19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>
March 2013



NEGOTIATING WHITENESS IN 21 ST CENTURY SOUTH AFRICA





### **CONVENED BY:**

The Research Centre, Visual Identities in Art and Design, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg

#### **WORKSHOP VENUE:**

University of Johannesburg School of Tourism and Hospitality, Bunting Road Campus, Auckland Park

### FRAMING STATEMENT

Although the complex and contested discourses surrounding whiteness are unavoidable in South African politics and popular culture, the loose field of analysis sometimes called 'critical whiteness studies' has almost no coherent presence within the South African academy at large, with most canonical and heavily cited writings on whiteness having thus far come out of the global North.

Global whiteness studies are relevant to post-apartheid South Africa as they question the mechanisms of power that support and sustain whiteness as an ideological construct and not a soley racial category; draw attention to and deconstruct the master narrative of whiteness; and engage with processes of de-authorising whiteness by revisiting subject positions from within the contexts of history, culture and power. Nevertheless, while global whiteness studies provide useful historical and methodological frameworks for analyses of postapartheid white subjectivities, there are significant areas of difference, given South Africa's history and demographics. Over the past fifteen years, some of these differences have been identified in the work of individual sociologists, historians, literary theorists and other researchers in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere in the South. Individually, their work has made an invaluable contribution to a critical understanding of whitenessesin South Africa; collectively, their vital interventions into the field point to the emergence of a fledgling South African whiteness studies. The Research Centre,

Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD), University of Johannesburg, hopes to develop this nascent field by bringing these scholars together to develop a new generation of researchers who are examining how South African constructs of whitenesses can be conceptualised in ways that are particular to a post-apartheid context. WHITEWASH I is intended as a forum for developing these existing and emergent conversations and providing opportunities for initiating and furthering dialogue and debate.

With this intent, WHITEWASH I brings together South African and international scholars, including postgraduate and early level researchers to high-profile academics from a range of disciplines. An overarching thematic of the workshop is the introduction of critical whiteness studies to the South African academy with a view to developing forms of discourse that are particular to constructions of whitenesses in post-apartheid South Africa. Amongst other factors, this entails considerations of whiteness and identity in visual culture; theories of southern whitenesses; emergent white – and specifically Afrikaner - identities in the twenty-first century; and whitenesses that are being played out in academia and the media. WHITEWASH I aims to critically interrogate the constructs of South African whitenesses, ways that they are effected in institutions, politics, culture and society, and their complex relations with privilege and power.

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### WHITEWASH I PROGRAMME

DATE	TIME	EVENTS	VENUES	
TUESDAY	8.00-8.45	Registration and coffee	School of	
19 MARCH		Welcome by Prof Federico Freschi (Executive Dean, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg)	Tourism & Hospitality,	
	9.00-10.30	PANEL 1: THEORISING WHITENESS  - Imagining whiteness: The sublimity of African whiteness (Candess Kostopoulos)  - Identity and conflict and South African whiteness (Samantha Vice)  - Institutionalising whiteness: Enacting love, hate, fear and passion (Shona Hunter) Chair: Neil Roos		
	10.30-11.00	COFFEE BREAK		
	11.00-13.00	PLENARY PANEL  - Knowing ignorantly: Recollections of the tacit social achievement of whiteness (Melissa Steyn)  - The unbearable boredom of the whiteness debate (Ferial Haffajee)  - Sarah Nuttall  Discussant: Louise Bethlehem		
	13.00-14.00	LUNCH		
	14.00-15.50	PANEL 3: WHITE IDENTITIES  - Parcelled people: Race, class and belonging in mostly white gated communities (Richard Ballard & Gareth Jones)  - White Africans? White identity in post-apartheid South Africa (Sally Matthews)  - The British in South Africa: Continuity and change (Pauline Leonard & Daniel Conway)  Not yet African: White identity as a moral concern (Jason van Niekerk)  Chair: Anthea Garman		
	15.50-16.15	COFFEE BREAK		
	16.I5-I <i>7.</i> 45	PANEL 4: WHITENESS IN VISUAL REPRESENTATION  - A spear of contention (Jessica Lindiwe Draper)  - Mediating the complexities of whiteness and diaspora in the works of contemporary South African artists (Juliette Leeb-du Toit)  - Photographing through a lens of 'whiteness' in contemporary South Africa: A creative research project (Stacey Vorster & Matthew Kay) Chair: Danelle van Zyl-Hermann		

DATE	TIME	EVENTS	VENUES	
WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH	9.00-10.30	PANEL 5: AFRIKANER IDENTITIES – PRIVILEGE AND ITS DISCONTENTS  - Creolising whiteness: Notions of 'hybridity' and 'impurity' in the history of Afrikaner dissidence (Xany du Toit)  - Negotiating Afrikaner whiteness during family conversations in a rural Eastern Cape context: Enacting hybrid identities in post-apartheid South Africa (Charl Alberts)  - Volksmoeder ordentlikbeid in post-apartheid South Africa: Respectibility in the (re)making of a subaltern whitness (Christi van der Westhuizen) Chair: Megan Lewis	School of Tourism & Hospitality, Bunting Road Campus, University of Johannesburg	
	10.30-11.00	COFFEE BREAK		
	II.00-I2.30	PANEL 6: WHITENESS IN PRINT AND VISUAL CULTURE  - Bongos and beneficiaries: Being white and (not)talking about privilege and inequality in the South African (white) media (Anthea Garman)  - Nationalism cloaked as anti-nationalism and anti-neo-liberalism: A critique of the Vrye Afrikaan project (Mariana Kriel)  - Photographs of poor Afrikaners in the 21st century: Representations and contestations (Thomas Blaser)  Chair: Leora Farber		
	12.30-13.30	LUNCH		
	13.30-15.20	PANEL 7: WHITE HISTORIES  - Some speculations on the history and historiography of whites in apartheid South Africa: Theory, agendas and ethics (Neil Roos)  - 'Boere Brutalism': Afrikaner nationalism, architecture, and the imaginary of high culture, 1948–1976 (Federico Freschi)  - Declassing whiteness: South Africa's white working class and the threat of democratic transformation (Danelle van Zyl-Hermann)  -Who was a real white South African? The South African state, whiteness and national identity (Sally Peberdy)  Chair: Christi van der Westhuizen		
	15.20-15.45	COFFEE BREAK		
	15.45-17.50	PANEL 8: WHITE MEN AND MANHOOD  - Let's talk about sex (Tommaso M Milani & Ella Kotze)  - Afrikaner nostalgia, abject manhood, and hip hop hybridity: Marking whiteness in performance on the contemporary South African stage (Megan Lewis)  - Eng/Afr: White masculinity in two contemporary South African films (Nicky Falkof)  Chair: Thomas Blaser		

