a canvas wrapping on the same day that the death occurs. My children’s ‘coffins’ are an ironical twist of Arabs being buried in Jewish coffins. The work looks at the innocence intended in the giving well-meaning names to children and the feelings of animosity that sometimes arise between the two groups. Both Jews and Arabs are Semites and to be anti-Semitic is as much to be anti Jewish as it means to be anti Arab._

_I often hint at cemeteries and graveyards in my work. My BLIND ALPHABET PROJECT has fields of containers that look like small tombs._

_See: http://www.willemboshoff.com/documents/artworks/blind_alphabet.htm._

_and in my GARDENS OF WORDS, I build fields of memorial gardens to the flowers on the red data list – flowers that will become extinct in the foreseeable future._


1.7 Is there any reason for the specific choice of 40 wooden boxes?

_Christ spent forty days in the desert, and, like the children of Abraham and of the Hansel and Gretel story, He also very nearly died – possibly also at the hand of his Father. His words: “My God (Father) – why hast thou forsaken me.” uttered when he finally did die comes to mind._
1.8 Are the wooden boxes finished off with glass or perspex?

Glass.

1.9 Would it be correct to interpret the wooden boxes as museum casings?

I am not sure what museum casings are, but the boxes are made to be shown against a gallery wall.

2. Theme: Arabic names

2.1 You sent me a list of the Arabic names and their meanings. Did you choose the names randomly from the list, or are these names in Bread and Pebble Roadmap a full register of the descendants of Ishmael?

I am fascinated by words/names and their meanings. “Ishmael”, for example, means “God has listened”. I collect dictionaries, and I also write them. I am fascinated by the fact that some mention of names can conjure up intense hatred amongst those who do not know the true meaning of those names. Names can easily enforce stereotypes. One hears that a person of a name that is unfamiliar will come to visit, and one imagines all sorts of strange scenarios. That person might actually turn out to be innocent, pretty helpful, and extremely likable.

When mothers (or fathers) name their children, they want only the best for them. Naming a child is sometimes an affirmation of what happened at birth. A third child might be named “Tertia”, the third, for example. A name can also be seen as a prophetic gesture – ‘Sophia’ means ‘truth’, and the mother projects a future of honesty and integrity on her daughter with such a name. The name Ishmael has both meanings – as the small child saved from dying in the desert and as the father of Arab descendants, the name affirms that ‘God has listened’.

I found the names I sent you on the internet. There are a number of websites aiding Arab mothers to give suitable names to their infants. I used these names and their meanings on the bread-rolls and pebbles – I think that I might find lots more Arab names if I knew where to look.

Some of the books related to names in my library are:

2.2 If these Arabic names are a full register of Ishmael’s descendants, how were you able to trace the descendants?

I did not trace the descendants of Ishmael by finding real people actually named by the names I sent you. I happen to know a number of Arabs, and the ones I know are all Muslim. The list is not definitive, but an allusion to the unfairness that we may treat people by if we don’t really know them. I am a pacifist, and refused to carry a rifle for the South African Defence Force. One of my reasons was that I refuse to kill the people I know, and I don’t see the point of killing the people I do not know.

2.3 How many names are there in total, and is there any symbolism connected to this number?

Each pebble and each bread-roll has a name, but I never counted them. I think that the names/descendants of the Arabs, as of the Jews, are as the sand on the sea-shore. One cannot begin to count them. I made a large number of rolls/pebbles to show the endlessness of the descendants, and so also their names.

2.4 Why did you not write the names in Arabic script?

I wanted the names to be readable to a Western audience — where I believe that Arabs are victimised most. So many action films coming from Hollywood are nothing more than Arab-trashing.

2.5 What do these Arabic names signify?

As with all cultures, one’s name signifies a link to one’s parents, one’s family, and the people one loves. When I gave my children their names, I had to satisfy myself and their mother that the names we gave them were OK with us, but, more so, that the names were OK with their grandparents as well. I believe that Arab names are similarly given, in a spirit of love and respect.
2.6 You wrote that the stones and bread marked with Arabic names and their meanings is an attempt to put the full register of Arabic names at risk. What does “to put the full register of Arabic names at risk” mean? Why are they at risk?

