

BOTH TEMPLE AND TOMB

***Difference, desire and death
in the sculptures of the
Royal Museum of Central Africa***

by WENDY ANN MORRIS

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF VISUAL ARTS
at the
University of South Africa
SUPERVISOR: DR E DREYER
JOINT SUPERVISOR: DR FJ POTGIETER**

November 2003

Summary

Both Temple and Tomb is a dissertation in two parts. The first part is an examination and analysis of a collection of 'colonial' sculptures on permanent display in the Royal Museum of Central Africa in Tervuren Belgium. The second part is a reflection on the author's own paintings, drawings and film and an examination of the critical potential of these images in challenging the colonial narratives of the RMCA.

Part I presents two arguments. The first is that European aesthetic codes have been used to legitimize the conquest of the Congo and to award sanction to a voyeuristic gaze. The second is that the organization of the sculptures of Africans (and European females) into carefully managed spaces and relationships results in the creation of erotically-charged formations that are intended to afford pleasure to male European spectators.

Part II examines the strategies used in *Re-Turning the Shadows* to disrupt (neo)colonial patterns of viewing that have become ritual and 'naturalized'. Against RMCA narratives that pay homage to the objectivity of science and research, the paintings and film present images that explore multiple subjectivities, mythologizing impulses, and metaphoric allusions.

Key Terms

Ethnographic museums, colonizing space and time, sanctioned eroticism, voyeuristic gaze, benevolence, Noble Savages, absent metaphors of violence, cannibal consumption, insurgent aesthetics, critical potential of visual images.

.....

Declaration

I declare that *Both temple and tomb: Difference, desire and death in the sculptures of the Royal Museum of Central Africa* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Wendy Ann Morris

.....

Contents

Preface	i
List of illustrations	vii

Part I: An analysis of European-made sculptures in the Royal Museum of Central Africa

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Colonized space, colonized time	11
Chapter 2: Sanctioned eroticism	37
Chapter 3: Benev(i)olence and the universalizing impulse	56
Chapter 4: 'Noble', and other 'useful' types of Savagery	69
Conclusion	85

Part II: Re-Turning the Shadows

Introduction	87
Chapter 5: 'Insurgent aesthetics' and <i>Re-Turning the Shadows</i>	91
Chapter 6: Critical structures	101
Chapter 7: Cannibal consumption and metaphors of violence in <i>Re-Turning the Shadows</i>	113
Chapter 8: Negotiating reception and identity: <i>A Royal Hunger</i>	121
Conclusion	127
Bibliography	129

.....

Preface

Both Temple and Tomb is a dissertation in two parts. The first part entails an examination and analysis of a series of 'colonial' sculptures on display in the Royal Museum of Central Africa (from here onwards referred to as the RMCA). The second part entails a reflection on my own paintings, drawings and film that have culminated in an exhibition, *Re-Turning the Shadows*. The two projects - the writing of the texts and the making of the images - have run parallel, feeding into and off each other. The paintings and drawings of *Re-Turning the Shadows* deal in metaphors and tropes that are grounded in the issues investigated in the research stage. The written analysis has benefited from the very close visual attention given to sculptural objects, images and display practices in the museum that was necessary for the making of my own images. The two parts of the project complement each other, valourizing both written and visual modes of analytic criticism.

The title of the dissertation draws on the metaphors of Temple and Tomb. To adherents of philosophies of Humanism and the cultural and moral superiority of Europe – in particular the Belgian colonizers of the Congo - the RMCA is a Temple to the glorification of Empire and the colonial project. To those who experienced the ruptures of this project – the colonized Congolese - and whose material culture and skeletons are on display here, the museum resembles a Tomb.

The RMCA contains metaphors that support the idea of the museum as a Temple in a religious sense. For one thing, it houses 'relics'. Parts of the tree under which the heart of Livingstone was buried are on display and listed as 'relics'. Since a relic is, according to the Oxford Paperback Dictionary, 'part of a holy person's body or belongings that is kept after his or her death as an object of reverence' (*Oxford Paperback Dictionary*. 1988. Sv 'relic'. Oxford: Oxford University Press.), it follows that Livingstone is considered a

holy person. As one of the 'major' explorers who 'opened up' central Africa to Commerce, Christianity and Civilization, it follows, too, that the imperial drive is being sanctified as a holy mission.

The design of the Rotunda, the entrance cupola of the RMCA, is reminiscent of a Baroque church in which the 'light of God' shines down through the glass dome upon the religious figures in the niches, and then down upon the human congregation on the ground. This spatial hierarchy of light is repeated in the Rotunda where the 'light of God' falls first upon the gilded allegories depicting Belgium's glorious conquest of the Congo, and then down upon the dull plaster figures of abject Black Africans¹ at ground level. It comes to rest on the image of a crown and a star that are inlaid in the very centre of the marble floor, on the spot where, in a Baroque church, the high altar would be placed². Representing the King and the Congo Free State, the star and the crown bind them together in the 'light of God'. This *ménage à trois* of Church, State and Crown (Saunders 2001a) has the effect of sanctioning the project of colonialism and the conquest of the Congo as divinely inspired.

In a secular sense the Rotunda is a Temple of desire. The combination of overtly sexualized Black female sculptures on display here, the homo-eroticism of some of the Black male sculptures, together with the lack of any sexual rivals to the White desirers, creates a sexually-charged atmosphere that is designed, in my view, to function as a powerful mood-enhancer to White male spectators. Scopophilic pleasure and the voyeuristic gaze are encouraged by the averted glances of the women depicted. Fantasies of complete power and authority over the colonized Other are given free reign.

Temples are built to glorify beliefs and lend legitimation to ideologies. The larger and more imposing that they are the greater, it would seem, their legitimating value: High Gothic cathedrals are one example, ethnographic-

colonial museums another. As Temples to Empire these museums were built to concretely demonstrate the cultural and moral superiority of 'Western' culture over those whose material culture they display. Ethnographic-colonial museums can be understood as celebrations of power over those they have conquered, and, by extension, as celebrations of power over life and death. Founded on very questionable assumptions about the 'naturalness' of Western imperial power, the concept of ethnographic-colonial and natural history museums quickly dissolves into one of strangeness and necrophilia.

The RMCA is a Tomb, a place of death. It is a repository of relics, of stuffed animals, of clothes removed from murdered bodies³, of skeletons, and of items dug out of burial sites. It is suffused by a taxidermal aesthetic in which death is displayed as life. The ability of the taxidermist to overcome death and to recreate an illusion of life normalizes the godlike powers of the expert. Life is displaced through the taxidermist's ability to re-present the living.

A Tomb is a site concerned with absence. The RMCA is a site of absences. Absent are any signs of the people whose material culture is displayed. Absent are any metaphors of violence to explain the processes by which the wholesale consumption of central Africa was made possible. Absent, too, is any acknowledgement of the fact that the Congo gained independence from Belgium rule almost fifty years ago. No hint of the Congo as a post-colonial state has entered the frozen time of this museum. It is this refusal on the part of the decision makers of the RMCA to move beyond a celebration of Empire that has been a motivating factor in the writing of this dissertation, and in the making of the film and paintings.

There is a very small body of critical literature focusing on the RMCA as a colonial museum (Asselberghs and Lesage 1999, Wastiau 2000, Saunders 2001a & 2001c, and Rahier 2003). There has been only one initiative to analyze the narratives of the museum through the work of artists

(ExitCongoMuseum 2000)⁴. While I have the highest regard for these critical interventions there is clearly still some work to be done in opening up the colonial discourses of the RMCA to investigation. There seemed to me to be space for an investigation that worked from the 'bottom' upwards, starting with the objects and moving 'outward' towards theory. In this dissertation, the theorizing on the meanings of these sculptures and their placement was the final stage of a process of research that began with examinations of the histories and oeuvres of the artists, the commissioning of the sculptures and the genealogies of the aesthetic codes that were used, as well as into the related historical chronologies of Belgian colonialism. In the visual part the film *A Royal Hunger* is the culmination of an extensive work period, of which the paintings and drawings that precede it are the trace.

It has been my intention, by dividing the investigation into a visual and a written component, to make an argument for the greater valorization of the power and persuasiveness of images as tools of de-construction and re-construction. Visual images have a sensual immediacy that is quite unrivalled by written texts. Where written ideas need to be argued sequentially, paintings and drawings can articulate ideas on many levels simultaneously. Without wanting to valorize one medium of communication over another I do want to draw attention to the rich possibilities of such interdisciplinary work.

The dissertation is divided into two parts, the first is an analysis of the sculptures in the museum, the second is a discussion of the visual work that came together as an exhibition entitled *Re-Turning the Shadows*.

Part I presents two arguments. The first is that European aesthetic codes have been used to legitimize the conquest of the Congo and to award sanction to a voyeuristic gaze. The second is that the organization of the sculptures of Africans (and European females) into carefully managed

spaces and relationships results in the creation of erotically-charged formations that are intended to afford pleasure to male European spectators.

Part I is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 examines the manner in which notions of time (modern time versus archaic time) and space (patriotic, masculine space versus domestic, feminine space) are used as strategies of colonial control. Chapter 2 examines the manipulation of aesthetic codes and the sanctioned eroticization of the colonial project. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the organization of the sculptures into two groups (those for inclusion in the Rotunda and those that are excluded) that reflect processes of Othering in representations of Africans. Chapter 3 looks into notions of universalism and considers the terms upon which Africans were drawn into a Belgian universe - and into the Rotunda. Chapter 4 examines the ambiguity of notions of Savagery. Representations of Noble Savagery are argued to be the preferred form of Savagery and, as such, to be included in the Rotunda. Representations of 'violent' Savagery, visualized as male, are argued to have a function in the RMCA, but not in the 'tamed' space of the Rotunda.

Part II is a discussion on the body of visual work exhibited as *Re-Turning the Shadows*. Chapter 5 is an examination of the strategies used to disrupt (neo)colonial patterns of viewing that have become ritual and 'naturalized' in Belgium. Through the tactics of an 'insurgent aesthetic', (neo)colonial imagery is revalorized by a process of inversion or regurgitation. Chapter 6 examines how the structure of the film and the paintings and drawings are in themselves a means of criticism. The trope of the palimpsest is used as both a means of constructing the film and as a means of informing its content. Chapter 7 discusses metaphors of consumption and violence that are used in *Re-Turning the Shadows*. Through these metaphors *Re-Turning the Shadows* attempts to show how violence is intrinsic to the system of colonization. Where narratives of colonization in the RMCA project all violence away from Europe towards the violent Other, the paintings, drawings

and film deflect it back. Chapter 8 considers factors influencing the cultural reception of the film *A Royal Hunger*.

Notes

¹ Using terms such as Black or White, European or African, are highly problematic. European cannot be conflated with White, nor African with Black. These stereotypes are in full use in the RMCA and it is close to impossible to discuss the sculptures without applying the same distinctions. I have capitalized the terms, rather than setting them in inverted commas, to link them to other capitalizations in the text that denote mental or stereotypical constructions.

² With thanks to Barbara Saunders for this architectural reference. 'The entrance-cupola at the Africa Museum is redolent of a baroque church. Beneath the dome where transepts and nave would intercept, a crown motif is set in the floor where the high altar should be' (Saunders, B. 1999. Congo Vision. In *Academic anthropology and the museum: Back to the future*. Bouquet, M(ed). 2001. New York: Berghahn Books).

³ In the Commemoration Hall there is a garment from a 'Dervish' (Mahdist) on display that shows signs of blood stains.

⁴ Chéri Samba's commissioned painting *Réorganization* (2003) has only recently been exhibited. In this painting he depicts Pierre Wissaert's sculpture, *Leopard Man* (Figure 16)(1913), being hauled out of the museum by disgruntled Africans.

List of Illustrations

- Figure 1 Arsène Matton, *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (1920).
Gilded bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA, Tervuren.
Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 2 Arsène Matton, *Belgium grants civilization to the Congo* (1920).
Gilded bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA, Tervuren.
Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 3 Arsène Matton, *Slavery* (1920).
Gilded bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA, Tervuren.
Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 4 Arsène Matton, *Belgium grants prosperity to the Congo* (1920).
Gilded bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA, Tervuren.
Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 5 Artist unknown, *Captain Bia*.
Bronze. Commemoration Hall, RMCA. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 6 Artist unknown, *J. Van de Velde*.
Bronze. Commemoration Hall, RMCA. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 7 Herbert Ward, *The Idolmaker* (1906).
Polychromed plaster, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (2001).
- Figure 8 Arthur Dupagne, *The Warrior* (c1935-1950).
Bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 9 Godfried Devreese, *Justice* (c1920-30).
Gilded bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (2000).
- Figure 10 Paul DuBois, *Charity* (c1920-30).
Gilded bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (2000).
- Figure 11 Herbert Ward, *The Chief of the Tribe* (1908).
Polychromed plaster, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 12 Arthur Dupagne, *The Rower* (c1935-1950).
Bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Official postcard, RMCA.
- Figure 13 Arthur Dupagne, *The Labourer* (c1935-1950).
Bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 14 Arthur Dupagne, *Man at his Toilet* (1936).
Bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (1999).

- Figure 15 Charles Samuel, *Vuakusu-Batetela defends a Woman from an Arab* (1897). Polychromed plaster and real artifacts, life-size. Rear entrance hall, RMCA. Photo: (left) Morris (2001), (right) Official postcard, RMCA.
- Figure 16 Pierre Wissaert, *The Leopard Man of Anioto* (1913). Polychromed plaster and real artifacts, life-size. Ethnographic Hall, RMCA. Photo: Morris (2001).
- Figure 17 Julien Dillens, *The Porters* (1897). Polychromed plaster and real artifacts, life-size. Rear entrance hall, RMCA. Photo: Morris (2001).
- Figure 18 Frans Huygelen, *Belgium seeks new fields of labour* (c1920-1930). Gilded bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 19 Arthur Dupagne, *Dancer with Drum* (c1936). Bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 20 Ernst Wijnants, *Fruitful/Fertile Africa* (c1920-30). Gilded bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 21 Oscar Jespers, *Negro Woman with Jar* (1923). Gilded bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 22 'Girl of the Titu Tribe', photograph from *Le Congo Belge*. (Boyens 1982:96, fig 65).
- Figure 23 Charles Samuel, *Vuakusu-Batetela defends a Woman from an Arab* (detail)(1897). Polychromed plaster and real artifacts, life-size. Rear entrance hall, RMCA. Photo: Morris (2001).
- Figure 24 Arsène Matton, *Slavery* (detail)(1920). Gilded bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA, Tervuren. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 25 S. de la Vallée after Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Madame de Pecoil and an Admirer* (1706). Engraving. (Massing 1995 :193, figure 63).
- Figure 26 Wendy Morris, *Largesse: Slavery* (2000). Oil on canvas, 200cm x 100cm.
- Figure 27 Wendy Morris, *Largesse: Belgium grants support to the Congo* (2000). Oil on canvas, 200cm x 100cm.
- Figure 28 Wendy Morris, *Largesse: Belgium grants civilization to the Congo* (2000). Oil on canvas, 200cm x 100cm.
- Figure 29 Wendy Morris, *Largesse: Belgium grants prosperity to the Congo* (2000). Oil on canvas, 200cm x 100cm.