### **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**



FERIAL HAFFAJEE is the editor-in-chief of City Press and previously held the same position at the  $Mail\ \mathcal{E}$ Guardian. She is an alumnus of the Africa Leadership Initiative, a project of the Aspen Institute. She sits on the board of Gender Links, which is geared to improving the media's coverage of development and gender empowerment. She is a previous winner of the Shoprite-Checkers Woman of the Year award, The Media magazine's Women in Media award and a Sanlam financial journalism award. In 2008 she was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum. She has also worked at the Financial Mail and at the SABC in both radio and television. She sits on the boards of the International Press Institute and the World Editors Forum, and chairs the South African National Editors Forum's ethics and diversity committee.



SARAH NUTTALL is Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies and Director of the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WiSER). She won a Rhodes scholarship to read for a DPhil at Oxford University, and has spent five years as a visiting lecturer at Yale and Duke Universities. She is the author of Entanglement: literary and cultural reflections on post-apartheid (Witwatersrand University Press, 2009), editor of Beautiful/Ugly: African and diaspora aesthetics (Duke University Press, 2007) and co-editor of many books, most recently Johannesburg – the elusive metropolis (Witwatersrand University Press, 2009) and Load shedding: writing on and over the edge of South Africa (Jonathan Ball, 2009).



MELISSA STEYN is one of the early theorists who established the field of whiteness studies internationally. Her book Whiteness just isn't what it used to be: white identity in a changing South Africa (SUNY Press, 2001) won the Outstanding Scholarship Award in International and Intercultural Communication from the National Communication Association, United States of America, in 2002. She has been spearheading the development of diversity studies as a field in higher education since founding iNCUDASA (Intercultural and Diversity Studies of Southern Africa) at the University of Cape Town in 2001, and is currently working on establishing the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies. Her co-edited books include: The prize and the price: shaping sexualities in South Africa (Vol 2) (HSRC, 2009), Performing queer: shaping sexualities in South Africa (Vol 1) (Kwela, 2005), Under construction: race and identity in South Africa today (Heinemann, 2004) and Cultural synergy in South Africa: weaving strands of Africa and Europe (Knowledge Resources, 1996). She is a recipient of the University of Cape Town's Distinguished Teacher's Award (2009) and a CHE/HELTASA National Excellence in Teaching Award (2010).



LOUISE BETHLEHEM is Senior Lecturer in the English Department and the Programme in Cultural Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her book, Skin tight: apartheid literary culture and its aftermath (Unisa Press & Brill, 2006) was recently published in Hebrew translation by the dissident Tel Aviv publishing house Resling. She has co-edited six volumes including South Africa in the global imaginary, with Leon de Kock and Sonja Laden (Unisa Press, 2004); Violence and nonviolence in Africa, with Pal Ahluwalia and Ruth Ginio (Routledge, 2007); and Rethinking labour in South Africa, past and present, with Lynn Schler and Galia Sabar (Routledge, 2010). Her co-edited special edition of Critical Arts 26(2) titled Unruly pedagogies, migratory interventions: unsettling Cultural Studies was published in 2012.

### **ABSTRACTS**

### **PANEL 1: THEORISING WHITENESS**

### IMAGINING WHITENESS: THE SUBLIMITY OF AFRICAN WHITENESS

Candess Kostopoulos, Department of Philosophy, University of Johannesburg

Critical whiteness studies mostly work with a view of whiteness that stresses the 'invisibility', or 'covertness' of whiteness itself. In Africa, however, whites are mostly aware of being white; and in South Africa, whites are particularly race-conscious - mostly due to the overt racialisation of the apartheid regime, and also due to the fact that whites are an ethnic minority. Nevertheless, African whites still share many of the characteristics of 'whiteness', especially with regard to normativity, or rather sets of normativities. The question that arises is whether racial awareness - and particularly the awareness of ethnic minority – makes a difference. Should we conceptualise whiteness differently in/from South Africa? In this paper, I present a philosophical interpretation of the relationship between an awareness of being-white (that which makes South African whites different from their 'western' counterparts) and the normalisation and idealisation of whiteness as a set of norms (that which South African whites share with their 'western' counterparts). I approach this issue from the vantage point of the social imaginary. I use a Ricoeurean framework to do so, but I supplement Paul Ricoeur's work on utopia-ideology with the notion of the Kantian sublime. I argue that South African whites' acute awareness of themselves as an ethnic minority leads to an imaginative construal of social fragility, which - in itself - leads to peculiar 'failures' of social imagination amongst whites. Yet, these very failures produce a (Kantian) sublimity, seeing as whites continue to imagine themselves as a group that has a superior rational nature. A 'sublime whiteness' lends itself both to awareness and the

fears and insecurities which come with it, and to normative superiority.

### IDENTITY AND CONFLICT AND SOUTH AFRICAN WHITENESS

Samantha Vice, Department of Philosophy, Rhodes University

My essay on being white in South Africa, 'How do I live in this strange place?' stimulated a fierce and sometimes hostile debate when it found its way into the media in 2011. In this paper, I further explore one of its central themes. The theme I explore is familiar – identity and selfhood - but I hope to address less familiar questions, and from a less familiar direction. First, what is the relation between our public identity as white and our private interior life? The importance of what I called the 'inner life' and 'work on the self', which drew on a long philosophical tradition, was the background to the paper's particular controversial claims. I will argue that it is particularly important that the dimension and demands of the inner life be recognised and supported in the highly politicised context of a transitional country. While this is the case for anyone, regardless of race, I explore its implications for white South Africans. Second, how do we balance the sometimes competing demands of different aspects of our identity? We are not only white or black, for instance, but women, gay or lesbian, in a country of overwhelming gender violence; or HIV-positive in a country still struggling with the stigma of Aids. Most basically, we are also citizens of a shared polis and moral agents of a shared 'kingdom of ends', in Immanuel Kant's phrase. It is this last aspect our moral identity - that is my particular concern. How do we balance the demands of our moral identity with those of our racial identity? I will argue that in a country recovering from years of racial injustice, part of the

tragedy and injustice is that sometimes the demands of racial identity will take precedence over those of moral identity.