Arab names, albeit innocent and well-meaning in themselves, are at risk of being feared, hated, and victimised. Such is the strength of Western propaganda, especially in politics. In my work CRUSADE (see http://www.willemboshoff.com/documents/artworks/CRUSADE.htm), I draw attention to the fact that so-called Christians waged terrible wars as crusaders against Arabs since the Medieval Ages. The more recent and shameful American wars against Iraq and Afghanistan are examples of how modern-day crusaders want to ‘sort the Arabs out’.

2.7 Are these names perhaps suggested destinations, and, if so, for what purpose are they given?

Yes, they often indicate a philosophical direction in which one hopes the child will develop.

2.8 You have always used language/words/text in a very clear way, either printed or block-mounted. They have always had a very particular presence, even in KykAfrikaans, where you used a typewriter, and words are obfuscated, it is still clear text, a clear process. In Bread and Pebble Roadmap, your use of text is different, handwritten. Your use of text seems an odd departure from your previous work (the only other work that seems the same is Ostrakon (2003). Why is this?

The bread and pebbles, at a glance, look like stones on the desert floor, stones of such a suitable size that they will fit comfortably in one’s hand, and of such a weight that, should one use them in a stoning, they will be effective in killing. The names are written small, and sometimes innocuous, as if the stones are marked by their various owners. If one writes one’s own name on one’s own stone/bread-roll, one is saying that the stone/bread-roll will not get lost; “This stone is mine; it has my name on it.” If one writes the name of one’s enemy on a stone, one projects the intention to do harm. One is, in effect, saying: “This stone has your name on it, I am going to use it on you.”

3. Theme: General

3.1 What inspired this work?

My sense of indignation at the unfairness by which the Palestinian people exist and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. At the time of the invasion of Iraq, George Bush proposed a plan
for peace for Palestine. He called it the “Roadmap for Peace”, and my work borrows from this title.

I was first showing the work at the Goodman Gallery in 2003, immediately after the American invasion of Iraq. Goodman Gallery was then owned by Linda Goodman and Linda’s husband was a fighter pilot in the Israeli army. I saw this Jewish obstacle as a challenge, but it turned out that Linda was very tolerant of the work.

3.2 How does this work contribute to identity formation of the contemporary Afrikaner?

I cannot speak for the contemporary Afrikaner. I once read a book on the way the early settlers often spawned children from their Malaysian slaves. Most of the descendants of these slaves have Arab/Islam names. One early settler by the name of Boshoff had children by a woman identified as Anna Kokeraia, a slave girl from Batavia. If I am one of Anna’s descendants, I present this work as homage to her and it is my way of telling her that I love her.

3.3 Do you think that Bread and Pebble Roadmap and Arabic-Afrikaans together (through their own analysis) constitute a key to unlock an understanding of Afrikaner identity?

Possibly – but I can’t speak for ‘other’ Afrikaners. In one of my latest works, TIEN TEEN EEN, I speak about my problem with belonging to a religion, a political party, a club or an assumed national group.

See: image at http://www.roneldejager.com/#!news-march-2011-ik-ben-project/c1a3b

3.4 You have previously stated that everything you make is a book. How do you see this work as a book?

The work is a kind of dictionary of names and each ‘coffin’ is a kind of page in this dictionary.

3.5 In your opinion, how does the relationship between image and text in this work reveal and sometimes conceal?

Text and image are rather dangerous devices if one looks back at the history of the Christian church. To destroy images one does not condone is called iconoclasm and to destroy texts and books one does not tolerate is called biblioclasm. I deal with the destruction of books in my work SKOOB. Skoob means the burning, burying or dumping of books in the sea in order to get rid of them (and of course their message and its effects) – from the Oxford English Dictionary – Skoob – ‘books backwards’.

3.6 Would you say obfuscation is intended to hide meaning in this or any other of your works?

Yes, the more difficult one makes it for an audience, the harder they try to get to the point of it. An hermeneutic process is one where things are explainable and can be interpreted. A hermetic process is one where things are deliberately hidden so that understanding and interpreting them becomes all the more difficult.

Marshall Macluhan said that to lower the definition of a work of art is to increase spectator participation.

3.7 In a discussion held in 2004 with Katja Gentric and Andrew Munnik, subsequent to the exhibition NONPLUSSED, you refer to a line from Shakespeare: “the evil that men do is written in stone; the good is written in water”. “So I am planning a work where I write in water...” Have you developed this idea any further?

No, I have not really. I have made a work called WALKING ON WATER in which text is used to make the ‘walking’ possible.