- Figure 30 Arthur Dupagne, *Fight with a Snake* (1936).
Bronze, life-size. Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 31 Pierre Wissaert, *The Leopard Man of Anioto* (1913).
Polychromed plaster and real artifacts, life-size.
Ethnographic Hall, RMCA. Photo: Morris (2001).
- Figure 32 Herbert Ward, *A Congo Artist* (1910).
Polychromed plaster, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (2001).
- Figure 33 Herbert Ward, *The Fire Maker* (1911).
Polychromed plaster, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA. Photo: Morris (2001).
- Figure 34 'Goed nieuws, Muganga' from *Tin Tin in Africa*.
(Hergé 1946:30).
- Figure 35 'Dit mijn pak zijn' from *Tin Tin in Africa*
(Hergé 1946:31).
- Figure 36 'Help!...' from *Tin Tin in Africa*
(Hergé 1946:31).
- Figure 37 'Genade, massa Blanke' from *Tin Tin in Africa*
(Hergé 1946:32).
- Figure 38 Angelo Bronzino, *Allegory of Time and Love* (1503-1572).
National Gallery, London. (Berger 1972:54).
- Figure 39 Wendy Morris, *Shot for the Pot* (2001).
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 150cm x 100cm.
- Figure 40 Bockor advertisement, billboard, Kortrijk. Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 41 'Megafestatie '99', advertisement on bus, Kortrijk.
Photo: Morris (1999).
- Figure 42 Wendy Morris, *Preservatives: jellied (severed object)*(2000).
Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.
- Figure 43 Wendy Morris, *Preservatives: canned (museum-piece)*(2000).
Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.
- Figure 44 Wendy Morris, *Preservatives: corned (master-piece)*(2000).
Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.
- Figure 45 Wendy Morris, *Sweeteners: moulded (chocolate hand from Antwerp)*
(2001). Oil on canvas, 70cm x 70cm.

- Figure 46 Wendy Morris, *Sweeteners: boiled (The Sole Genuine Caramella)* (2001). Oil on canvas, 70cm x 70cm.
- Figure 47 Wendy Morris, *Sweeteners: clenched (Freedom of the 90s)* (2001). Oil on canvas, 70cm x 70cm.
- Figure 48 Wendy Morris, *Sweeteners: cubed (A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down)*(2001). Oil on canvas, 70cm x 70cm.
- Figure 49 Wendy Morris, *Sweeteners: distilled (Rhum Brun Superieur)*(2001). Oil on canvas, 70cm x 70cm.
- Figure 50 Wendy Morris, *The Great Power Line (Negrita)*(2001). Charcoal and pencil on paper, 100cm x 65cm.
- Figure 51 Wendy Morris, *The Great Power Line (Negro)*(2001). Charcoal and pencil on paper, 100cm x 55cm.
- Figure 52 Wendy Morris, *The Great Power Line (Afrika)*(2001). Charcoal and pencil on paper, 100cm x 65cm.
- Figure 53 Wendy Morris, *Backscratcher*. Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002). Charcoal on paper, 100cm x 75cm.
- Figure 54 Wendy Morris, *Backclapper*. Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002). Charcoal on paper, 100cm x 75cm.
- Figure 55 Wendy Morris, *Voor de Goede Keuken*. Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002). Charcoal on paper, 100cm x 75cm.
- Figure 56 Wendy Morris, *Voor de Goede Keuken*. Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002). Charcoal on paper, 100cm x 75cm.
- Figure 57 Wendy Morris, *Ingredients: Eyes* (2001). Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.
- Figure 58 Wendy Morris, *Ingredients: Heart* (2001). Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.
- Figure 59 Wendy Morris, Wendy Morris, *Ingredients: Guts* (2001). Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.
- Figure 60 Wendy Morris, *Gift for Congo (back view)*(2001). Oil on canvas, 67cm x 100cm.
- Figure 61 Wendy Morris, *Gift for Congo (front view)*(2001). Oil on canvas, 67cm x 100cm.
- Figure 62 Wendy Morris, *Voor de Goede Keuken*. Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002). Charcoal on paper.

- Figure 63 Wendy Morris, *Voor de Goede Keuken*. Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002). Charcoal on paper.
- Figure 64 Wendy Morris, *Voor de Goede Keuken*. Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002). Charcoal on paper.
- Figure 65 Wendy Morris, *General Necessity*. Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002). Charcoal on paper.
- Figure 66 Wendy Morris, *General Necessity*. Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002). Charcoal on paper.

.....

Part I

Analyses of sculptures representing Africans and Europeans on permanent display in the RMCA.

Introduction

There are two arguments running through Part I. The first is that the artists who produced the sculptures in the RMCA have employed European aesthetic codes to legitimize the colonial project and to award sanction to the voyeuristic gaze. The second is that through the selective grouping and placement of the sculptures – something done not by the artists but by museum staff - representations of Black Africans (and White European females) are further manipulated to create 'agreeable' formations that encourage fantasies of complete power and control by colonizers over colonized.

On display in and around the Royal Museum of Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium, are over thirty sculptures made by fifteen European artists. They were commissioned or acquired by the RMCA during a period of one hundred years that began with the founding of the museum in 1897¹. Most represent Africans, some of whom are shown alone, some in groupings with other Africans, and still others in groupings with Europeans. The remainder are military busts honouring the Belgian 'pioneers' of the early colonizing period, a larger-than-life, full-length, sculpture of Leopold II, and two pieces entitled *Justice* and *Charity*. Both depictions of Belgians and Africans are taken as the subject of this dissertation, for representations of the Other and of the Self are locked together in the construction of identity. Identities are

Figure 1
Arsène Matton, *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (1920).
Gilded bronze, life-size. RMCA, Tervuren.
Photo: Morris (1999).

forged out of reactions to other peoples, born out of the need or desire to define Ourselves in relation to Them.

An analysis of these sculptures and the contexts in which they were produced require of the researcher an interdisciplinary approach. To attempt this study through a single disciplinary approach - art historical, anthropological or historical - would be to ignore the intertextuality of issues that surround these sculptures. Instead I would locate this study within the emergent field of 'visual culture' in which the focus (like that of cultural studies or queer theory) crosses the borders of traditional academic disciplines.

In line with the aim of visual culture theorists (Rogoff 1999, Mirzoeff 1999, Stam 1999, Shohat 1999) to constitute a new, postdisciplinary, object of knowledge, I have situated this investigation at the point where a number of critical fields of study merge, converge and diverge. 'Africanist' discourse, art historical studies, the interrogation of European aesthetic reasoning, and studies into the articulated categories of gender, race and class, are all brought to bear on the analysis of these sculptures as displays of colonial power.

In the first instance, the European-made sculptures of Africans and Europeans both constitute and are constituted by 'Africanist' discourse. Christopher Miller (1986:5) in *Blank Darkness: Africanist discourse in French* defines 'Africanism' as a discourse 'born and nurtured in Europe of European ideas and concerns'. Like Edward Said's theorizations of 'Orientalism', 'Africanism' can be conceived of as a description of the world that 'generates concepts and categorizes thought until it becomes a massive screen between subject and object' (Miller 1986:15). Said (1978:3) described Orientalism as 'the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient - dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by

Figure 2
Arsène Matton, *Belgium grants civilization to the Congo* (1920).
Gilded bronze, life-size. RMCA, Tervuren.
Photo: Morris (1999).

teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient'. Similarly, 'Africanism' is the corporate institution for dealing with Africa.

Both Said and Miller argue for the usefulness of Michel Foucault's notion of a 'discourse', as described in *The archaeology of knowledge* (1972), for identifying Orientalism and Africanism. Said (1978:3) contends that without examining Orientalism as a discourse it is impossible to understand the systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage or produce the Orient. My concern with the sculptures at Tervuren is to examine how they have been formed by, and how they re-form, Africanist discourses within the parameters of Belgian colonial history.

In the second instance, the sculptures are produced by artists who draw on a European artistic heritage. European aesthetic codes are employed to legitimize the colonial impulse and to sanction a voyeuristic gaze. The attentive, adoring African figure in Arsène Matton's *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (1920)(Figure 1) is a latter-day version of the Black slave page serving a White female 'mistress'. Deliberately or not, it echoes four hundred years of European painterly traditions in which the depiction of African servants or slaves attending to European female figures has been a regular feature. The figural group of which the African figure is a part draws on Greek statuary, Christian iconography of the ecstatic, and nineteenth-century Abolitionist imagery. Arthur Dupagne's series of African Primitives dimly echoes a Romantic longing for a return to Paradise. Yet, unlike the implicit criticisms of the Romantic movements in which the aesthetic was used as a form of oppositional ideology, these sculptures harbour no criticism of 'civilized' Europe. Rather, the sculptures in the Rotunda appeal to the putatively 'disinterested' realms of European aesthetic reasoning in order to legitimize their displays of power and authority as both moral and beautiful.

Figure 3
Arsène Matton, *Slavery* (1920).
Gilded bronze, life-size. RMCA, Tervuren.
Photo: Morris (1999).

An examination of the codes of this aesthetic sanction dispels all notions that art can ever operate in a 'disinterested' realm, that it can ever be autonomous and autotelic on the one hand, or universal and transcending geography on the other. The third field of critical study upon which this analysis draws is that of studies into the social production of art (Wolff 1988) and emerging studies into the 'colour-coding' of art theory and the complicity of aesthetic reasoning with White, male, bourgeois self-interest (Taylor 1998). Both areas of study have provided important insights into the role of aesthetics in the support of colonial ideologies.

Marxist sociologist Janet Wolff (1988:119) argues that the ideas, beliefs, attitudes and values expressed in all cultural products are ideological in the sense that they are always related 'in a systematic way to the social and economic structures in which the artist is situated'. She argues that 'ideas and beliefs proposed as value-free or non-partisan are merely those ideas which have assumed the guise of universality, perceiving as natural social facts and relations which are in fact historically specific' (Wolff 1988:119). Wolff asserts that ideology is never directly reflected in a painting or novel but is always mediated by the 'aesthetic code'(1988:119). Clyde Taylor (1998:14) argues that this 'aesthetic code' functions to unite, rationalize and legitimate spheres of the ideological, namely the moral, political, legal, religious, economic and philosophical. To Taylor the aesthetic domain can be considered the 'very paradigm of the ideological' (Taylor 1998:14). Extending these assertions to an analysis of the sculptures of the Rotunda, I shall argue that European notions of the aesthetic are ethnic and gendered.

The fourth area of study that has a crucial bearing on this analysis is a growing field of interest in the 'articulated categories' (McClintock 1995:4) of gender, race and class. Anne McClintock argues that race, gender and class are not distinct realms of experience that exist in isolation from each other but rather 'articulated categories' that come into existence '*in and through*

Figure 4
Arsène Matton, *Belgium grants prosperity to the Congo* (1920).
Gilded bronze, life-size. RMCA, Tervuren.
Photo: Morris (1999).

relation to each other'(1995:5, her italics). I shall be examining the relationships set up, through the grouping of the sculptures, between White and Black women, between White men and women, between Black women and White men and between Black and White men, in order to examine the tensions within, as well as between, colonizing and colonizer groups.

Part I is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter it is argued that conceptions of time and space are 'colonized' in the RMCA. Reading the sculptures through their spatial organization I shall argue that space and time in the RMCA are gendered and racial. Black men and women are grouped with White women into spaces that are 'feminized' and archaic. In contrast, busts of White men are displayed in separate spaces that are constructed as 'masculine' and 'modern'. Notions of time and space, when applied to Africa, are conflated. Travelling across geographical space from Europe towards Africa is envisioned as travelling backwards across time. The spaces into which Black men and women, and European women, are organized are domesticated through the introduction of children, the representation of women as mothers, and the depiction of Black males as 'less-than-adult' and subordinate to the White authority figures.

Chapter 2 explores the sanctioned eroticization of the colonial project. The voyeuristic gaze is given state, scientific and aesthetic sanction. I shall be examining how these sanctions are complicit with modes of domination.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the ideologies behind the organization of the sculptures into two groups - those for inclusion in the Rotunda and those for exclusion. Chapter 3 looks into notions of universalism and assimilation and considers the terms upon which Africans were admitted into a Belgian universe - and into the Rotunda. The symbolic violence of reducing Africans to European is examined. Chapter 4 examines the ambiguity of notions of Savagery. Representations of Noble Savagery are viewed as 'manageable',

even desirable forms of Savagery and, as such, worthy of inclusion in the Rotunda. Representations of 'violent' Savagery can be seen to have a useful function in the RMCA, but not in the 'tamed' space of the Rotunda.

The importance of the Rotunda as a mediating space in the RMCA needs to be stressed. It is through here that visitors enter and leave the museum. The space is impressive in its grandeur, in its marbled walls and inlaid floors. The dimly lit ethnographic halls that lead off from here are dull in comparison. It is in the Rotunda that representations of Belgium and the Congo are brought together into a very definite hierarchy of nations and peoples. It is here that visualizations of Belgium as an imperial power are shaped. It is in the sculptures of the Rotunda that fantasies of complete power and authority over a colonised Congo and its people, are encouraged.

Notes

¹ The first museum was founded in the Palace of Colonies in Tervuren after the *Brussels-Tervuren International Exposition* in 1897. In 1910 the collections were moved to the new museum that was inaugurated by Leopold II's successor Albert I.

Chapter 1: Colonized space, colonized time

In this chapter it is argued that the manner in which the sculptures of Africans and European women are separated from European men and grouped into different areas of the RMCA reflect colonial manipulations of time and space as a means of Othering and as a strategy of control.

The Rotunda displays figures of African men and women, and European women. The representations of the Black women are eroticized, those of the White women are figures of bland respectability. Black men are represented as degenerate, emasculate, infantile or atavistic. The single White male figure in the Rotunda is a Christian Catholic priest, and a figure of spiritually motivated celibacy. Separated from this group and displayed in a marginal space at the rear entrance of the museum are a number of sculptures depicting African males who, it will be argued, project either psychological self-awareness or self-sufficiency. The Commemoration Hall is given over to representations of King Leopold II and the military 'heroes' of the colonization.

Through strategies of inclusion and exclusion, these three rooms – the Rotunda, Commemoration Hall and rear entrance hall - and the sculptures within them are organized in such a way as to reflect and reinforce colonial politics of inclusion and exclusion. The selective grouping of the sculptures of abject, infantilized or emasculated Black men placed together with Black and White women establishes a 'femininized' space in the Rotunda. The patriotic, medalled and militarized busts of White males keeping their own company in the Commemoration Hall establishes a 'masculinized' space.

Through an examination of these 'femininized' and 'masculinized' spaces, and the third unresolved space at the rear of the museum, it will be argued that conceptions of modernity and historically-specific, teleological time are

Figure 5
Artist unknown, *Capt. Bia*.
Bronze.
Commemoration Hall, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

Figure 6
Artist unknown, *J. Van de Velde*.
Bronze.
Commemoration Hall, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

reserved for male Europeans. African men and women, and European women, in contrast, are relegated to time 'out of time', a conception of time as premodern, prehistoric, archaic, and unchanging. In the RMCA space and time are conflated and geographical distance away from Europe towards Africa is conceived of as distance backward in time. In this manner conceptions of time are manipulated to legitimize male European authority and control.

The Rotunda is a space domesticated through the use of family metaphors and the portrayal of female figures. Three gilded sculptures by Matton in the Rotunda are personifications of Belgium and Congo, and as such are representations of national (Belgian) identity. Through an examination of the artist's selective use of female figures and a celibate Catholic priest to represent the nation of Belgium, it will be argued that notions of nationalism, in the Rotunda, are domesticated and 'feminized'.