### INSTITUTIONALISING WHITENESS: ENACTING LOVE, HATE, FEAR AND PASSION

Shona Hunter, Department of Sociology, Leeds University

An enduring conundrum for critical scholarship focused on understanding and combating racialising and racist practices is the paradoxical knowing and unknowingness of all racialised subjects. How can racialised subjects be both knowing and not knowing; both responsible for and subject to racialising practices? In this paper I consider what the idea of institutional whiteness (Ahmed et al. 2006; Ahmed 2012) might have to offer when trying to understand this general paradox. Because it focuses our attention on the way in which whiteness is actively produced through everyday institutional practices, this idea enables us to understand how white ideals are actively produced through institutional inaction. Institutional inaction is actually a form of action, which is constantly achieved through everyday practices. Whiteness, like other forms of ethnic identification, is produced through everyday practices. It is not something some people automatically have or 'are', something existing ontologically, but something actively produced and reproduced; an identity which must be materially, symbolically and affectively enacted through social relationships. It is constitutive of institutional space and constituted through it. It is this reproduction of whiteness as a social ideal within institutional spaces which enacts racialised inequalities. This basic idea of the active production of whiteness is what I see as connecting various newer and more long-standing forms of scholarship, practice and activism interested in

understanding and undoing whiteness as a social ideal. In this paper I consider where 'we' as scholars, practitioners and activists are in relation to understanding our own investments in this idealisation. I pursue these questions not as a means to discredit this work, but as a means to better understand the continuing fractures and disconnections between scholarship, practice and activism in it.

### SOURCES CITED

Ahmed, S. 2012. On being included: racism and diversity in institutional life. London: Duke University Press.

Ahmed, S, Hunter, S, Kilic, S, Swan, E & Turner, L. 2006.

Race, diversity and leadership in the learning and skills sector, final report of the Integrating Diversity Project. Lancaster: Centre for Excellence in Leadership.

### **PANEL 2: PLENARY SPEAKERS**

- Ferial Haffajee
- Sarah Nuttall
- Melissa Steyn

Discussant: Louise Bethlehem

### **PANEL 3: WHITE IDENTITIES**

## PARCELLED PEOPLE: RACE, CLASS AND BELONGING IN MOSTLY WHITE GATED COMMUNITIES

Richard Ballard (Department of Population and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal) & Gareth Jones (Department of Geography and Environment, London School of Economics)

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between race, class and belonging in elite gated communities in Durban according to affluent white people who are numerically dominate in such spaces. Our broad argument is that, according to affluent white residents, belonging and access to the territory of gated communities draw heavily on both race and class, but to highly contradictory effect. First, the 'somatic norm' (Puwar 2004) is affluent white people. Affluent white residents are seen to most easily fit into this space because they are the most typical kind of person. However, notwithstanding performances of community such as orchestrated Halloween trickor-treating, residents seek to maintain distance from their like-bodied neighbours. Second, the affluent black minority is also regarded in ambivalent terms. On one hand they legitimate gated communities as ordinary post-apartheid spaces rather than continuities of apartheid. On the other, their deviance from the somatic norm places a burden of doubt on their ability to fit in. Third, less affluent residents, including many white tenants, provoke further ambivalence. On one hand they induce anxieties of class compatibility. On the other they are seen as bringing welcome diversity and liveliness to gated communities. Finally, poor black people also occupy an ambiguous position. Proposals to oblige gated communities to provide a component of affordable housing were widely denounced. Yet poor black people routinely access gated communities as guards, cleaners and gardeners who produce and reproduce the domestic spaces of residents. These four

kinds of social relationships suggest that even where gated communities have mostly affluent white residents, there is no neat social and spatial 'parcelling' of affluent white people by the perimeter fencing. Instead, notions of belonging navigate complex qualifications across a variety of race and class stratifications.

### SOURCE CITED

Puwar, N. 2004. Space invaders: race, gender and bodies out of place. Oxford: Berg.

### WHITE AFRICANS? WHITE IDENTITY IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

Sally Matthews (Department of Political and International Studies, Rhodes University)

The post-apartheid era necessitates the rethinking of white identities in South Africa. One way in which some white South Africans are seeking to redefine themselves is through describing themselves as African. In this paper, I explore the possibilities and limitations that the embracing of an African identity by white South Africans has for the development of what Ruth Frankenberg (1993) calls "anti-racist forms of whiteness". I examine the hostility that such claims have attracted from some black South Africans and argue that a too easy claiming of an African identity may obscure white complicity in and commitment to continuing white privilege in South Africa. However, a rejection of African identity in favour of the embracing of some other (European?) identity is clearly also fraught with difficulties. The paper suggests that white South Africans think of themselves as having an 'inbetween' identity - they are, in the words of JM Coetzee (1988:11), "no longer European, not yet African". I explore what this might mean for thinking about how whites can develop identities that are not blind to race and to the continuing workings of white privilege,

but that also move beyond and do not reify the racialised identities of the past.

#### SOURCES CITED

Coetzee, JM. 1988. White writing: on the culture of letters in South Africa. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Frankenburg, R. 1993. *The social construction of whiteness - white women, race matters*. Routledge: University of Minnesota Press.

### THE BRITISH IN SOUTH AFRICA: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Pauline Leonard (University of Southampton) & Daniel Conway (Open University)

Recent South African whiteness studies literature recognises that "whiteness in South Africa differs from Western contexts in that it is more obvious in its potency: self-conscious rather than deliberately obscured, and accepted rather than veiled as a site of privilege" (Salusbury & Foster 2004:92). At the same time, it is also recognised that there is no such entity as the 'whites', but that white people are divided geographically, politically, religiously and economically as well as by language (Steyn 2001; Lambert 2009). Some inspiring scholarship has resulted, particularly exploring the extent and manner to which Afrikaans and white English-speaking South African (WESSA) identities are adapting to the changing post-apartheid context (e.g., Steyn 2001; Salusbury & Foster 2004). This paper builds on this work by drawing on new ethnographic research currently being conducted on the British in contemporary South Africa. Looking at both long- and short-term British residents who were born in the United Kingdom but have migrated to South Africa from as early as the 1960s up to the present day, our research explores the ways in which conceptualisations of whiteness shift as people move from the North to the South. Whereas in the North, whiteness is

largely 'invisible', masked at the level of thought and practice, this "ignorance" (Steyn 2012) cannot be easily maintained in the South African context. Indeed, many British came because of the privileges offered to whiteness. To what extent then, and how, is whiteness drawn upon, in combination with British nationality, gender and class in the construction of new identities, social relations and everyday lives? The research reveals a variety of discursive positions as well as spatial practices and argues that the meanings of white Britishness fragment transform and multiply through the processes of migration from North to South.

### SOURCES CITED

Lambert, J. 2009. 'An unknown people': reconstructing British South African identity. *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37(4):599-617.

Salusbury, T & Foster, D. 2004. Rewriting WESSA identity, in *Under construction: 'race' and identity in South Africa today*, edited by N Distiller & M Steyn. Pietermaritzburg: Heinemann.

Steyn, M. 2001. Whiteness just isn't what it used to be: white identity in a changing South Africa. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Steyn, M. 2012. The ignorance contract: recollections of apartheid childhoods and the construction of epistemologies of ignorance. *Identities: global studies in culture and power* 19(1):8-25.

### NOT YET AFRICAN: WHITE AFRICAN IDENTITY AS A MORAL CONCERN

Jason van Niekerk (Department of Philosophy, University of the Witwatersrand)

In White writing JM Coetzee (1988:11) suggested a frustrated teleology when he described white South Africans under apartheid as "no longer European, not yet African". Almost two decades beyond apartheid, there is little discernible progress toward such a white African identity. This is unsurprising, pragmatically, in a post-

### PANEL 4: WHITENESS IN VISUAL REPRESENTATION

#### A SPEAR OF CONTENTION

Jessica Lindiwe Draper (Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford University)

apartheid context of persistent whitely privilege: generic whiteness has all the currency necessary, while the cost of asserting an African identity is unknown. Yet when Sentletse Diakanyo publically insisted that white South Africans could not be African, many cried out, either aspiring to such an identity or insisting that they already embody it by default. The anaesthetic effect of privilege notwithstanding, this response suggests that Africanness has a value distinct from its pragmatic component for white South Africans. In this paper I outline the strategies for asserting (and contesting) a white African identity extant in public discussion, arguing that each fails to properly capture what is salient about such an identity. As an alternative, I re-articulate the debate in terms I take to capture its moral import and relationship to other Africans. Without presuming to resolve this debate, I suggest at least two reasons a putative white African identity should interest academics: such an identity is interesting qua moral concern in that it is implicated in personal responses to inherited injustice; and such an identity is novel among constructions of white identity, as it is contingent on recognition by others, rather than secured by white hegemony.

### SOURCE CITED

Coetzee, JM. 1988. White writing: on the culture of letters in South Africa. New Haven: Yale University Press.

In contrast to majority-white societies where the ideologies of whiteness exist at an unconscious level, the apartheid regime in South Africa ensured that everyone was acutely aware of whiteness via mechanisms such as 'whites only' signage. If whiteness has generally been confronted and subverted by being made explicit, then how might one go about exposing something that is already so categorically present? Apartheid devoted nearly fifty years to making whiteness visible, and it would therefore appear that this strategy instead reaffirms racial difference. Hence the dilemma of the white South African artist: ignoring whiteness perpetuates invisible advantage, and acknowledging it reifies a claim to apartheid's visible advantage. Stereotypes first provided by the western classification of African art, and then by the documentary-style photography so widely practised during apartheid, have generated an expectation on the part of the international (and local) art market of seeing these images reproduced. This expectation both stems from and produces false traditions. Whiteness has thus contributed to the artistic pressure to conform to such stereotypes which are now so established that they function as valid. This paper will look at this phenomenon, using the corpus of Brett Murray's work (creator of The Spear) as an example of an artist who has wrestled with this paradox. I argue that he has resisted these artistic pressures by addressing and questioning his own whiteness, while simultaneously critiquing his sense of selfhood. By doing so, he offers one way to "make whiteness strange" (van der Watt 2001:64). What is somewhat unique about Murray's work is that the lens then turns outwards again, questioning both white and black authorial voices and challenging political change. This makes his work as

morally disquieting for black as for white South Africans. Thus he attempts to position himself in a multicultural society that requires an acknowledgement of complicity, a display of 'white guilt', as an author-ising gesture.

### SOURCE CITED

van der Watt, L. 2008. Making whiteness strange. *Third Text* 15(56):63-74.

## MEDIATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF WHITENESS AND DIASPORA IN THE WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN ARTISTS

Juliette Leeb-du Toit (Research Centre, Visual Identities in Art and Design, University of Johannesburg)

Now democratically decentred and disempowered (Epstein 1998:50), South African whites have come to revisit their whiteness with self-conscious hesitancy but also a degree of self-confidence. With a new constitution in place that identifies the significance of all South Africans, regardless of race, Jennifer Law (2005:108) suggests it became increasingly important to "trace ones' ancestry, justify one's presence, one's history, with authenticating lineages, memories and political experiences" and above all "identify and explore one's difference". The plurality imbricated in diasporic difference, however, has seldom been addressed locally, in part because of the prevailing sensitivities it embodies for white South Africanness. Issues of class and cultural difference, especially among nationalities regarded as peripheral to former mainstream European and anglophile peoples in South Africa, have simply been ignored. In this art historians have ignored the rich inflections and diasporic historiography that marks their distinctiveness. Diasporic theory is valuable to whiteness studies in that it considers the ways in which peoples conceal and reveal their racial, ideological or cultural

affinity and their acculturation or resistance to it when they engage with the recipient nation or geographic realm in which they find themselves. In this paper I focus on the work of South African artists Penny Siopis and Leora Farber, tracing aspects of their diasporic origins reflected in a complex and shifting enactment of a distinctive whiteness that references history, self-representation and inter-cultural encounter by adopting several strategies that enable them to both expose and partly submerge their whiteness and diasporic difference. Responding to what has been termed 'post-democratic crisis', their work reflects a distinctive whiteness which challenges the homogeneity of perceived South African whiteness.