The Rotunda is a space of colonial desire. The presentation here of sculptures that depict sensual, naked and nearly naked Black women, posed frontally, and with gaze averted, and carrying such titles as *Fruitful Africa* and *Belgium seeks new fields of labour* has the effect of envisioning 'Africa' as a sensual female and as what Anne McClintock (1995:23) terms a 'porno-tropics for the European imagination'. The Rotunda is a space designed for the scopophilic pleasure of European voyeurs.

Reading the sculptures through their spatial organization, in which White women, Black women and Black men are placed together but separated from White men, allows for a shift away from views of colonial elites as homogenous communities of common interest. By this I mean that the focus shifts from how colonizers viewed the indigenous Other towards a consideration of the tensions within colonial views of themselves. Ann Stoler (1995) notes the ambiguous positions of women in colonial landscapes.

Figure 7
Herbert Ward, *The Idol Maker* (1906).
Polychromed plaster, life -size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (2001).

European women in the colonies experienced 'the cleavages of racial dominance and internal social distinction very differently than men for they were both subordinates in colonial hierarchies and active agents of imperial culture in their own right' (Stoler 1995:129). In the space of the Rotunda White women hold contradictory positions. They are both colonizers, as in Matton's *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (Figure 1) which depicts Belgium as an armed warriorress towering over a subordinate African male figure, and they are 'colonized', collapsed into one group with Black men and Black women through a denial of coevalness¹.

A comparative reading of the organization of the sculptures into these three spaces of the RMCA is intended to reveal asymmetries of gender and race, and to a lesser degree, class.

1.1 Modernity: a male reserve

The spatial organization of the sculptures reflects imperial constructions of time that are both racialized and gendered. The manner in which they are grouped encourages assumptions of historical time and modernity as a 'colony' that is reserved for European men. Coevalness - the sharing of the same time- and historical agency – the ability to act and to influence events in one's time - can be seen to be denied not only to colonized people but also to European women.

The people represented in the Commemoration Hall and the History Hall that leads into it are exclusively male and European. In the History Hall it is Stanley, Livingstone, and other explorers, who are depicted in paintings and photographs. In the Commemoration Hall it is Belgian 'pioneers'² (Figures 5 & 6) and Leopold II who are represented in busts, bas-reliefs, a full-length statue, and paintings and photographs. In this latter room the statues stand amongst a range of artefacts such as field guns and maps from the various

Figure 8
Arthur Dupagne, *The Warrior*(c1935-1950).
Bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

campaigns against the 'Arab'³ slave trade. In the History Hall the images of explorers and travellers are set amongst instruments of measurement used by travellers and land surveyors (and representing the latest in modern technology at the time of their use), suitcases, journals and other artefacts of travel. On the walls the maps of Africa, spanning an era of a thousand years, display 'scientific' developments in cartographic techniques.

The displays in these two rooms are premised on tropes of modernity and progress, tropes that are presented here as a White masculine reserve. It is alone in these two rooms that events are dated and people are named, and all those who are named are European and male. The commemoration plaques honouring those who died on Congo soil during the campaigns to eradicate the 'Arab' slave trade, during the world wars, or in the service of duty, mention no women. The only reference to a woman is an indirect one. Accompanying Stanley's battered suitcase is a notice stating that his wife had kept the suitcase under her bed after his death with instructions that it not be removed under any circumstances. Dorothy Tennant, known in her own right as a 'high society' painter (Hochschild 2000:96) appears in this space of 'masculine' memory as a wife, the unnamed keeper of a male fetish.

There are no references at all to specific Africans. The History Hall is subtitled in the visitor's guide with the extension: 'Europe and Central Africa', but history is clearly reserved here for Europe. No Africans are named in this room – nor, it must be added, anywhere else in the museum. The two images of Africans in this Hall are both of Cannibals. The one is a painting representing Stanley's fight with the Avisibba Cannibals in 1885. The other is an eighteenth-century lithograph depicting 'Jagas' who were, according to the accompanying description, Cannibal invaders of the ancient Kongo kingdom. Seen together, and as the *only* two images of Africans in this History Hall, the subtext might read 'Cannibals then, Cannibals now'. It seems to me to effectively conflate *Africa* with *Cannibal* as well as positing Cannibalism (for

Figure 9
Godfried Devreese, *Justice* (c1920-30).
Gilded bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (2000).

which we could substitute Savagery) as a continual, unchanging practice in Africa. It serves to exclude Africa and Africans from conceptions of evolutionary and progressive, linear time, which are held here to be the exclusive reserve of European males.

1.2 Time is a colony

'If Time is a colony, then nothing is free', writes Olu Oguibe (1993:4). It is the arrogance of 'occidental' discourse, he argues, that turns even the concept of history 'into a colony whose borders, validities, structures and configurations, even life tenure, are solely and entirely decided by the West'(Oguibe 1993:3). With his comments Oguibe draws attention to the manipulation of conceptions of time that became a means of controlling not only Africans in the colonies, but also women and the lower classes in industrial Europe.

Conceptions of time were radically altered in the mid-eighteenth century by the theories of Charles Darwin and the social evolutionists. Following the publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species* in 1858, social evolutionists began to conceive of a single, linear and evolving world history. Anthropologist Johannes Fabian (1983:11) shows how they first secularized and naturalized time – time was no longer related to Biblical chronicle time but rather based on records taken from the 'natural' world - and then spatialized it. Social Darwinists spatialized time by projecting an axis of time onto an axis of space. Time and geography became interlinked. Those peoples furthest geographically from Europe were set furthest back on an evolutionary scale. Time became a 'geography of social power' and a map from which to read a 'global allegory of 'natural' social difference (McClintock 1995:37).

The idea of a unified world history is riddled with paradoxes. Geographical difference across *space* is conflated with historical difference across *time*.

Figure 10
Paul DuBois, *Charity* (c1920-30).
Gilded bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (2000).

Travelling away from Europe is figured as travelling towards the past. In imperial narratives, progress across the space of empire is figured as a journey backward in time. The return journey to Europe, by extension, is seen as 'rehearsing the evolutionary logic of historical progress, forward and upward to the apogee of the Enlightenment in the European metropolis' (McClintock 1995:40). Anne McClintock (1995:40) argues that the 'threatening heterogeneity' of the colonies was disciplined and contained not as socially or geographically different from Europe – and thus equally valid – but as '*temporally* different'.

Africa was figured to inhabit both a different geographical space and a different time zone (1995:40). Within colonial theories of the late eighteenth century it came to be seen as a land 'out of time'. It is a conception rehearsed in the display spaces of the RMCA. A comparison of the Rotunda (that houses sculptures of Africans and European women) and the Commemoration Hall (that houses sculptures of European men) reveal time zones that are differently constituted. Africans and European women occupy, respectively, prehistoric and premodern time. European men occupy historical time.

It is through comparison that this becomes clear. The bronze and marble busts of colonial agents, captains and lieutenants, named and titled, that stand in the Commemoration Hall, are depicted wearing Congo Free State and Belgian army uniforms and medals. They are portraits of men in their prime⁴. The busts are set amongst photographs of specific campaigns and the technology and trophies of war – maps, field glasses, artillery guns and pistols, together with items taken off the bodies of slain opponents. Constituted through the combination of these objects in the space of the Commemoration Hall is a narrative of male European accomplishment and historical agency - the ability to act upon and influence the course of events in their time.

Figure 11
Herbert Ward, *Chief of the Tribe* (1908).
Polychromed plaster, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

Historical contextualization and agency are absent in the Rotunda. Africans and European women are set into a space that is prehistoric (in the sculptures of Africans) and premodern (in the sculptures of the European women). The people portrayed are 'types' rather than portraits of individuals. No-one is named. Few figures are clothed and of those that are their garments are not recognisable as belonging to any specific time, and certainly not to the time of the officers in the Commemoration Hall. Most African women are naked. European women are dressed in garments that function as sculptural devices through which the female body is shaped rather than as identifiable clothes. Amongst the African figures the only objects of technology to be seen are Iron-age - the wood and metal adze with which *The Idol Maker* (1906) (Figure 7) of Herbert Ward carves the wooden 'fetish' in his hands, and the wood and metal spear of *The Warrior* (c1935-54) (Figure 8) of Arthur Dupagne. The European figure of *Justice* (c1920-30) (Figure 9) by Godfried Devreese carries a set of scales and metal sword that are premodern - Greek or Roman - in design.

Sculptures of African males in the Rotunda depict them literally or figuratively as close to the earth, as people 'at one' with Nature. A chief crouches on his naked haunches on the ground, an artist doodles in the sand, a man kills a snake with a rock. There are no social groupings of Africans in the Rotunda and no hint of cultural formations. Whereas in the Commemoration Hall a sense of accomplishment and agency is established, here there is a sense of inaction. There is no hint or suggestion that Africans could stand up and take control of their environment. Africans are depicted here as Primitives, and Primitivity is depicted as Destiny, fixed and unchangeable.

European women in the Rotunda are not Primitive but Archaic, not entirely out of historical time as Africans are, but pushed back to the far reaches of premodernity. In their case, allegory and myth are used as strategies of distancing. An allegory is a story in which characters or events symbolize

Figure 12
Arthur Dupagne, *The Rower*(c1935-1950).
Bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Official postcard, RMCA.

some deeper underlying meaning. A myth is an invented or imaginary story, often originating in ancient times. Godfried Devreese's *Justice* (Figure 9), with her blindfold, scales and sword, is a reworking of a Roman theme and is both allegorical and tendentious in its placement in a colonial museum. The allegory of Justice is of fairhandedness. When set in a space that celebrates the colonization of the Congo, its implicit purpose is to persuade of Belgium's justness in its dealings with the Congo. Matton's Britannia-type figure in *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (Figure 1) is mythic. She is an amalgam of Roman and Christian iconography. The work as a whole - including the African figure who personifies the Congo, the baby (putti) at 'Belgium's' feet, and the title - is allegorical. Like *Justice* it is intended to symbolize Belgium's just and fair rule of the Congo. Both works set the women into an anterior time. Allegory and myth function regressively, making points about the present through metaphors of the very distant past.

European women and Africans are not depicted in the same time frames as European men. Rather they are confined to what McClintock (1995:40) describes as 'anachronistic space', space and time that are conflated and envisioned as prehistoric or premodern, atavistic and irrational. Denied coevalness, Africans and European women are effectively denied historical agency. Conceptions of time have been manipulated to favour European men.

1.3 Family time

In the Rotunda time is domesticated through the invocation of the trope of the family. Putative familial relations are set up between European 'parents' and African 'children'. Matton's priest in *Belgium grants civilization to the Congo* (1920) (Figure 2) is 'father' to the little 'pygmy'. The European female in *Belgium grants prosperity to the Congo* (1920) (Figure 4) is 'mother' to the African child in her arms. These hierarchical relationships reflect a

Figure 13
Arthur Dupagne, *The Labourer* (c1935-1950).
Bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

naturalization of a social hierarchy that has been transposed onto an imperial context.

Two aspects of the trope of the family are important here. The first is the institution of the family that was structured on the naturalization of the subordination of woman to man, and child to adult. This hierarchical model - that supposedly took the interests of all its members into account - was adapted as a means of envisioning social and racial hierarchies (McClintock 1995:39).

The second is the model of the Family Tree that came to represent historical progress as an evolving family, a 'Family of Man'. Within this figure human history is visualized as naturally teleological, demonstrating an organic process of upward growth that shows Europeans at the highest point of progress. The image of the tree came to represent, in spatial terms, a hierarchy of the world's discontinuous cultures (McClintock 1995:39).

The contradiction in the figure of the 'Family of Man', following McClintock (1995:39), is that while the idea of historical progress is naturalized in the Family Tree as an evolving 'family', women are entirely absent from the model. History is figured as familial but depicted without the presence of women. The effect of this is to disavow the role of women as historical agents and to relegate them to the realm of nature. While history is figured as familial, the family as an institution is seen as beyond history (McClintock 1995:39).

This contradiction is evident in the 'family' figures of the Rotunda. The 'parents' and 'guardians' in DuBois' *Charity* (c1920-30)(Figure 10) and the sculptures of Matton (Figures 1,2 & 4) depict women and a priest, yet both figures are denied historical time and historical agency. In the anachronistic space of the Rotunda, the family, as an organizing trope, is envisioned as beyond history, even as the antithesis of history. This has a very real

Figure 14
Arthur Dupagne, *Man at his Toilet* (1936).
Bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

advantage to imperial narratives for it 'naturalizes' imperial intervention, making the subordination of the Uncivilized to the Civilized as 'natural' as the subordination of children to parents in the institutional model of the family. Murderously violent change can be legitimized through this 'organic' model as the progressive unfolding of natural decree.

1.4. Nation time and nation space.

The Rotunda is a national space. Three of the key sculptural groups displayed here carry the name of Belgium in their titles, *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (Figure 1), *Belgium grants civilization to the Congo* (Figure 2), and *Belgium grants prosperity to the Congo* (Figure 4). Through an examination of the figures chosen to represent Belgium, the concept of the nation can be seen to be gendered.

National space is constructed within a paradigm of national time. Like the model of the family, this one too is contradictory. McClintock (1995:358) argues that the model of national time is constructed with a view to both the past and to the future. 'The mapping of Progress depends on systematically inventing images of archaic time to identify what is historically new about enlightened national progress'(McClintock 1995:358). The anomaly of time within nationalism – 'the veering between nostalgia for the past and the impatient sloughing off of the past' – is resolved, according to McClintock (1995:359), by viewing the contradiction in the representation of time as a natural division of gender.

Matton's figures of 'Belgium' (Figures 1,2 & 4) depict two women and a priest. The women are allegorical, mythic figures, backward-looking, inert and 'natural'. They do not inhabit history proper but exist, like colonized people, in an anterior time. The figure of the priest, is equally complex.

Figure 15
Charles Samuel, *Vuakusu-Batetela defends a Woman from an Arab* (1897).
Polychromed plaster and real artifacts, life-size.
Rear entrance hall, RMCA.
Photo: Left : Morris (2001).
Right : Official postcard, RMCA.

He is included in the Rotunda and nation time, I would argue, for two reasons. The first is that while he is symbolically patriarchal and spiritually 'potent', he is not represented as physically virile. His oath of celibacy, which is a denial of sexuality, associates him with the figure of the eunuch and 'femininizes' him. Secondly, and like the women in the Rotunda, priests are associated with authentic bodies of national tradition, Christianity in his case, and what McClintock (1995:359) terms, 'the conservative principles of continuity'.

In contrast to the priest and the European women who represent archaic time and the 'nostalgia for the past' (McClintock 1995:359) that is part of the construction of nation time, European men in the Commemoration Hall are figured as the progressive agents of national modernity and represent the 'impatient sloughing off of the past' (McClintock 1995:359). Adorned with medals from their king, linked to 'historic' campaigns, and set amongst the modern technology of their time, they embody nationalism's 'revolutionary principle of discontinuity' (McClintock 1995:359).

Nationalism's anomalous relation to time is managed as a natural relation to gender and race. Consigning women, celibate men and the colonized to antiquity cast Belgian male society, in contrast, in the light of progress and civilization. Using an insight by Walter Benjamin that a feature of nineteenth century industrial capitalism was 'the use of the archaic to identify what is historically new'⁵, McClintock makes the argument that images of 'archaic' time were systematically invoked to identify what was historically new and 'progressive' in European society (1995:40). In a slightly different vein (and without paying attention to the dimension of gender) Olu Oguibe backs McClintock's argument when he writes 'of the underlying necessity to consign the rest of humanity to antiquity and atrophy so as to cast the West in the light of progress and civilization'(1993:5).