### SOURCES CITED

Epstein, D. 1998. Marked men: whiteness and masculinity. The New Man? *Agenda* 37:49-59. Law, J. 2005. The gift, in *Penny Siopis*, edited by K Smith.

Johannesburg: Goodman editions: 102-117.

## PHOTOGRAPHING THROUGH A LENS OF 'WHITENESS' IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA: A CREATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

Stacey Vorster (University of the Witwatersrand) & Matthew Kay (independent photography practitioner)

Part of the complexity of the contemporary South African experience is a sensitivity around forms of looking at, talking about and representing the 'other'. Defined by race, this manifestation of a long history of the colonial gaze in Africa has in many ways marked the boundaries of artistic practices like photography, where the very act of looking is a central task. Photographers including Mikhail Subotzky, Peter Hugo and Roger Ballen have, in some sense, set up a style of representation where the 'other', or even some version of the self as 'other', is further alienated, estranged and

### PANEL 5: AFRIKANER IDENTITES – PRIVILEGE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

## CREOLING WHITENESS: NOTIONS OF 'HYBRIDITY' AND 'IMPURITY' IN THE HISTORY OF AFRIKANER DISSIDENCE

Xany du Toit (University of the Free State)

exoticised. Susan Sontag's seminal text On photography (1977) begins to explore some of the violence in the nature of photography as a medium, the predatory act of 'shooting' an image. In a postcolonial, post-apartheid environment, acts of looking and representing are still heavily politicised, leaving a vacuum in dialogue around who can speak for or about whom. As a response to this situation, we embarked on a creative research project, which took as its starting point the act of looking through hetero-normative eyes. Using images as a starting point for the production of knowledge, white, male, middle class, English-speaking photographer Matthew Kay has taken a series of photographs that can be interrogated for the ways in which they displace, disrupt and or maintain the colonial 'gaze'. These images are the starting point for an exploration into what it means to be a young white male photographer in post-apartheid South Africa and what forms of looking are ethical, interesting and/or worthy of public attention. The intended outcome of the collaborative research project is to interrogate deeper experiences of hetero-normativity in the postcolonial setting of South Africa.

This paper retraces the history of Afrikaner dissidents as anti-purists with regard to Afrikaner nationalist conceptions of race, volk, culture and language. Since its inception, but especially after the establishment of the Gesuiwerde [Purified] National Party (GNP) under the leadership of DF Malan in 1934, Afrikaner nationalism attached immense importance to 'purity'. As anti-British imperialists, Afrikaners 'purified' their language from English elements. Far more notorious, however, was their pursuit of racial 'purity' which culminated in the introduction of the Population Registration Act (1950) and other apartheid legislation – an incredible venture, as RW Johnson (2004:141) has described it, "in an already Creolised society". Alongside this growth of ideals of nationalist purity one finds the development of views of tainted, hybrid forms of protest and hybrid identities against the aforementioned delusional Afrikaner ideal. Dissidence against this stringent control imposed by the government initially took the form of literature (as seen with the 'Sestigers' movement), but rapidly appeared in all forms of art and entertainment. The earlier dissidents' protest against the racist ideals of the nationalist government gradually evolved into protest against the unpolluted Afrikaner ideals of whiteness, sexual piousness, prudence, chauvinism and the Afrikaans language, amongst others. I look at the development and advancement of the various forms of protest embodied in Afrikaner dissidence and their counter-relationship with those ideals with which they battled. These forms of protest include art, literature, music and performance art, including apartheid and post-apartheid dissident movements, ranging from the Sestigers to contemporary alternative popular music.

#### SOURCE CITED

Johnson, RW. 2004. South Africa. *The first man, the last nation*. Johannesburg & Cape Town: Jonathan Ball.

### NEGOTIATING AFRIKANER WHITENESS DURING FAMILY CONVERSATIONS IN A RURAL EASTERN CAPE CONTEXT: ENACTING HYBRID IDENTITIES IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

Charl Alberts (Department of Psychology, University of Fort Hare)

In recent years, research interest in re-defining Afrikaner identities in the post-apartheid context has increased. However, only a limited number of studies on Afrikaner youth identities have been conducted. This paper focuses attention on a recent study that was undertaken to investigate how school-going Afrikaner adolescents and their parents are talking about what it means to be Afrikaans and 'white' in post-apartheid society. Nine Afrikaner families, consisting of both parents and their adolescent offspring, were invited to take part in focus group discussions about their 'white' Afrikaner identities. The construction of youth identities was conceptualised from a discursive and rhetorical (Billig 1996) point of view, as well as from a dialogical, self-theoretical perspective as formulated by Hubert Hermans et al. Hermans (2001) conceptualises self and identities as multi-voiced, dialogical and embedded in social, cultural and historical contexts. This perspective enables scholars to understand the complexity and diversity of voices or identity responses, as well as the conflicts and contradictions emerging in a rapidly changing social context like present-day South Africa. The analysis revealed that multi-voiced Afrikaner young people enacted heterogeneity of identities of whiteness and Afrikanerness in dialogue with their parents. This paper discusses the findings in terms of what Hermans and Agnieszka Hermans-Konopka (2010) call

the emergence of a 'third position'. Afrikaner adolescents seem to develop voices of whiteness that can be interpreted as an integration between apartheid-style Afrikaner whiteness and the Other in the extended self. These new voices or identities of Afrikaner whiteness can also be viewed as hybrid identities and draw from discursive and ideological resources encountered while embedded in desegregated contexts, mostly at school. Discursive material is presented to illustrate these findings.

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## VOLKSMOEDER ORDENTLIKHEID IN POSTAPARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: THE (RE)MAKING OF A SUBALTERN WHITENESS

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This paper is based on an analysis that explores (dis)continuities in identifications in post-apartheid South Africa, with a particular focus on postcolonial subjectivities at the intersections of gender, sexuality, race and class. Such identitary processes are approached through the lens of *ordentlikheid* — an ethnicised respectability — with the paper positing it as a mode for manufacturing, organising and regulating relations of gender, sexuality, class and race among Afrikaans-speaking 'whites'. In particular, this study investigates how *ordentlikheid* (re)animates or disrupts normative *volksmoeder* white, middle class heterofemininity. Examining 'Afrikaner' identity through the lens of *ordentlikheid* surfaces a co-generative rela-

tionality: Afrikaner identity works as a subaltern whiteness at a mutually productive interface with the normative whiteness of white English-speaking South African (WESSA) identity. Historically, ordentlikheid was a mode to recuperate 'the Afrikaner' from its British figuring as "an inferior or degraded class of colonist" (Keegan 2001:460), "uncivilised Afrikaner savages with a thin white veneer" (Barber 1999:18). The volksmoeder (Brink 1990) signifier served as a nodal point for middle class, white, heterofeminine respectability in the production of an 'Afrikaner femininity' from the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and throughout official apartheid. Discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe 1990; Laclau 1990; Carpentier & Spinoy 2008; Smith 1998) is applied to analyse texts from a media source, focus group research and individual in-depth interviews among subjects who identify as women, 'white', heterosexual, middle class and Afrikaans-speaking. The paper traces the discourses constructing white Afrikaans feminine ordentlikheid in an expanded post-apartheid democratic space, and the potentialities for subjectivities drawn from a radical democratic imaginary (Laclau & Mouffe 1990; Smith 1998).

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### PANEL 6: WHITENESS IN PRINT AND VISUAL CULTURE

### BONGOS AND BENEFICIARIES: BEING WHITE AND (NOT) TALKING ABOUT PRIVILEGE AND INEQUALITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN (WHITE) MEDIA

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Whiteness surfaces, every now and again, in the South African media as a very vexed issue. And when it does, a media flurry ensues around a person's actions or statements; guilt and shame are raised for an airing, pronouncements are made about privilege, benefits and the proper place of the apartheid past and then the discussion (often very heated and occasionally very abusive, especially in its online form) re-enters a hiatus. We do not seem capable of sustaining a conversation about white privilege in post-apartheid South Africa or finding the language in which to conduct it in a thorough, explored, listening and hearing manner, through the media. Some of the moments in the media I'd like to examine, which form these punctuations in our public life, are the 'I benefitted from apartheid' T-shirt made by Roger Young, the response from 'Bongo' (Beneficiary of the New World Order) Renate Cochrane and the sudden fame of philosopher Samantha Vice, who asked questions about shame, whiteness and reticence in an academic journal article made public. Linking these events to previous work I've done on accusations by politicians and commentators that the elite, mainstream media in South Africa continue to be 'white' and behave 'white', I ask questions about the possibility of creating a sustained, open, public space in which such conversations can be held and which allows for both speaking and hearing. Theoretically I draw on Susan Bickford's work on political listening. Bickford provides suggestive concepts and ideas about speaking across difference and understanding both the 'who' and the 'what' of the speaker's identity. This listening is a democratic practice that takes the airing of conflict and vested interests seriously but reaches beyond voice and understanding into acts of citizenship.

## NATIONALISM CLOAKED AS ANTI-NATIONALISM AND ANTI-NEO-LIBERALISM: A CRITIQUE OF THE VRYE AFRIKAAN PROJECT

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The Afrikaner campaign of the early 1990s for the continued official status of the Afrikaans language in a post-apartheid South Africa was followed after 1994 by a language rights campaign which has, since then, continued to increase in intensity. Initially, white Afrikaans language activists promoted the idea of 'a racially inclusive Afrikaans language movement'. It was a 'politically correct' language maintenance project for a discredited ethnic identity. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, a mainstream segment of the Afrikaans language movement was identifying itself as an Afrikaner movement aimed at the remobilisation of an Afrikaner identity and history (i.e., a nationalist movement). Needless to say, this so-called new Afrikaner project was bound to alienate black support. To Christo van der Rheede (Cape Times 2009), the latest 'white Taalstryd' was reactionary, parochial and "embroiled in controversy and hidden agendas". This paper evaluates the validity of Van der Rheede's claim. Employing thematic content analysis, it reconstructs the ideology/philosophy of the 'new' Afrikaner movement as it has been expounded in the pages of Die Vrye Afrikaan [The Free African] between 2005 and 2008. I demonstrate how the regular contributors to this monthly (and later bi-monthly) publication styled themselves as critics of the (alleged) individualism of liberalism, the consumerism of neo-liberalism and the imperialism of

'Afro-nationalism'. These ideologies were rejected in favour of civic republicanism and radical democracy: the new Afrikaner dream, as Danie Goosen (2005) once put it, was about "us becoming radical democrats". However – and this is the key contention of my paper – the position of the 'new' Afrikaners/*Vrye Afrikane* was anything but a radically leftist one. A critical discourse analysis reveals how the rhetoric of radical democracy was appropriated for an ethnocentric cause, and how the criticism of neo-liberal consumerism (the representation, also in cartoons, of the 'Afro-nationalist elite' as 'gluttonous') had old racist undercurrents.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS OF POOR AFRIKANERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: REPRESENTATIONS AND CONTESTATIONS

Thomas Blaser (University of Stellenbosch)

Why have images of poor white Afrikaners elicited so much interest at the beginning of this 21st century? A quick survey reveals a myriad of recent photographic projects that depict poor white Afrikaners, including Finbarr O'Reilly, Pierre Crocquette, Jodi Burch, Nadine Hutton, Jose Cendon, Ben Krewinkel and so on, and of course there are also the 'old masters', David Goldblatt and Roger Ballen, who started doing so some years ago. Poor white Afrikaners have a long history of drawing attention, as the most recent history on the topic by Edward-John Bottomley (2012) indicates. How can we explain these current representations of Afrikaners