Figure 16
Pierre Wissaert, *The Leopard Man of Anioto* (1913).
Polychromed plaster and real artifacts, life-size.
Ethnographic Hall, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (2001).

1.5 A space of desire

A comparison of sculptures exhibited in the Rotunda against those that are relegated to the marginal space of the rear entrance hall, reveals strategies of colonial control that are related to male colonialist fantasies of complete authority and erotic adventure. An examination of the sculptures that have been included against those that have been excluded reveals a process of selection to have been at work that favours images of sexualized women and emasculated men for the Rotunda. The Rotunda is constructed as an Africanist - as opposed to Orientalist - harem fantasy in which the desires of a male spectator are fuelled by the construction of an erotic narrative in which he is the dominant male.

Only those African men who present no challenge to the sexual supremacy of European males are included in the Rotunda. The African men that are exhibited here are depicted as abject or 'degenerate', denied adult status or projected into prehistory. The sculptures of Ward, Dupagne and Matton depict Black men as subordinate, lacking self-awareness, or engaged in 'archaic' activities. *The Warrior* (Figure 8) of Dupagne depicts a boy rather than an adult warrior. Ward's *The Chief of the Tribe* (1908) (Figure 11) is no leader-of-men but a passive, defeated figure. The 'pygmy' figure at the side of the priest (Figure 2), and the 'servant' on his knees in front of 'Belgium' (Figure 1) in Matton's gilded works, are figures subordinated through size, attitude and status, to the European figures. The potential for African male resistance to colonial authority is neutralized through these 'passive' or 'tamed' representations.

There are sculptures here that do depict virile young men. *The Rower* (c1935-1950)(Figure 12), the *Labourer* (c1935-1950)(Figure 13) and *Man at his Toilet* (1936)(Figure 14) by Dupagne, are representations of upright and

Figure 17
Julien Dillens, *The Porters* (1897) (detail).
Polychromed plaster and real artifacts, life-size.
Rear entrance hall, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (2001).

proud men, positioned or posed to best reveal their gleaming muscles and athletic torsos. Yet their sexuality is also held in check. They are depicted as 'decoratively' Primitive. Eroticized in a passive, homo-erotic manner, these Noble Savages depict men who, rather than acting upon their own desires, feed the desires of other men. They are no less objects of a voyeuristic gaze than the African women in the Rotunda.

The sculptures exhibited in the rear entrance hall and the Ethnographic Hall can be seen to have fallen short of the requirements demanded for inclusion into the Rotunda. For one thing, these African men are not 'tamed' and passive, and for another, this African woman, though sensually depicted, is not in need of European assistance. By making no allowances for representations of European authority, they are of little use in the construction of an erotic fiction in the Rotunda in which European men are the Alpha males, African men the subdued rivals and African women the available females.

In the rear entrance hall of the museum, the assertive young man in *Batetela defends a woman from an Arab* (1897)(Figure 15) is depicted as requiring no assistance, European or other, in the defense of his woman from the 'Arab' slaver. His engaged presence precludes the possibility of an active role for a colonizing male. There is neither space nor need for European intervention. In contrast, Matton's *Slavery* (1920)(Figure 3), which deals with the same theme and is included in the Rotunda, does suggest the need to rescue the young women from her tormentor. In this figural group the African defender has been removed, putting the (now much younger) woman at the mercy of the 'Arab' slaver. It effectively creates a space for the intervention of a rescuer, and, in the pornographic construction that it is, a space of fantasy for a European voyeur.

The figural groups in the Rotunda depict African males in 'inter-racial' relationships. The combination of an African 'pygmy' and a European priest, or an African servant and a European warrior-goddess, position Africans within a European universe and as subject to Europe. In the figural groups outside of the Rotunda, Africans are depicted without Europeans. The *Leopard Man of Anioto* (1913)(Figure 16) by Pierre Wissaert depicts one African man attacking another. *The Porters* (1897)(Figure 17), a work by Julian Dillens that stands in the rear entrance hall depicts two African men attempting to balance their loads. There is no allowance made in these works for representations of European authority.

Against an examination of the sculptures that are excluded, the sculptures included in the Rotunda can be seen to be creating and regulating a space of colonial desire, a 'porno-tropics for the European imagination' as McClintock (1995:23) has described it, in which the only authoritative male is the absent colonialist. The importance of the Rotunda as a mediating space should not be underestimated. The spectator must pass through it at both the beginning and the end of a journey through the museum and through 'Africa'. Through its grand, marbled splendour the Rotunda legitimizes narratives of colonial authority that are constituted here in the arrangement and selection of the sculptures exhibited.

Notes

¹ Johannes Fabian introduced the term 'denial of coevalness'. He describes it as 'a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse' (1983:31).

² The 'pioneers' are the early colonizers who 'opened' up and 'pacified' the Congo on the orders of Leopold II.

³ The slave-trade that operated in east Africa was controlled not by 'Arabs' as such but by moslem, Arabianized Africans.

⁴ The soldiers and colonial agents are shown in their prime and not in older age, which is when many of the portraits would have been commissioned.

⁵ Quoted in Buck-Morss, S. 1990. *The dialectics of seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades project*. Cambridge: MIT Press:127.

Chapter 2: Sanctioned eroticism

The focus in this chapter is on the manner in which the voyeuristic gaze is legitimized and sanctioned in the RMCA. The gaze of the voyeur is given colonial (state), scientific and aesthetic sanction. Many of the sculptures in the Rotunda were commissioned by state officials in the Ministry of Colonies and were intended to celebrate Belgium's conquest of the Congo. The overtly sexualized images that were produced on demand of these state officials – as will be demonstrated in an examination of the commissioning of Oscar Jesper's sculpture - amounts to a sanctioned eroticization of the colonial project. The display of such sexualized images of Africans in a museum that views its *raison d'être* as the furtherance of scientific knowledge about central Africa (Gryseels 2003:3) amounts to scientific sanction of the voyeuristic gaze. Aesthetic sanction is awarded by the encoding of these sculptures in conventions of European 'high art' that are identified as disinterested and detached from considerations of politics or self-interest. The aesthetic gaze, like that of the scientific or colonial, will be shown to be ethnic, masculinist and complicit with modes of domination.

There is an almost palpable eroticism in the sculptures of the Rotunda. It is apparent in the transgendered figure of 'Belgium' in Matton's *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (Figure 1), and in her relationship to the adorer whose arms stretch up across her thighs. It emanates from the adolescent body of the young girl caught in the grip of the slaver in Matton's *Slavery* (Figure 3), and is accentuated by the sculptor's twisting of her body towards the viewer to best display her breasts, pudenda and buttocks. The dancing woman in Frans Huygelen's curiously entitled *Belgium seeks new fields of labour* (c1920-1930)(Figure 18) lifts her arm above her head to accentuate the firmness of her breasts. The frenetic dancer in Dupagne's *Dancer with Drum* (c1936)(Figure 19); the woman carrying a basket overflowing with fruit in

Figure 18
Frans Huygelen, *Belgium seeks new fields of labour* (c1920-1930).
Gilded bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

Ernst Wijnants' *Fruitful Africa*¹ (c1920-30)(Figure 20); and the stylized pregnant woman in Oscar Jespers' *Negro Woman with Jar* (1923)(Figure 21), are all overtly sexualized images of African women. The taut muscular bodies of the men in Dupagne's set of Noble Savages (Figures 12 - 14) are no less erotic than those of the women.

2.1 State and scientific sanction

To examine state sanction of the voyeuristic gaze I am going to look at three works in the Rotunda that are celebrations of power and authority. The title of Frans Huygelen's *Belgium seeks new fields of labour* (Figure 18) makes reference to the economic desires of Belgium. In combination with the image of a sensual, naked African woman posed full-frontally for the visual pleasure of the viewer, it also makes a link made between sexual and expansionist desire. Arsène Matton's *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (Figure 1) is a celebration of Belgium's conquest of, and power over, the Congo. The sensual nakedness of the figures, 'Congo' and 'Belgium', and their close physical proximity, has the effect of eroticizing that power. Oscar Jespers' *Negro Woman with Jar* (Figure 21) was commissioned by a state official, Louis Franck, and was based on a photograph that appeared in a colonial journal, *Le Congo Belge* (Boyens 1982:95). An examination of the photograph and the differences between it and the Jesper's work are revealing of the interventions of power in the sanctioning of a colonial voyeuristic gaze.

The *Negro Woman with Jar* was commissioned in 1922 by a state official in the Ministry of Colonies, Louis Franck, for the museum at Tervuren. The brief appears to have been straightforward. Oscar Jespers' was shown a photograph of an African woman of the 'Titu tribe' and was instructed to make a sculpture of it (Boyens 1982:95-96). The photograph that appeared in 1921 or 1922 in *Le Congo Belge* - a publication of the Ministry of Colonies –

Figure 19
Arthur Dupagne, *Dancer with Drum* (c1936).
Bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

depicts a young, pregnant woman. She has her hands placed confidently on her hips and looks directly at the camera and, by extension, at the cameraman (Figure 22). Although Jespers has made few changes to the photograph, those that are made are telling of the construction of colonial voyeurism. The direct gaze in the photograph is gone in the sculptural work, and with it a negotiated relationship between viewer and viewed. Jesper's woman retains her frontal pose but looks away to the side. No longer challenged by her return gaze, the viewer is free to examine her body. The aversion of her glance amounts to an effacement of her subjectivity and she is reduced to an object of scopophilic pleasure. This objectivization is a principle device of pornography which plays 'on the localization of desire and the intensification of pleasure through the effacement of the subject' (Oguibe 1995:7).

The averted gaze of *Negro Woman with Jar* (Figure 21) is repeated throughout the Rotunda. Huygelen's female figure (Figure 18) looks upward, away from the viewer. *Fruitful Africa* of Ernst Wijnants (Figure 20) looks straight ahead, above the head of the viewer. The tormented young woman in Matton's *Slavery* (Figure 3), her body twisted in such a way as to make her breasts, pudenda and buttocks clearly available for scrutiny, has her eyes shut. The voyeurism implicit in the viewing of representations of bodies of colonized women, who's own gaze is firmly diverted, is sanitized of shame in the culturally approved setting of the museum. Here seeing is given scientific sanction as the pursuit of knowledge and cultural sophistication.

Frans Huygelen's sculpture of an African female (Figure 18) is entitled *Belgium seeks new fields of labour* (*België zoekt nieuw arbeidsvelden*). The French title of this work is *The colony awakes to civilization* (*Colonie s'éveillant à la civilisation*). Both titles link an eroticized image of an African woman to the colonial project. While the Dutch title makes the direct link between state expansionist policies and the sexual availability of the

Figure 20
Ernst Wijnants, *Fruitful Africa* (c1920-30).
Gilded bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

colonized woman, both visualize the colony as a sexualized and available female.

Conquest, too, is visualized through eroticized females. Matton's *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (Figure 1), commissioned by the Ministry of Colonies in 1911, is a display of military might that is presented in sensual female form. The ecstatic, erotically-charged relationship between the dominant female figure of 'Belgium' and the subordinate male figure of 'Congo' has the effect of fetishizing colonial power. In this sculpture Matton constructs an image of benign power in which conquest by force is substituted by a fiction of conversion by (sensual) persuasion. The military nature of conquest is substituted by a milder narrative of 'pacification' using the distraction of nipples and crotch to draw attention away from weapons and flags.

Sexuality and religious devotion compete. The male figure of the African reaches up to her in what could be described as either religious awe or sexual longing. This image of a sensual, naked African man, on his knees in front of an almost naked European woman/warrior/goddess, his arm crossing her groin and his hand resting on her thigh, both recalls and re-configures a number of visual traditions. It echoes sentimental eighteenth- and nineteenth-century abolitionist imagery of the slave, his chains now broken, kneeling in gratitude before the one who has helped him to freedom. It echoes, too, a Western European convention of placing an African servant in the background of paintings of European women, either as a darker foil to her lighter skin or as an indication of her (low) moral status. Yet where there was a certain distance maintained between those subordinate African figures and the dominating European ones, in Matton's reconfiguration of these conventions that distance has been diminished. The two figures are now in close physical contact. In this the image suggests an ecstatic adoration that

Figure 21
Oscar Jespers, *Negro Woman with Jar* (1923).
Gilded bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

is both sexual and religious. It has the effect here of further fetishizing 'Belgium' and the colonial power that it represents.

2.2 Aesthetic sanction

The voyeuristic gaze is granted scientific and state sanction through the conditions of acquisition and placement of these sculptures in a state run, 'scientific' institution. Displayed in the Rotunda, in a space designed to resemble the Salon settings of the late nineteenth century, and drawing on 'high' art conventions of the same period, the eroticism of the sculptures is also granted aesthetic sanction.

Aesthetic sanction relates to a philosophical space of contemplation that is marked out as characterized by the aesthetic gaze or experience. This aesthetic gaze is identified as disinterested, removed from considerations of politics, money or self-interest, in favour of a higher inquiry (Taylor 1998:13). The object of this aesthetic experience, the work of art, is considered to be autonomous and autotelic on the one hand, and universal, transcending geography and history on the other (Taylor 1998:15). The world of art, like that of literature, is treated as a sanctuary where play is governed by other rules, valid in those worlds, where the subject is the subject of the text and has no dimension in the real world (Taylor 1998:97). Aestheticism is a sanction that protects works from being exposed to and studied in the light of social or historical realities.

The belief that certain forms of aesthetic practice can elicit lofty sentiments serves to obscure the conditions under which these same lofty sentiments are made possible. Art historian Deborah Root argues that the abstraction of ideas of beauty from their social and cultural matrix, and imagined as something separate and transcendent, makes 'all the violence and repressions of history thinkable' (Root 1998:18). 'The old idea that beauty is

Figure 22
'*Girl of the Titu tribe*', photograph from *Le Congo Belge*.
(Boyens 1982:96, fig 65).

somehow good in itself has excused many unattractive moments' (Root 1998:18). The sculptures of colonised men and women in the Rotunda appeal to an aesthetic reasoning that gilds oppressive social and historical facts with a patina of taste and beauty.

A comparison of Matton's *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (Figure 1) with an eighteenth-century engraving depicting a court beauty and her Black slave draws attention to the complicity of aesthetic conventions of 'high' culture in naturalizing or normalizing the display of European authority over Africans.

In the engraving by S. de la Vallée, after a painting by Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Madame de Pecoil and an Admirer* (1706)² (Figure 25), an elegantly dressed African page holds out a basket of flowers for his 'mistress'. He is positioned in the foreground of the picture, between his 'mistress' in the picture and the viewer outside of it. The flowers that he offers her are a token of admiration from a male European admirer who is referred to in the title, but is out of view, outside of the frame. In facial development the page appears to be adult, but he is shown as physically smaller than the female he serves. Madame de Pecoil does not acknowledge his presence through the direction of her gaze, but the resting of her hand on his shoulder is suggestive of her familiarity with him. The nature of their relationship is to be deduced by the metal slave collar that he wears.