### **PANEL 7: WHITE HISTORIES**

SOME SPECULATIONS ON THE HISTORY
AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF WHITES IN
APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: THEORY, AGENDAS
AND ETHICS

Neil Roos (University of the Free State)

in photography in South Africa and across the globe? Then and now, images of poor Afrikaners serve as a denunciation of the threat to and the decline of white civilisation, white people and the west - now in the context of transnational, global circulations of images of white poverty with the backdrop of an unsettling landscape of global economic decline and power shifts. At the same time, Afrikaners in popular culture and art are represented as ordinary people, even as fashionable and hip, with Afrikaans band Die Antwoord optimising the reworking of the 'poor white Afrikaner' in popular culture and Roelof Van Wyk depicting young Afrikaners as ordinary yet special. What these apparent conflicting images perhaps point to is to the difficulty of representing Afrikaners. This paper intends to bring these conflicting representations into conversation with each other and to probe how they can be used to gain new insights into the workings of whiteness.

This paper asks how historians might write 'new' histories of whites under apartheid. It asks further whether such histories may be positioned as radical (Eley 2005), and argues that critical whiteness studies as enunciated by David Roediger (2001) must perforce be historical (see also Gilroy 1991). For three decades, Marxist-inspired social history has been the major vehicle for radical history in this country. Adrift from the strong theoretical base necessary for enrichment and renewal, it has however been unable to pose the appropriate questions to develop a radical historiography of whites appropriate to the conditions of post-apartheid society. Following Deborah Posel (2010), I argue for an explicit act of re-theorising to break the taken-forgranted association of local social history with Marxism, and propose that new sources of theory may be drawn from the north and the south (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012), the mainstream and the margins, the academy and beyond. Historiographies of below need not be historiographies from below, and observations made by black critical voices including Sol Plaatje (1917) and Steve Biko (2004) suggest that a starting point for the history of apartheid-era whites might be the idea of a racial state, a concept that owes more to Michel Foucault than Karl Marx. Subaltern Studies, with its emphasis on the need to separate histories of power from those of capital, its transdisciplinary range and insurgent spirit, offers useful perspectives to explore the "souls undressed" (Du Bois 1999) of whites, within the bigger analytic frames of a racial state. Subalternity is a condition not a category, and I conclude by asking whether non-elite whites in South Africa may be considered subalterns, albeit 'subalterns of a special

### 'BOERE BRUTALISM': AFRIKANER NATIONALISM, ARCHITECTURE, AND THE IMAGINARY OF HIGH CULTURE, 1948-1976

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sort'. Consideration of this point is important for shaping the intellectual and political project of a new radical history of white folk and imagining pedagogies against essentialised whiteness.

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By the time the National Party came to power in South Africa in 1948, the architectural language associated with Afrikaner nationalism had been clearly articulated, and expressed in terms of volksargitektuur: a 'people's architecture'. As a concrete manifestation of political aspirations at a time when Afrikaner nationalism was asserting its political and cultural dominance, volksargitektuur made a claim for the authenticity of the modern Afrikaners' uniquely 'African' origins and their consequent right to sovereign nationhood. The quintessential example of this style, Gerhard Moerdijk's Voortrekker Monument, was inaugurated in 1949. Following so close on the heels of the National Party victory, it gave literal expression to the abstractions of politics and nation building and appeared to set the tone for future architectural projects of the Afrikaner state. By the time of the Soweto Uprisings in 1976, however, this language had shifted considerably. In the context of an ever-strengthening economy and burgeoning industrialisation, state-sponsored building projects had proliferated in the urban centres, but were now designed in a style that embraced the brutalism of the post-Second World War International Style with a fervour that bordered on the messianic. From civic centres to theatre complexes, airports, churches and provincial administration buildings, the architectural message of the 1960s was of a government that had 'arrived', and whose claims to progress and modernity were unassailable. With reference to examples of what one might call 'Boere Brutalism', I suggest in this paper that this self-conscious embrace of modernity was more than merely a response to the apartheid government's programme of modernisation and urbanisation: it was also linked implicitly to the

construction of a particular imaginary of white Afrikaner nationhood. This has profound implications for notions of what constituted Afrikaner high culture and the way in which it was officially mediated in architectural terms at the height of apartheid.

## DECLASSING WHITENESS: SOUTH AFRICA'S WHITE WORKING CLASS AN THE THREAT OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION

Danelle van Zyl-Hermann (Cambridge University)

Apartheid South Africa has been described as featuring 'colonialism of a special type' (CST): before 1994, the country displayed the characteristics of both an imperialist state and a colony, in which the white ruling class was both colonial power and bourgeoisie, and black colonial subjects were not only the colonial conquered but also to a large extent comprised the working class. CST has been criticised for assuming a uniformity of interest and experience among all colonially 'oppressed' people, and some analysts have cautioned that postcolonial theories risk perpetuating these theoretical inadequacies. In keeping with such critiques, this paper focuses on the subjectivities surrounding race, class and transformation articulated within the white working class – subjectivities framed in terms of whiteness. Occupying an economic position of both exploiter and exploited, the white working class upsets CST explanations in a similar manner to the black middle class or elite, but has received little attention in scholarship on South Africa's transformation. Starting in the late 1970s, when the Afrikaner labour-business-government alliance which underpinned the economic prosperity of the 1960s started to break down under pressure from black resistance, this paper follows the response of a white-only blue-collar trade union in the mining industry to the withdrawal of state support for working class privilege based on whiteness. This response includes a consciousness of being exploited by fellow whites, particularly Afrikaners,

as well as anxieties surrounding the apparent corruptibility of whiteness and the threat that industrial and social integration therefore poses. I will argue that what underlies these notions is the relative material vulnerability of this union's members vis-à-vis both other whites and black labour, and that, as democratisation gained momentum, this has resulted in a project of declassing whiteness which originates in white working class discourse and has been extended to all Afrikaners after 1994.

## WHO WAS A REAL WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN? THE SOUTH AFRICAN STATE, WHITENESS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Sally Peberdy (Gauteng City-Region Observatory)

It is usually assumed that until the 1990s, South African immigration policies were driven by anxieties about maintaining white supremacy. That they were used to counter the 'black peril' is indisputable. But this does not explain why successive South African governments were so selective, at times to the point of almost total restriction, about white immigration. Why were some whites more acceptable than others, and how did the state define who was white? The practices of immigrant inclusion and exclusion act as a lens through which changing constructions of nationhood and national identity and therefore whiteness by the South African state can be explored. This paper explores specific moments or episodes in South Africa's immigration history where changing visions or constructions of white national identity are revealed, and shows how the definitions of whiteness and white national identity were both flexible and contested. These include restrictions on the entry of East Europeans in the 1920s, Jewish immigrants from the 1920s to the post-war period, Englishspeaking immigrants in the 1950s and southern Europeans in the 1960s. The paper concludes with a short reflection on the relationships between state constructions of national identity and race in contemporary immigration policies.

### PANEL 8: WHITE MEN AND MANHOOD

### LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

Tommaso M Milani & Ella Kotze (University of the Witwatersrand)

In the wake of South Africa's transition to democracy, Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron (1995:5, emphasis added) stated, "Asserting a lesbian or gay identity in South Africa [...] is a defiance of the fixed identities – of race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality - that the apartheid system attempted to impose on us". Without downplaying the importance of the historical moment of these statements, the question that needs asking is whether asserting a gay/lesbian identity is actually an act of insubordination against identities inherited from the past or is instead a performance that may reproduce the status quo. In order to understand whether, and if so how, same-sex desire might be bound up with the reproduction and/or defiance of different axes of difference, this paper will bring under investigation a series of interviews conducted with fifteen white, middle class South African men aged 20-45, all of whom desire and/or have sex with other men. Employing critical discourse analysis, the paper will illustrate how the discursive construction of race in the interviews is bound up with several other axes of social categorisation. Essentially, the disavowal of blackness in talk about same-sex desire is a subtle way through which the white men in the study discursively construct a 'superior', 'more educated' and 'more civilised' 'Self' in opposition to an 'uneducated', 'inferior', 'culturally different' black 'Other'. Hence, race still seems to be a key element structuring same-sex desire in post-apartheid South Africa. What counts as 'normal' and 'acceptable' sex has a clear racial layering in that it implies erotic practices between individuals of the same race. This in turn reproduces the deeply ingrained process of intimate self-regulation which was forged through the apartheid ideology of racial segregation.

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# AFRIKANER NOSTALGIA, ABJECT MANHOOD, AND HIP HOP HYBRIDITY: MARKING WHITENESS IN PERFORMANCE ON THE CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN STAGE

Megan Lewis (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

If we apply Judith Butler's work on gender performativity to the socio-cultural and political category of whiteness, we must consider the manner(s) in which whiteness gets constructed - and performed through a stylised repetition of acts that, through repeated enactment, become entrenched as the default, as the invisible and unmarked norm (complete with all its concomitant problematic power dynamics). In this paper, I examine a spectrum of marked and unmarked, visible and invisible, consciously self-reflexive and consciously nostalgic performances of whiteness in post-1994 South African theatre. Working through Leigh Boucher, Jane Carey and Katherine Ellinghaus's definition of whiteness, I locate my investigation in three contemporary performance sites: Afrikaner theatre impresario Deon Opperman's large-scale musical work at the (conservative) State Theatre that very strategically performs Afrikaner nostalgia and foregrounds white anxiety in a multiracial democracy; performance artist Peter van Heerden's performance installations in nontraditional spaces that actively critique the structures of white patriarchy by offering up the abject white male body for scrutiny and revision; and Durban-based white rapper Iain 'Ewok' Robinson's one man show Seriously?,

which has played for the past two years in Grahamstown, and self-reflexively negotiates a hybrid whiteness through the language and ideology of hip hop. I chart these three men's creative work through the following questions: how is whiteness 'performed' and 'enacted' on contemporary South African stages? How do these performances engage with the larger historic and political dynamics of this racially marked society? And what observations and options can theatre offer South Africans (and the world) by performing, or modelling, alternative realities (which is always an engagement with reality that can mirror, comment on, critique, or radically undermine the status quo)?

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### ENG/AFR: WHITE MASCULINITY IN TWO CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN FILMS

Nicky Falkof (Research Centre, Visual Identities in Art and Design, University of Johannesburg)

According to Daniel Conway (2004:214), during apartheid white masculinity was constructed within a frame of "violence, racism, dominance and control" while Jacklyn Cock (2001) draws connections between gun violence and white masculinity and Kobus du Pisani (2001:158) links Afrikaner manhood to "pure New Testament principles ... rigid austerity and strictness in conduct and morals". In the post-apartheid era, however, white masculinity has necessarily changed, if only in that its connection to patriarchal ideals of racial and gender dominance is no longer stated as a political imperative. This paper considers the way in which portrayals of white masculinity in contemporary popular culture suggest responses to this alteration in white male identity, revealing uncertainties about what it means

to be a privileged white man in South Africa today and considering the different ways in which English and Afrikaans manhood are being interrogated. It examines two contemporary feature films whose protagonists are middle-aged white South African men, both educated and financially stable, both of whom make sexual choices that are seen as deviant, with damaging consequences. Oliver Hermanus's Skoonheid (2011) is the story of Francois, a married Afrikaans man whose secret homosexual desires lead to obsession and crisis, while Barry Berk's Sleeper's Wake (2012) follows the bereaved John Wraith as he embarks on an affair with a troubled teenage neighbour. I use these films' portrayals of white men of a certain age to draw comparisons between Afrikaans and white English-speaking South African (WESSA) masculinity within a population group that came of age during apartheid and was at the frontline of the erosion of white privilege that occurred after 1994. I consider issues of whiteness, desire and identity in these films' portrayal of their flawed heroes, and contrast this to earlier interpellations of white South African men.

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A TWO-DAY INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOP EXAMINING THE CONSTRUCTION OF WHITENESS IN CULTURE, THEORY, POLITICS, SOCIETY, SPACE AND LIVED EXPERIENCE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