There are two hundred years separating De la Vallée's engraving from Matton's sculpture, yet a comparison between the two is enlightening. The pose of the servile male figure kneeling before a dominating female warrior in Matton's work follows a line of descent from the conventions used in the De la Vallée work. In both, the Black 'servant' gazes up towards his White 'mistress', and in both, the 'mistress' ignores his gaze. In both the Black

Figure 23
Charles Samuel, *Vuakusu-Batetela defends a Woman from an Arab* (detail) (1897).
Polychromed plaster and real artifacts, life-size.
Rear entrance hall, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (2001).

'servant' is positioned lower than the dominant female, and in both the servant figure reaches up across her hips.

The African figures are reduced to accessories and as such are not unlike another accessory that began to appear in paintings from the seventeenth century - the pet dog. Both the slaves and the dogs wore collars and gazed devotedly towards their owners. According to Samuel van Hoogstraten, who wrote an introduction to the *Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst* in 1678 (in Pieterse 1990:126), African servants and pets were 'bywerk' - accessories or decorations to add lustre and variation to portraits. 'Bywerk' could include tame animals, feathered birds or Moors³.

While the formal purpose of including the Black page-slave – in preference to a bird or pet dog - in such engravings or paintings may have been to underline by contrast the pale complexions of the women portrayed, it cannot be ignored that their presence was a reflection of political realities of Western expansionism at that time. In *From Greek proverb to soap advert: Washing the Ethiopian*, Jean Michel Massing (1995:192) suggests that the slave-collars should be seen as no more than 'partly symbolic – signifying a servile devotion to the lady's White loveliness – rather than as a literal reflection of the realities of society'. This seems to me to be missing an important point. The appearance of Black pages wearing slave collars in paintings and engravings from the mid-sixteenth century is reflective of a major shift in European representations of Africans that was prompted by a growing 'imperialist-consciousness' on the part of Western Europeans.

Prior to this shift Africans had featured in European art as players on centre stage in works that drew on biblical or Aesopic tales and they were positively represented⁴. In the mid-sixteenth century Africans slip off the main stage to the sidelines, to play the role of accessories and messengers to Europeans. This reduction in thematic status – from the Magus attending the Madonna, to

Figure 24
Arsène Matton, *Slavery* (detail) (1920).
Gilded bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

the servant of a rich man's mistress - was an indicator of the rising hegemony of Western Europe. The little Black page not only drew attention to the wealth of the commissioner of the painting but also to the *source* of that wealth. His or her inclusion was frequently an indicator of the colonial connections of the persons concerned. In *Belgium grants support to the Congo* that colonial connection has become the theme of the work. The implicit reference to the rising hegemony of Europe in the earlier works like *Madame de Pecoil and an Admirer* has become an explicit reference in the Matton work.

An examination of the differences between the engraving of *Madame de Pecoil and an Admirer* and the sculpture of *Belgium grants support to the Congo* is revealing of how aesthetic 'conventions' of the sixteenth century have been manipulated to the purpose of sanctioning an eroticization of Belgium's colonial project.

In *Madame de Pecoil* the slave is fully clothed while the flesh of the 'mistress' is selectively exposed. Her low-cut neckline is slightly unbuttoned so as to reveal the curves of her breasts, and her three-quarter length sleeve exposes her wrist and forearm. Only the head and hands of the slave are exposed. His presence in the engraving is to lend sexual nuance to the picture and to the relationship between the depicted woman and the invisible male surveyor, but he is not himself sexualized (Gilman 1985:209). In the conventions upon which *Madame Pecoil* draws, Black pages serve as sexual messengers. They are the carriers of gifts between male admirers - who are seldom pictured but are symbolically present in the baskets of flowers that they have sent - and the women being admired.

The 'servant' in Matton's sculpture is, in contrast, eroticized. He is quite naked while his 'mistress' is (to a degree) clothed. 'Belgium' wears the accoutrements of battle. The 'Congo' wears nothing. In the conventions of

Figure 25
S. de la Vallée after Hyacinthe Rigaud,
Madame de Pecoil and an Admirer (1706).
Engraving. (Massing 1995:193, figure 63).

paintings of Black servants attending White mistresses from which this work by Matton emerges, this nakedness is not usual. It could be argued that he is naked since Africans were thought by Europeans to go naked. However, there is such an eroticism and sexual tension between the two figures in this work, created in no small part through the depiction of sensual naked skin, that it seems not explanation enough. The distance maintained between the two figures in the two works is also different. Madame de Pecoil rests a hand on the slave's shoulder but he does not touch her in return. Matton's work repeats the action of the servile African figure reaching up across the hips of the female, but his hand rests on her thigh. There is a far greater intimacy in the interlocking of these two figures. In light of the theme of the Matton work, the heightened sensuality in the relationship between the two figures has the effect of eroticizing the idea of colonial power.

De la Vallée's figure proffers flowers from a male admirer, the 'Congo' is empty-handed. Yet the motif of flowers is not entirely absent from the latter work. The palm-fronds placed between the two figures in Matton's work recall the flower motif so common to paintings with Black pages of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In De la Vallée's engraving there are roses in the basket of flowers. Roses were associated in seventeenth-century European art and literature with the 'beauty of women' and 'the pinker extremities of the female form' (Massing 1995:190). Their function in the engraving, like that of the page, was the introduction of sexual innuendo. They indicate that the woman pictured is the mistress of the man commissioning the picture. The palm fronds in Matton's sculpture serve a different function, but one that is not unrelated to the desires of the intended male viewer. They are introduced here as a means of hiding or denying the male figure's adult sexual status. Seemingly a device of modesty, I would argue that their placement has the less innocent function of 'emasculating' the male figure. Matton creates a figure with the sensuality of a young man but

without the complications (for the White male viewer) of his being capable of sexual desire.

In the sense that he lacks 'maleness' – adult sexual status – he is a 'feminized' representation. His lithe boyishness is homo-erotic. His objectification, like that of African women in the Rotunda, is both a form of control and a powerful mood enhancer for the colonizing male. Encoded in the image of Black males, even if reduced to juveniles and eunuchs, is the mythic baggage that associates the figure of the Black male with concupiscence. Like a mental shorthand these myths are carried from one genre of representation to the next without much alteration in their content. The appeal to the trope of the 'neutered' Black male that resurfaces here in the Matton sculpture, can be seen as a part of a construction of the Rotunda as a Temple of White male desire in which the latter is assured of his own virility and power.

Through Matton's *Belgium grants support to the Congo*, Huygelen's *Belgian seeks new fields of labour* and Jesper's *Negro Woman with Jar*, the colonial project and the conquest of Congo are eroticized and granted aesthetic, scientific and state sanction.

Notes

¹ The Dutch title of the sculpture is *Vruchtbaar Africa*. It could be translated as *Fertile Africa*.

² Reproduced in Massing, JM. 1995. From Greek proverb to soap advert : Washing the Ethiopian. *Journal of the Warbourg and Courtauld Institutes*, 58:193.

³ *Bywerk geeft de dingen*

Een luister: zoo m'ook enich tam Gediert

Te pas brengt, of gepluimt gevogelt, 't siert

het werk: zoo vind het oog ook een vernoegen

Somtijts een Moor by maegdekens te voegen.

(Samuel van Hoogstraten (1678) *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst*).

Pieterse 1990:126.

⁴ 'The Adoration of the Magi', for instance, was a popular religious theme in European art of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century that featured Africans in major roles. Among the Flemish and Dutch artists who produced paintings on this theme were Hans Memling (1464), Hieronymous Bosch (ca. 1510), Peter Paul Rubens (1606) and Rembrandt van Rijn (17th c)

(Blakely 1994:86). The Black king was frequently depicted as the youngest of the kings, according to Allison Blakely (1994:84) in *Blacks in the Dutch world: the evolution of racial imagery in a modern society*, 'presumably symbolizing Africa as the continent just beginning to participate in world affairs'. The 'Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch' was another popular theme. There were also a large number of portraits painted of individual Africans. Albrecht Dürer executed *Portrait of the Moorish woman Katharina* (Florence: Uffizi Gallery. In Blakely 1994:86), and *Study of a head of black man* (Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna. In Blakely 1994:87).

Chapter 3: Benev(i)olence and the universalizing impulse

Representations of Africans are managed in the RMCA. They are organized in such a way as to construct 'preferred narratives' that allow for, even encourage, fantasies of power and control. These narratives are constituted largely through spatial arrangement and the manipulation of aesthetic codes, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2. Two other factors influence their construction. The first is an assumption of universality that is a fundamental feature of the construction of colonial power. The second is the notion of a benevolent colonialism motivated by philanthropic and altruistic ideals - rather than economic self-interest. The two ideas connect in the representations of the Rotunda.

The European assumption of universality holds that the features of humanity are the characteristics of those who occupy the positions of dominance, and that it is these people who are 'human', who have a legitimate history and who live in 'the world' (Mbembe 2000:4). It follows, then, that the assimilation of the peoples of the Congo into a Belgian universe - a narrative given visual form in the Matton sculptures in the Rotunda - can be envisioned as a gesture of magnanimity that demonstrates Belgian benevolence and largesse.

This chapter is an examination of the terms upon which Africans have been brought into a European universe and of the manner in which Belgium has been represented as a benign power. A framework is set out within which philanthropic arguments can be seen to have been used deliberately to justify Leopold II's, and later Belgium's, intervention in the affairs of central Africa. These arguments served to mask, for a home audience, the disruptions and violence of the conquest. Then, through an examination of Matton's *Belgium grants support for the Congo* (Figure 1), it will be demonstrated how an image of benign power is created through processes of substitution,

mythologization, and sentimentalization. Following this, Matton's *Slavery* (Figure 3) will be analyzed in the light of its construction as a malevolent counter-image to the visualizations of Belgian benevolence in the artist's three other figural groups, *Belgium grants support for the Congo* (Figure 1), *Belgium grants civilization to the Congo* (Figure 2) and *Belgium grants prosperity to the Congo* (Figure 4).

The 'benev(i)olence' of the title refers to the symbolic violence of reducing Africans to Europeans and the contradictions inherent in conceptions of benevolence that are built upon that symbolic act of violence. Notions of universality assume the fundamental equality and common humanity of all human beings, they also assure that the distinctive characteristics and the difference of other societies are marginalized. The particularities of the Congo are made to disappear. Africans are reduced to pale copies of European originals. The sculptures of Matton are acts of terror precisely because they reduce the Other to Europeans.

3.1 Philanthropic intent

There were two specific instances in which philanthropic arguments can be seen to have been deliberately employed. The first was around 1876 when Leopold II sought to gain influence in central Africa by setting himself up, in the eyes of the world powers, as a philanthropist. The second followed the take-over of the Congo Free State by the Belgian state in 1908, the inauguration of the new museum building two years later ¹, and the inscribing 'in stone' therein of the conquest of the Congo as a humanitarian mission. I shall consider Leopold II's appropriation of the language of philanthropy first.

In September 1876, Leopold II invited thirty-seven explorers, geographers, 'humanitarians', business executives and military men - all persons considered to be eminent in the field of exploration - to a Geographical

Conference at the Royal Palace in Brussels. In his opening speech the king stated that his intentions in establishing a string of 'hospitable, scientific, and pacification bases' across central Africa were entirely altruistic. The aim, Leopold II said, was to 'open to civilization the only part of our globe where it has yet to penetrate, to pierce the darkness which envelops whole populations, it is, I dare to say, a *crusade* worthy of this century of progress (speech quoted in Pakenham 1992:21, my italics).

Philanthropic intentions were thus established at the outset of Leopold's 'project' as the moral justification for European intervention in the affairs of central Africa. Leopold's reference to 'civilization', 'crusade' and 'the century of progress' are telling of his astuteness in sensing the ideological motivators of his time. Notions of philanthropy, when directed towards Africa, depended on a mix of Christian beliefs, secular Enlightenment beliefs and racial theories. Leopold II's offer to steer such an enterprise was hailed by Viscount de Lessops, one of the participants in the Geographical Conference, as being 'the greatest humanitarian work of this time' (Viscount de Lessops in Pakenham 1992:22).

It was, clearly, a red herring and a ruse. For the constitutional king of Belgium it was a convenient ideological guise that camouflaged his desire for greater power. From the moment that Leopold II had convinced the world powers of his intentions to play an altruistic role in central Africa through the activities of international philanthropic societies, he went steadily about doing the contrary. In 1885 he made himself King-Sovereign of the newly declared, privately controlled, Congo Free State.

The second moment that I would isolate, in which discourses of philanthropy were deliberately engaged, followed the inauguration of the new museum and the commissioning of the first sculptures. The RMCA, which was opened in 1910, a year after Leopold II's death, functioned as the official mouthpiece

for the state controlled Ministry of Colonies. In 1911 Arsène Matton was commissioned to produce four sets of figural sculptures for the marbled entrance cupola of the Museum. In 1920 he delivered *Belgium grants civilization to the Congo* (Figure 2), *Belgium grants prosperity to the Congo* (Figure 4), *Belgium grants support for the Congo* (Figure 1) and *Slavery* (Figure 3). The first three sculptural groups - in which 'Belgium' forms a part of the title - concern Belgian largesse and the dispensing of 'civilization', 'prosperity' and (military) 'support'. The fourth sculpture, *Slavery*, identifies the 'enemy', the demon Arab, from whom the Africans must be saved. The latter is the foil to the other three, most especially to the priest figure that it faces from across the room. I would argue that these sculptures were crucial to the construction of a major narrative of the RMCA that, like Leopold II in his speech to the Geographical Conference, sets philanthropy at the forefront of the ideological engagement of Belgium with the Congo.

Between the date of the Geographical Conference in 1876 and the installation in 1920 of Matton's representations of Belgian benevolence in the Rotunda of the RMCA, ten million Congolese are estimated to have died of unnatural causes (Hochschild 1999:223). Not due to the 'scourge of the Arab slave trade', nor to their own Savage nature, these millions fell victim to one of the bloodiest and most greedy of all colonial regimes. Leopold II and the concessionary companies' hunger for wild rubber, fueled by the high prices to be gained on the European and American markets, cost the population of the Congo in lives, limbs and tortured bodies. Historian Jan Vansina (Hochschild 1999:233) estimated that between 1880 and 1920 the population of the Congo was cut 'by at least a half'. The first official census taken around 1922 estimated the population then to have been around ten million (Hochschild 1999:233). Though the atrocities were brought to the attention of the world by the efforts of people of conscience such as Edward Morel, Roger Casement, William Shepherd and others, who recorded statements by witnesses, publicised reports, and lobbied for change, it caused no more than a minor

embarrassment to Belgium, and even less to its constitutional monarch who brushed the accusations aside.

3.2 Images of benign power

Matton's representations of Belgium as a benign power need to be examined in the light of the accusations of atrocities committed against Congolese in the course of the conquest and the subsequent 'harvesting' of the colony. For it is then that the representation of Belgian as the caring guardian of the Congo is shown up for the falsity that it was.

Matton uses three devices to construct an image of benign power in *Belgium grants support for the Congo* (Figure 1): he substitutes female for male; he mythologizes the conquest, and he employs sentimentality.

The original title of *Belgium grants support for the Congo* was to have been *The conquest of Congo by Belgium*². In the first substitution, in the change of title from 'conquest' to 'support', a re-writing is already evident. The theme of conquest remains the subject of this work but it is dealt with covertly, disguised by another substitution, the use of 'feminine' markers. The work is a personification of male military might but is presented in sensual female form.

Iconographically the dominant female figure refers to any number of historical or mythological warrior queens or goddesses, except that she carries male attributes. Her leather footwear with fluted front could refer to the footwear of either a Roman soldier or to the Roman messenger of the Gods, Mercury, both of which are male images. The erect hilt of the sword at her hip and the flaccid sheath-like leather strips hanging from her shoulder-pads are shaped as male attractors, the purpose of which, when worn by a man, is to enhance

the wearer's masculinity. In this female figure they are without their referent, disconnected. Military imagery is disguised. Metaphors of gender are mixed. Gestures of overt sexuality compete with gestures of covert, even coy, sexuality. Matton sculpts for his warrioress a few flaps of a short leather panelled 'skirt' that appears to be there for purposes of modesty, but then sculpts over that a strip of cloth, hanging from her hips, that he knots over her crotch. The one covers the position of her genitals, the other points, vectorlike, to it. From close-up, a film of wafer-thin chain-mail, looking not a little unlike mermaid fish-scales, and in no way disguising the sensuality of her skin, covers her torso from breasts to thigh. Her nipples are protected by metal nipple plates that delineate them in all their sensuality. Baroque folds of cloth fall away from her body and dramatize not only her female nakedness but also a large muscular leg.

The military nature of conquest is substituted by a milder narrative of 'pacification', using the distraction of nipples and crotch to draw attention away from weapons and flags. Conquest by force is substituted by a fiction of conversion by (sensual) persuasion. Female replaces male but is given many male attributes. All overt displays of male military might are absented from the Rotunda yet the spectre of that might underwrites the narratives of every sculpture included there.

The historically specific conquest of the Congo is visualized in the Matton works as a mythic victory. The linking of 'Belgium' to ancient Greek or Roman mythologies, to the classic historic past, has the effect of legitimizing the present. This act of chronic de-historicization and distancing transfers the bloody act of conquest from the arena of human greed to the bloodless realm of heavenly matters determined by the gods. It has the comforting effect of absolving Belgians of any possible need for self-reflexivity. It not only legitimizes the present but it dignifies the exercise of power. In *Ways of Seeing* (1977), Peter Berger suggests that a moral value was ascribed to

Figure 26 (left)
Wendy Morris, *Largesse: Slavery* (2000).
Oil on canvas, 200cm x 100cm.

Figure 27 (right)
Wendy Morris, *Largesse: Belgium grants support to the Congo* (2000).
Oil on canvas, 200cm x 100cm.

Figure 28 (left)
Wendy Morris, *Largesse: Belgium grants
civilization to the Congo* (2000).
Oil on canvas, 200cm x 100cm.

Figure 29 (right)
Wendy Morris, *Largesse: Belgium grants
prosperity to the Congo* (2000).
Oil on canvas, 200cm x 100cm.

mythological constructions. The classic texts, 'whatever their intrinsic worth', he says,

supplied the higher strata of the ruling class with a system of references for the forms of their own idealised behaviour. As well as poetry, logic and philosophy, the classics offered a system of etiquette. They offered examples of how the heightened moments of life - to be found in heroic action, the dignified exercise of power, passion, courageous death, the noble pursuit of pleasure - should be lived, or, at least, should be seen to be lived (Berger 1977:101).

Salon art in the mythological genre was intentionally vacuous or perfunctory, Berger (1977:100) argues, for the prestige and the emptiness of mythological constructions were directly connected. The intention was not to stimulate the imagination of the spectator-owners but to render the works 'wearable'. 'Sometimes the whole mythological scene functions like a garment held out for the spectator-owner to put his arms into and wear. The fact that the scene is substantial, and yet, behind its substantiality, empty, facilitates the 'wearing' of it' (Berger 1977:102).

The passion, grief or generosity of the spectator-owner could be mirrored in the mythological work. In front of *Belgium grants support for the Congo* (Figure 1) 'Belgium' could see the classic face of her own generosity and the guise of her nobility. In front of two other allegorical sculptures in the Rotunda, she could also see mirrored her impartiality and largesse. *Justice* (Figure 9), by Godfried Devreese, depicts an allegorical female figure, blindfolded, carrying a sword in one hand and a set of scales in the other. *Charity* (c1920-30)(Figure 10), by Paul Du Bois, depicts a motherly figure clasping a child to her chest. As part of the group of sculptures in the Rotunda they function to reinforce the view of 'Belgium' as just, impartial, and philanthropic. Again, through the use of female images, they emphasize a benevolent colonization. They are not intended to stimulate the imagination but to embellish an already idealised self-image. Perhaps vacuous allegories

in other contexts, in the context of the Rotunda and the RMCA they acquire a deliberate tendentiousness.

The third device that Matton uses to create an image of benign power is through the trope of the family. Through strategic placement of children he constructs a sentimental justification for Belgium's 'pacification' of the Congo. The presence of a child at the foot of the warriorress in *Belgium grants support for the Congo* (Figure 1) sets 'Belgium' up as a protective presence in and for the Congo, a compassionate guardian angel. The children in the arms of the dominating figures of the priest and the mother in the other two Matton sculptures function in the same benevolent manner.

The introduction of a child in *Slavery* (Figure 3) has a very different purpose. This dead child serves to mark the 'Arab' as cruel and callous. *Slavery* is the foil to the other three sculptures. It demonstrates the malevolence of the 'Arab' slave traders and the moral necessity of Belgian intervention. The child, upon whose corpse the 'Arab' slaver stands, has been murdered, the narrative would suggest, by the same evil figure who has in his grasp the older sister, or mother, of that dead child. The three interlocking figures tell a story of 'Arab' inhumanness to Africans, of 'Arabs' as users and abusers of human flesh, of 'Arabs' as traders in human misery. It is a part of the construction of 'Arabs' as the enemy against which Belgium - as a representative of the 'civilized' world - must act. The malevolence of 'the Arab' is contrasted to the benevolence of Belgium.

3.3 Images of malevolence

Slavery is a counter-image to *Belgium grants support to the Congo* and of *Belgium grants civilization to the Congo*. The oppositions are crudely drawn. *Civilization* (Figure 2) depicts a Christian priest - a trader in souls - in the role of guardian to an African 'youth', *Slavery* (Figure 3) depicts a Moslem slaver -

a trader in bodies - in the role of aggressor to an adolescent girl. Where *Belgium grants support to the Congo* (Figure 1) depicts Belgian altruism and the caring guardianship over the infant nation of Congo, *Slavery* depicts the violent denial of basic freedoms and human rights. In the RMCA the trope of the immoral 'Arab' is central to the construction of the image of Belgian morality.

Africans within the Rotunda are depicted in many ways, from earnest and simple-minded to lacking in psychic life, but they are not depicted as threatening. Within the circle of sculptures included in the Rotunda the figure that is demonised and constructed as the cruel enemy is that of the 'Arab'. It is a construction with a long genealogy in European thinking of the Orient and has here, in official narratives of Belgian imperialism, been adopted and adapted to justify Belgian intervention in Central Africa.

Eradication of the 'Arab scourge' has been written into the official narratives of the RMCA as one of the moral pillars of the colonization. In *Slavery* Matton is reworking a theme that had already made its appearance at the 1897 Brussels-Tervuren International Exposition³. I want to look now at the shift that this theme underwent between that appearance and the Matton version of 1920 and then to consider the connection between those changes and the RMCA's re-writing of the conquest of the Congo as 'Belgian' and as humanitarian.

Charles Samuel's *Vuakusu-Batelela defends a woman from an Arab* (1897)(Figure 15,23) was commissioned for the 1897 Brussels-Tervuren International Exposition. Though it is now relegated to the marginal exhibition space of the rear entrance hall, it is one of the few sculptures from that founding exhibition that still has a place in the present-day RMCA. A comparison of this work with Matton's *Slavery* is enlightening. Samuel's sculpture is constructed of three figures: an African man in the role of

defender, a naked African woman in the role of victim, and an 'Arab' slaver in the role of aggressor. In Matton's *Slavery* (Figure 3) the African defender of the woman has gone. Matton's woman, still naked though now hardly more than a child, faces her 'Arab' tormentor alone. It makes for a more dramatic and more tightly sculptured composition. It also creates a gap. A space that can be filled by the intervention of 'Belgium' as the defender of defenceless women and children. No longer are African men depicted as able or brave defenders against 'the scourge of the Arab slave trade', now the suggestion is that they need help. In this way Matton's *Slavery* it is part of the (re)construction of the conquest of the Congo as a deed of kindness motivated by concern for the welfare of Africans.

The Samuel's tableau is a large and open composition that requires the viewer to encircle it in order to 'read' it. One is never able to see all the 'action' from one viewpoint. From any angle a part of the narrative is obscured. To see the defender from the front entails seeing the aggressor from the back. Each figure is sculptured alone, none are in contact with another. For all the 'realism' introduced through the real items of clothing and the sticks with which the men are armed, as well as in the depiction of the faces, it is a stylized and static work. The woman does not give the impression of someone narrowly escaping capture by a slaver. Nude rather than naked, she reclines languidly on her elbow, her arm pointing up towards the two men, her one leg tucked under another that is sensuously outstretched. Her face is turned upwards toward the men, her mouth open as if speaking. The dispute between the two men resembles an argument rather than a struggle. It is anecdotal genre work, it contains no message of urgency.

Slavery, made over twenty years later, when the 'war' on the 'Arabs' was long over, does have a sense of urgency. It is a dramatic work in the manner in which the figures interlock and spiral upwards. The contorted figure of the

powerless woman-child and the limp body of the dead boy-child caught up in her knees and under the sandaled foot of the malevolent 'Arab', introduce a pathos and a drama that is dynamic. The urgency emanating from this figure was a patriotic call – after the event by some forty years – to Belgians to rescue their fellows from the clutches of the demon 'Arab' slave traders. Since it was made long after the issue of 'Arab' slavery was of any consequence in the Congo, it points to a process of re-writing Belgium's conquest of the Congo as a moral undertaking.

Through appeals to tropes of the institution of the family that 'naturalize' social hierarchies, to myths relating to the classical origins of Belgium, and the creation of an 'Arab' aggressor, the sculptures inside the Rotunda constitute and reflect a dominant narrative of the RMCA in which the colonization of the Congo is held to have been humanitarian.

Notes

¹ In 1910 the new museum was inaugurated by Leopold's successor, Albert I. Commissioned by Leopold II it was not completed until after his death. Built in the same royal domain in Tervuren as its predecessor, the new museum was far larger and grander in scale.

² The original titles of Matton's four sculptures were: *The glorification of the colonial work of Belgium* (De verheerlijking van het kolonialie werk van België); *The coming together of Belgium and the Belgian Congo* (De toenadering tussen België en Belgisch Kongo); *The conquest of Congo by Belgium* (De verovering van Kongo door België); and *The civilization of the Belgian Congo* (De beschaving van Belgisch Kongo). Van Lennop, J. *Catalogus van de beeldhouwkunst: Kunstenaars geboren tussen 1750– 1882*:496.

³ At the Brussels-Tervuren Exposition of 1897 (the founding exhibition of the first Museum of Central Africa) the theme of 'Arab slavery was one theme amongst many. Sango dancers, a Mayombe family group, and Bangala fishermen, were other subjects dealing with 'life and customs' that appeared in sculptural tableaux on the same exhibition. While the popularity of these other genre themes seems since that exposition to have fallen away, that of the 'Arab' slaver remained popular – useful is perhaps more to the point – and appeared in numerous pictorial reports or visual works about the Congo.

Chapter 4: 'Noble', and other 'useful' types of Savagery

Representations of Africans exhibited outside of the Rotunda are differently encoded to those exhibited inside it. Sculptures excluded from the inner circle, it can be argued, display aspects of Savagery that are found to be incompatible with the narrative of Belgian altruism that is constructed in the Rotunda. Representations of Africans outside of the Rotunda do not depict Africans as benign Primitives who are assimilable to the Belgian 'world'. Sculptures like *The Leopard Man of Anioto* (Figures 16,31) by Pierre Wissaert overstep the border of 'manipulable' Savagery.

This chapter is an examination of the ambiguity of notions of Savagery and the manipulation of these concepts in the RMCA. Representations of Noble Savagery, it seems, are viewed as 'manageable', even desirable forms of Savagery and, as such, worthy of inclusion in the Rotunda. Representations of 'violent' Savagery, on the other hand, are not useful to the creation of a 'tamed' space of the Rotunda, but can still be seen to have a useful function in the RMCA.

Images of Others do not circulate for their truth value, according to sociologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1990:233), but because they reflect the interests of those who produce and those who consume them. As the interests of the producers and consumers change so do the images. The sculptures in the RMCA were designed to serve the needs and feed the desires of a colonizing group. As these needs and desires changed so did the description of the colonised Other. Savagery is not a fixed category but a set of floating tropes that are reconfigured on demand.

Through a comparative examination of the Noble Savages of Arthur Dupagne - *The Rower* (Figure 12), *Fight with a Snake* (Figure 30), *The Labourer*

Figure 30
Arthur Dupagne, *Fight with a Snake* (1936).
Bronze, life-size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (2001).

(Figure 13) and *Man at his Toilet* (Figure 14) - and the violent Savage of Pierre Wissaert - *The Leopard Man* (Figures 16,31) - I will demonstrate that Savagery in the Rotunda is sanitized and controlled while Savagery outside this circle is displayed as a reminder of the threat of the violent Other. Both are managed and manipulated to further the ends of a colonizing group.

In *Cannibal culture: Art, appropriation, and the commodification of difference* (1996) art historian Deborah Root asserts that notions of racism are constructed on both greed and fear. The fear rests on the possibility of the resistance of the Other. She argues that in aesthetic works attempts to contain the ambivalence between desire and fear can operate in two ways (1996:160). In the first instance, difference can be domesticated, made manageable, and the Other thereby considered assimilable to a Western European cultural universe. 'This is the primary operation of the process of appropriation, which seeks to absorb difference and make it part of the so-called larger culture. Difference is transformed into something that is no longer all that different and hence ceases to be dangerous' (Root 1996:160). Herbert Ward's (Figures 7,11,32,33) and Arsène Matton's (Figures 1-4) representations of African men in the Rotunda are subject to these processes of appropriation. Ward's are 'tamed' and abject Primitives, Matton's are assimilable Others, 'paler' versions of European originals. Both are figures of subordination. Arthur Dupagne's group of men (Figures 12,13,14,30) are configured differently. These elegantly muscled young men are posed in stances reminiscent of Classical Greek statuary. They represent a noble and desirable Savagery.

Root (1996:160) argues, in the second instance, that foreign people can be represented in such a way as to make them appear violent and dangerous, thereby serving as a warning to the Westerner of the dangers of venturing 'outside of the conceptual certainties of the West '. The wanton violence

Figure 31
Pierre Wissaert, *The Leopard Man of Anioto* (1913).
Polychromed plaster and real artifacts, life-size.
Ethnographic Hall, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (1999).

depicted in *The Leopard Man* (Figures 16,31) and further elaborated upon in the text that accompanies it¹, serve as a warning of the danger of the undesirable Savage, and of the need to 'manage' that Savagery.

4.1 Preferred tropes of Savagery

Root (1996:160) argues that the image of a fearsome undressed angry person of colour doing something violent fascinated the colonists, but that this construction was dependent on the converse fiction of the meek and complacent servant who enjoyed being taught the virtues of civilized existence. It is clear that both stereotypes are catered to in the RMCA. Representations of the meek and complacent colonised are contained within the Rotunda, representations of those who are resistant to colonization are fearsome and violent are excluded from that inner circle.

I would argue that stereotypes of 'tamed' and 'untamed' Savagery function in different ways. Firstly, the images of Savagery and 'wildness' create a frisson of excitement that is clearly fascinating to many European viewers. The transference of the image of the *The Leopard Man* into popular media² is a case in point. Secondly, images of meek and complacent colonized peoples confirm the sense of authority of the colonizers in believing that it is in their power to convert the violent Savage into the meek 'servant'. Thirdly, the combined displays of both stereotypes serves to legitimate and confirm the 'necessity' and the 'success' of the colonial 'project of civilization'.

Pierre Wissaert's *The Leopard Man of Anito* (Figures 16,31) is an image of violent Savagery. It stands outside of the circle of sculptures in the Rotunda, at the top of a short flight of steps that lead from the Rotunda into the Hall of

Figure 32
Herbert Ward, *A Congo Artist* (1910).
Polychromed plaster, life -size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (2001).

Ethnography. The sculpture depicts a life-size, chocolate brown man bearing down menacingly on a sleeping figure. Clenched in the man's hands, between each knuckle, are metal 'claws'. On the ground is a wooden stick that is carved at its base with the footprint of a leopard. Imprinted in the ground next to the sleeping figure are 'spoor' from this stick. The head and torso of the menacing figure are covered with a leopard-skin hood with two eye-holes cut away. The figure is represented in the moments before he attacks the sleeping figure.

More than any other sculpture in the Africa Museum this has become *the* image of Savage Africa. It is the one image that has moved beyond the walls of the museum into the popular imagination of Belgians. Hergé, author and artist of the *Tin Tin* series, introduced the image of the *Leopard Man* into his *Tin Tin in Africa* in the 1940s (Figures 34,35). The *Tin Tin* series has been continuously on sale in Belgium since its inception. It is included in all suburban library collections, and it continues to be hugely popular with children and adults alike. Through it the image of the murderous *Leopard Man* has become the abiding image of African Savagery for generations of Belgians³.

In its transferral from the sculpture in the RMCA to the pages of a comic strip, the import of the image has altered. Whereas in the halls of the museum the Savagery of the figure functioned to warn of the dangers of the violent Other and the necessity for colonization, in Hergé's story the Savagery of the figure is but a front, a mask assumed to scare off the cub reporter, Tin Tin. Underneath this mask is an African figure who is all too easily converted into a servant.

Hergé's 'magician' Muganga, who is dressed in the clothes and mask of the *Leopard Man* in the RMCA, is malicious and ill-intentioned, but inept and bungling. When Tin Tin sees through his disguise, the once fierce Muganga

Figure 33
Herbert Ward, *The Fire Maker* (1911).
Polychromed plaster, life -size.
Rotunda, RMCA.
Photo: Morris (2001).

pleads like a child with the young Belgian reporter for his life and pledges to be his devoted servant forever (Figures 36,37). While the dog Snowy 'speaks' perfect English - as does a monkey in the story - Muganga can only manage a pidgin version of the language. Hergé, in introducing the *Leopard Man* into his *Tin Tin in Africa*, does not do so to make Africans seem more threatening, but less so. While he neutralises the impact of Black Savagery by showing Africans as being easy to outsmart (even a dog can manage it), he leaves intact the narrative initiated by the *The Leopard Man of Anjoto* in the museum in which violence by Africans is shown to be wanton and deliberate.

4.2 Noble Savagery

The adult male figures of Dupagne that stand in the niches of the Rotunda represent a noble and desirable Savagery. They can be discussed in the light of the trope of the Noble Savage. Three elements of this construct are of relevance to an analysis of these sculptures. The first is that it is nostalgic, it is connected to myths of paradise, and it reflects a longing for an earlier, and supposedly more ideal, time. The second is that it is paradoxical. It reflects both attraction and repulsion, both idealization and criticism. The third is that it is resistant. The trope of the Noble Savage is not immutable but it is bound by certain recurring features.

The first element concerns myths of paradise. Until Europe's discovery of the New World, myths of paradise had been projected back into its own history. In Judeo-Christian writings the myth of paradise referred to humankind in Eden prior to the expulsion. In Greco-Roman thought it referred to a Golden Age, the purest of the four ages, in which humans enjoyed lives of complete happiness and blessing (Dietrich 1993:100). This backward projection of paradise was subject to review after the voyages of discovery in which a humanity still in its 'natural' state was 'seen' to exist, in

Figure 34 (top)
'Goed nieuws, Muganga'
from *Tin Tin in Africa*.
(Hergé 1946:30).

Figure 35 (bottom)
'Dit mijn pak zijn'
from *Tin Tin in Africa*
(Hergé 1946:31).

the present, in the New World. The voyages beyond the boundaries of the known world spatialized and localized myths of the primordial paradisiacal beginnings of humans that had been embodied in Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman thought (Dietrich 1993:83). In his doctoral thesis *On salvation and civilization* the South African artist and art historian Keith Dietrich (1993:83) writes,

[As] long as Latin Christendom had remained spiritually and geographically closed within itself, myths of paradise were projected back into its own history, to the 'beginning'. But with the expansion of their world-view, Westerners found new societies which at first glance seemed to be living the kind of paradisiacal life hitherto only described in myths, legends, and accounts of distant times.

The second element of the construct, one that is evident in its wording, is that the admiration for the 'natural' state of humankind is paradoxical. 'Noble' may denote the divine or god-like but 'Savage' anchors the concept in ideas of wildness and sub-humanity. The ambivalence inherent in this trope can also be noted in its use as a means of self-criticism or self-analysis of the group or society doing the labelling. Dietrich (1993:85) notes that: '...already in the first half of the sixteenth century there was a definite tendency amongst humanist philosophers such as Montaigne to idealise the Indians and to hold them in contrast to European decadence'.

Following a meeting with a group of Carib men in France in the later 1500s, Michel de Montaigne [1533-1592] wrote an essay, *On Cannibals*, in which he contrasted 'natural' America with the artificiality of Europe. De Montaigne noted that the Indians were 'in such a state of purity that it sometimes saddens me to think we did not learn of them earlier, at a time when there were men [Lycurgus and Plato] who were better able to appreciate than we...' (in Dietrich 1993:101). De Montaigne's connection of the Noble Savage to the Golden Age is a nostalgic lament for earlier, supposedly better, times.

Figure 36 (top)
'Help!...'
from *Tin Tin in Africa*.
(Hergé 1946:31).

Figure 37 (bottom)
'Genade, massa Blanke'
from *Tin Tin in Africa*.
(Hergé 1946:32).

His strong stance of cultural relativism in maintaining that Europe, despite its Classical heritage and Christian perspective, was not necessarily at the centre of the universe (Dietrich 1993:101), displays a degree of critical reflection upon his own 'civilized' society.

This element of criticism implicit in appeals to the trope of the Noble Savage has extended from De Montaigne through writers like the British Aphra Behn [1640-1689] in her novel *Oroonoka* (1688), through the *Discourses* of the Swiss-French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau [1712-1778] and into the Romantic movements of the last two centuries. The use of the trope of the Noble Savage has not simply reflected a stereotyping of the newly experienced peoples with whom Europeans came into contact but frequently also an attempt to re-evaluate the writer's own society in the light of these new and very different cultures that were being encountered. Though they frequently reflected a nostalgia for an earlier period in the writer's or artist's own creation myths, they can also be viewed as attempts to reach more complex understandings of an expanding world. Like many stereotypical constructs of Others, the trope of the Noble Savage is more illuminating of the referring society than of the society to which it refers.

The third element of the trope that is important here, is its resistance. The trope of the Noble Savage is mutable but resistant, by which I mean that it is bound by certain recurrent and limiting features. These recurring features are, firstly, that it is a trope about male Others, secondly, that it posits a benign humankind living in a 'natural' state, and, thirdly, that this state is 'uncontaminated' by contact with a more 'modern' or 'developed' society. Following this schema, four of Dupagne's sculptures would be recognizable as models of Noble Savages. *The Rower*, *Fight with a Snake*, *The Warrior*, and *Man at his Toilet* (Figures 12,30,8,14) are representations of (semi)naked, muscled - but unthreatening - males involved in such 'natural'

activities as maintaining personal hygiene or hunting. Dignified men who are 'at one' with their 'primitive' paradisiacal world.

This frame of analysis is challenged by a consideration of another of Dupagne's sculptures. *The Labourer* (Figure 13) depicts a young man leaning on a spade. In his dignified demeanour, his semi-nakedness, and his well-developed musculature, he resembles the four other male sculptures as a model of the Noble Savage. But whereas the paddle, spear and knife of the other figures are implements of 'traditional' African manufacture and activity, the metal and wooden spade of the *Labourer* is an implement of European design that has been introduced into the colony to assist, doubtless, in the work of Civilization. On those grounds, on the grounds of enculturation or 'contamination', *The Labourer* could be considered to fall outside of the scope of the conception of the Noble Savage.

However, while tropes are resistant they are not immutable, and they are subject to reconfigurations from time to time. Pieterse has already noted how images of the Other circulate because they reflect the interests of those who produce and those who consume them, and that as those interests change so too do the images (1991:233). A trope is a complex conceptual mechanism for organizing images and ideas. These formations of ideas are slow to mutate but are mutable nonetheless. I would argue that Dupagne's introduction of the spade, and with it the concept of work, into his images of Natural man has effected a reconfiguration of the trope of the Noble Savage. Noble Savages become Noble Labourers, retaining the resistant attributes of the former construct but extending them to include the view of Africans as a 'natural' labouring class. This notion of an African proletariat would have had very definite appeal to a European colonizing audience for it could lock together two immensely useful ideas. It ennobled the idea of work - of manual labour done by someone else for the benefit of the colonizing group - and it conveniently consigned those workers to prehistory, thereby denying

them contemporary historical presence and with it the ability to negotiate the conditions of that work.

Dupagne has effected a reconfiguration of the construct of the Noble Savage in his figure of the *Labourer*. In his hands it has been altered from one that held the potential to re-examine or criticise European society to one that affirms European hegemony.

The examination of 'Savagery' highlights the degree of manipulation that has gone into organizing the sculptures into 'agreeable' formations that legitimate the chief narratives of the RMCA in which the colonization was shown to be necessary, moral and carried out with a minimum of interruption to the lives of Congolese.

Notes

¹ The text accompanying the Wissaert sculpture notes that it was made specifically for the museum and that the scene depicts a man from a secret group of 'Anioto' and his victim. Alongside the title is written 'Bali, Zaire', and in the text it is stated that these secret groups were active in Northeast Zaire. Seemingly factual, there is no substantiative evidence given of any actual murders and it would seem that innuendo is being clothed as fact.

² It appears in Hergés *TinTin in Africa*, Casterman. 1946 .

³ It has also become a symbol of resistance to the colonialist narratives of the RMCA. The Kinshasa/Paris based artist Cheri Samba produced a painting in 2003 that depicts Africans removing the statue of the Leopard Man (Figure 16) from the RMCA - much to the chagrin of the museum staff who attempt to prevent the removal. Samba was commissioned by the RMCA to make a painting though there seems to have been no specific brief about its content.

Figure 38
Agnolo Bronzino,
Allegory of Time and Love (1503-1572).
National Gallery, London
(Berger 1972:54).

Conclusion

Images of Africans are manipulated for the dual purposes of legitimating the colonization of the Congo and providing scopophilic pleasure for European, male spectators. There are two aspects to this manipulation. The first, effected by the artists, has involved the extension of European aesthetic conventions that were already masculinist (Berger 1972) and ethnic (Taylor 1998), to accommodate and sanction imperialist imagery. The second, this time by museologists or museum staff, has involved the (re)organization of the sculptures into 'pleasurable' formations that further encourage fantasies of power and authority of European males over African men and women. Through selective grouping, the individual works of different artists have been made to lock together in the creation of a tendentious narrative of sexual and imperial power.

The Rotunda can be viewed as a composite work, as a sculptural tableau, in which all the elements can be read together. If we leave aside its imperial symbolism for a moment, this tableau is not that far removed from many sixteenth-century allegorical paintings in which naked women are the main subject. John Berger's analysis of Bronzino's *Allegory of Time and Love* (1503-1572) (Figure 38) could be used as effectively – on the level of European aesthetic reasoning - to describe this Rotunda tableau. Berger (1972:54) argues that Bronzino's painting, before it is anything else, is a painting of sexual provocation. That the title refers to an allegory which is supposed to be the main subject of the painting, Berger argues, is but an excuse for a sexually provocative image that is designed to feed the desires of a male spectator. The same could be said of the sculptures of eroticized African women in the Rotunda. They too are about feeding the fantasies of male viewers.

African men in the Rotunda tableau play as similarly ineffective roles as the men in the Bronzino allegory. The boy kneeling on the cushion and kissing the woman, in the painting, is Cupid. She is Venus. But the way her body is arranged has nothing to do with their kissing. Her body is arranged in the way it is, frontally, to display it to the man looking at the picture. The same could be said of the young woman in *Slavery* whose body is twisted so as to display her sexuality to the spectator (Figure 24). The only effective men in these images – in the allegorical paintings and in the Rotunda - are those who are not pictured, who stand outside of the painting or tableau looking in. These are the 'owners' of the images and the women.

Here the similarities end. For the images of the Rotunda tableau are not limited to ideas of 'ownership' and power over European women, but over an entire country and its people. The images of sexualized African women function as metaphors for European power and possession over colonized Congolese, over both men and women. The eroticization of imperial power is the most disturbing element of the narrative created in the Rotunda. The Bronzino painting was certainly about male power over women, but it was not about the violent conquest and colonial oppression that underwrites the Rotunda images.

.....

Part II

Re-Turning the Shadows

Introduction

Re-Turning the Shadows is the title of a series of visual works that were made over a period of three years, and that culminated in an exhibition of the same name at the end of 2002¹. The purpose of this series of paintings, drawings, installation and a film is twofold. It is intended to set into question the manner in which Europeans appropriate images of Africans or 'blackness' to market products that have no (direct) relation to Africa. It is also intended to unsettle colonialist narratives of the RMCA. *Re-Turning the Shadows* is based on the conviction that through a 're-animation' of images from the museum and their connection to images in broader circulation in Belgian society, the veneer of objective, rational Science and humanitarian ideals upon which the RMCA is founded, could most powerfully be challenged. It is not a project in the sense that it began with formulated objectives and an endpoint in sight, but rather is shaped as an exploration of the subversive and critical potential of images.

Part II comes at the end of an extended process of reading, writing, painting and drawing that has resulted in both a text, *Both Temple and Tomb*, and an exhibition, *Re-Turning the Shadows*. It allows for a reflection on the interconnectedness of these activities and for a consideration of how the two 'projects' feed into and off each other. The conceptual 'rationality' of the written argument finds its complement in the metaphoric 'irrationality' of the images. The paintings and drawings of *Re-Turning the Shadows* explore visually many of the issues explored textually in *Both Temple and Tomb*.

Figure 39
Wendy Morris,
Shot for the Pot (2001).
Charcoal and pastel on paper,
150cm x 100cm.

Re-Turning the Shadows does not intend to privilege the colonial. The concern with colonial history is to the extent that that history has determined the configurations and power structures of the present. The field of imagery that is re-animated includes the colonial² but also the neo-colonial³ and images and objects that are unrelated to either of these two fields. The mixing of the past and the present is a deliberate strategy of *Re-Turning the Shadows*. Far from suggesting a disregard for historical specificity its purpose is to show how the past is active in the present.

Re-Turning the Shadows presents a series of counter images to those of the RMCA. Against the museum narratives that ignore the sacrifice of African bodies, the paintings and film present images of consumable bodies and body parts, of punitive amputation and anthropophagy. Against the museum narratives that pay homage to the objectivity of science and research, the paintings and film present images that explore multiple subjectivities, mythologizing impulses, and metaphoric allusions.

Chapter 5 examines the strategies used in *Re-Turning the Shadows* to upset (neo)colonial patterns of viewing that have become ritual and 'naturalized'. Disruption of the 'natural' and displacement of recognition are tactics of an 'insurgent aesthetic', an aesthetic that aims to revalorize by a process of inversion or regurgitation of (neo)colonial imagery. Chapter 6 examines how the structure of the film and the form of the paintings and drawings are in themselves means of criticism. For instance, the trope of the palimpsest (a parchment on which layered traces of diverse moments of past writing are inscribed) is used both as a means of constructing the film and as a means of informing its content. Chapter 7 discusses the use of metaphors of consumption and violence in *Re-Turning the Shadows* to draw attention to the intrinsic violence of the system of colonization. Where narratives of colonization in the RMCA project all violence away from Europe towards the violent Other, the paintings, drawings and film deflect it back. Chapter 8

considers factors influencing the cultural reception of the film *A Royal Hunger*. The film is shown to be a resolutely interdisciplinary object.

Notes

¹ *Re-Turning the Shadows*, KVS/de Bottelarij, Brussels, Oct – Nov 2003.

² A number of paintings and drawings are based on objects in the museum. The series of paintings, *Largesse* (2000)(Figure -), are translations of the four gilded sculptures of Arsène Matton (Figures 3,4,5,19). The characters in the film *A Royal Hunger* are drawn from busts of Leopold II and his colonial agents that stand in the Commemoration Hall.

³ Neo-colonial imagery could be described as colonial-derived imagery that serves current economic purposes and is currently in production. The Banania logo that has recently been reintroduced into the market as a nostalgic collector's item is one example. The logo depicts a Senegalese tirailleur from the World War II drinking Banania, a banana flavoured chocolate drink. A range of containers carrying this logo are now on display and for sale in diners along the highways of Belgium and France.

Chapter 5: 'Insurgent aesthetics' and *Re-Turning the Shadows*

This chapter is an examination of the strategies used in *Re-Turning the Shadows* to disrupt (neo)colonial 'visualizing rituals' (Saunders 2001a). The first part examines the circulation and 'naturalization' of 'supremacist' imagery, and the second part explores how these visualizing rituals are subverted in the paintings and drawings of *Re-Turning the Shadows*.

5.1 Visualizing rituals

The intention has been to disturb colonial 'visualizing rituals' both within the RMCA and in wider circulation in Belgian society. These visualizing rituals are patterns of seeing – in this case of images of Others as inferiors – that have become so 'normal' to European viewers that their meanings and implications are barely noticeable. Colonial or Africanist visual culture supports notions of the 'naturalness' of White-European-Christian supremacy. This field of 'supremacist' imagery is in evidence in the RMCA but it is certainly not limited to that one site. Throughout visual 'networks' in Belgium – from billboard advertisements to product labels, from cartoon strips to Sint Niklaas¹ imagery – stereotyped and discriminatory, exotic or 'nostalgic', images of Africans continue to circulate to sell products that have no (direct) connection to Africa or to Africans. In Belgium objects of dark colour are almost routinely labelled with a reference to Africa. A variety of bird seed that is very dark in colour is called 'negerzaad', though it has nothing at all to do with Africa. A dark purple cabbage is called a 'negerkop' and packets of seeds for this 'variety' are on sale in the gardening chain-store, AVEVE. Products containing chocolate inevitably get references to Africa in their title, two examples being the *Afrika* biscuits by Belsen and the *Matadi* biscuits by Delacre.

Figure 40
Bockor advertisement,
billboard, Kortrijk.
Photo: Morris (2001).

Figure 41
'*Megafestatie '99*',
advertisement on bus, Kortrijk.
Photo: Morris (1999).

The images of Africans that are selected for display in the RMCA, on food packaging and cleaning products, and in advertisements, constitute filters through which White Europeans choose to look at Black Africans. They reflect carefully structured and codified ways of picturing Africans and their relationship to Belgians. Images of Others reflect the interests of those who produce and those who consume them (Pieterse 1990:233). These images reveal little about Africa or Africans as such, but much about European constructions of, and uses for, an imagined Africa. These belittling images of Africans as Others serve, by a process of deflection, to 'naturalize' notions of an essential and superior White Europeanism.

While stereotyping can be understood as an - albeit lazy - attempt at knowing, the imagery of Africans that circulates in Belgium is being used not to increase understanding or knowledge, but to sell products. These images make various appeals. Some appeal to a 'nostalgia' for the period of European expansionism when Whites could indulge in views of themselves as 'natural' lords and masters, and when colonized men and women 'knew' their place and their role as servants. The smiling woman on the label of the rum bottle (Figure 49) is a revision of erotic adventure narratives of European sailors entering exotic ports. The *Negrita* box (Figure 50) contains stove polish that carries the slogan 'zwart op de oude wijze' (black in the old way). This refers, nostalgically, to earlier methods of blackening stoves but also to the connection of Black woman (Negrita's) and manual labour. Other images make reference to the supposed rationality of Europeans by envisioning an 'opposite', a comic or unintelligent African. The *Bockor* advertisement (Figure 40) suggests that only an African would try to fill his mouth with billiard balls, the 'rational' person would buy *Bockor* beer. The most extreme image of 'African' unintelligence is the one that was pasted onto the side of buses in the Kortrijk-Gent area (Figure 41). It advertised an event unrelated to Africa with the head of a Black man that consisted of a large mouth (with teeth and tongue), ears and chin, but lacking eyes or a brain.

Figure 42 (top)
Wendy Morris, *Preservatives: jellied (severed object)*(2000).
Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.

Figure 43 (middle)
Wendy Morris, *Preservatives: canned (museum-piece)*(2000).
Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.

Figure 44 (bottom)
Wendy Morris, *Preservatives: corned (master-piece)* (2000).
Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.

The association of discriminatory stereotypes with Africans or Black people has become 'ritual' in the sense that it is a regularly repeated gesture. It is not one that is innocently applied, I would argue. Cultural texts are never neutral. They reflect bodies of beliefs that are ideological and that sustain and legitimate current power relationships. Terry Eagleton (1991:5), in *Ideology, an introduction*, argues that a dominant power legitimizes itself by promoting beliefs and values congenial to it. By 'naturalizing' and 'universalizing' such beliefs these are rendered self-evident and apparently inevitable. By excluding rival forms of thought and by denigrating ideas which might pose a challenge to it, social reality is obscured in ways convenient to the dominant power. The real power relations in society (between classes, between coloniser and colonised, between men and women) are thereby obscured.

An ambition of *Re-Turning the Shadows* has been to heighten the visibility of this field of colonial imagery and to encourage a more critical reading of the implications of this imagery.

5.2 Strategies of subversion

Subversive strategies used in *Re-Turning the Shadows* involve two processes: the exploitation of colonial imagery as raw material for a new synthesis and the investment of 'unrelated' objects with a significance that converts them into metaphors of the brutality of the colonial venture.

Re-Turning the Shadows uses the strategy of an 'insurgent aesthetic' to disrupt established visualizing rituals. The term 'insurgent aesthetic' is appropriated from an article by Ella Shohat (1998:39) and Robert Stam, *Narrativizing visual culture*, for its ability to locate and identify the intentions of *Re-Turning the Shadows*. Shohat and Stam use 'insurgent aesthetics' to

Figure 45 (top left)
Wendy Morris,
*Sweeteners: moulded (chocolate
hand from Antwerp)* (2001).
Oil on canvas, 70cm x 70cm.

Figure 47 (bottom left)
Wendy Morris,
*Sweeteners: clenched (Freedom of
the 90s)* (2001).
Oil on canvas, 70cm x 70cm.

Figure 46 (top right)
Wendy Morris,
*Sweeteners: boiled (The Sole Genuine
Caramella)* (2001).
Oil on canvas, 70cm x 70cm.

Figure 48 (bottom right)
Wendy Morris,
*Sweeteners: cubed (A spoonful of sugar
makes the medicine go down)* (2001).
Oil on canvas, 70cm x 70cm.

describe alternative cultural practices of artists who have located themselves outside of, but in critical dialogue with, Western art movements. They examine the alternative aesthetics offered by tricontinental², postcolonial and minority artists in which these artists valorize, by a process of inversion, something that had previously been viewed as a negative. Where the notion of cannibalism had been the very sign of Savagery in colonial discourses on the native peoples of Brazil, it became, in the work of the Brazilian modernists, an anti-colonial trope and a term of value (Shohat & Stam 1998:31). Brazilian artists sought to digest imported cultural products and ideologies and exploit them as raw material, thus turning the imposed culture back, transformed, against the colonizer (Shohat & Stam 1998:39). This synthesis of European avant-gardism and Brazilian 'cannibalism' became the basis of an 'insurgent aesthetic'.

It is in the sense of the exploitation of colonial imagery as raw material for a new synthesis that I wish to align my visual work with the spirit of these alternative, 'insurgent aesthetics'. *Re-Turning the Shadows* takes as its material representations that are already in circulation: labels on packages, statues in the museum, colonial memorabilia, posters for theatre pieces, bus adverts. These European representations - that perpetuate colonial, pre-colonial or neo-colonial stereotypes of Africa - are 'consumed' and 'regurgitated' in my work into new configurations.

The series of four paintings entitled *Largesse* (2000) (Figure 26-29) are mimetic re-productions of Arsène Matton's four gilded sculptures from the Rotunda. By painting them, they have been brought down out of their niches and re-placed in a public sphere. By recontextualizing them, by setting the paintings in other cultural spaces, the four images that depict the hierarchical relationship of Belgium to Congo, undergo a process of 'de-naturalization'.

Figure 49
Wendy Morris,
Sweeteners: distilled (Rhum Brun Superieur) (2001).
Oil on canvas, 70cm x 70cm.

Along with the use of representations already in circulation, *Re-Turning the Shadows* introduces objects that are not directly related to or associated with colonialism or European imagery of Africans. These objects – a chocolate hand, a can of sprats, a plate of intestines– are invested with significance by small alterations made to them, by placement, or by their relation to other objects. The image on the can of sprats that is pictured in *Preservatives: canned (museum-piece)* (2000) (Figure 43) has been altered. Replacing the three heads of fishermen that are on the original product are three heads of Batwa men. These men were photographed in the early twentieth century by the ethnographer Emile Torday whose practice it was, when photographing 'types', to arbitrarily select every seventh person out of a line-up. This ensured that personal, subjective, choices were avoided in the interests of 'objective' Science. The transference of these African men to the label of canned food creates a number of new associations. While the fishermen on the original packaging referred to the fish content of the tins, the replacement figures refer to the contents of the can as human flesh. In a process of inversion the idea of African cannibalism – an idea promoted in the RMCA and in strip cartoons available in suburban libraries - is replaced with an idea of European cannibalism and the consumption of African bodies. The process of canning or preserving food is likened, through the reference in the title, to ethnographic museums, and to their attempts to contain and preserve 'precolonial' cultures. The lettering on the side of the can is unaltered. Sprats are little fish and the three men pictured are 'Pygmies', little men. It is not a connection that is going to be made by the spectator on the strength of the information given, but it is a reference embedded in the work nonetheless.

'Ordinary' objects – in broad circulation in Belgium and unlikely to arouse much interest – are placed in contexts or situations that disturb their ordinariness. The chocolate hand in *Sweeteners: moulded (chocolate hand from Antwerp)* (2001) (Figure 45) was bought in a tourist chocolate shop in Antwerp, where the severed hand is a symbol relating to the city's founding

myth³. Placed, in the painting, in an ornate jewellery box, it is an object displaced. Any certainty about what it is is removed. It becomes an exotic object. Within the context of *Re-Turning the Shadows* the fact that the hand is severed, removed from a body, invests it with associations that have nothing to do with its intended function as a tourist item. Now it is associated with the punitive practice of hacking off hands during the rubber terror in the Congo, a subject more directly visualized in other works⁴. As an edible human hand it links to the notion of European cannibalism that runs throughout *Re-Turning the Shadows*.

Through the elevation of 'ordinary' objects to the status of icons and fetishes, and their connection to imagery already in circulation, established visualizing rituals are disrupted.

Notes

¹ Sint Niklaas and his 'assistant' Zwarte Piet visit young children around the 6th of December with gifts and sweets. Sint Niklaas is pictured as riding a white horse, Zwarte Piet carries the bag of gifts and walks. Sint Niklaas does the thinking, Zwarte Piet does the work. In a recent television series Zwarte Piet is portrayed as a well-meaning but bumbling idiot, unable to do what Sint Niklaas requires of him. While the origin of these two figures is purported to come from Celtic myths of the gods of day and night, there can be no argument about the racism implicit in their present-day form.

²'Tricontinental' is the term favoured by Robert Young in preference for 'Third World', 'the South' or 'non-Western'. Tricontinentalism marks an identification with the Havana Triennial of 1966 which was the first global alliance of peoples of the three continents (African, Asia and Latin America) against imperialism. Its journal the *Tricontinental* was also the founding moment of post-colonial theory. Young argues for 'tricontinental' over 'postcolonialism' for its broader internationalist political identity (2001:5).

³The founding myth of Antwerp relates a battle between a giant and young man. The young man outwits the giant and cuts off and throws away his hand. In the central square in Antwerp there is a large sculpture by Jef Lambeaux depicting the moment before the severed hand of the giant is thrown away.

⁴This subject is referred to in *Gift for Congo*(2002), *Preservatives: jellied (severed object)*(2000), *Preservatives: corned (master-piece)*(2000), and in the opening scene of *Voor de Goede Keukenin A Royal Hunger* in which a hand is cut up and canned.

Chapter 6: Critical structures

The form or structure of the paintings, drawings and film of *Re-Turning the Shadows* is an important part of their content. The form is frequently, in itself, a means of leveling criticism. Methods of display and categorization, collecting practices, even conceptions of time, that are part of the practice of ethnographic museums, are parodied through the formal structure of paintings, film and drawing.

The idea of the palimpsest is used in *A Royal Hunger* both as a means of construction – one image drawn over another – and as a means of questioning (neo)colonial notions of time – in which 'modern' and 'progressive' time is held to be a reserve for the Civilized, and prehistoric time to be the reserve for all Others. The practice of ethnographic museums to classify and catalogue Others into scientific taxonomies of Natural History is parodied in *The Great Power Line* (2000) series in which objects referring to Africa or to 'blackness' are depicted against rulers (Figure 50-52). The airbrushed oil paintings of *Re-Turning the Shadows* are parodies of another sort. In their hyperreality they create an illusion of the 'real' that simultaneously mimics and undermines the Scientific Realism of the museum. In their fetishistic sensuality the paintings parody relics that are displayed as tokens of the sacredness of the colonizing mission.

6.1 *A Royal Hunger*

The structure of *A Royal Hunger* is built up through a series of charcoal drawings that are filmed, manipulated and refilmed. This method allows for an entire sequence of events to occur within one drawing. As the charcoal images of the film move and mutate they leave behind them a shadowy trail of their passing. The erasures and overdrawings declare both a present state and the memory of past states.

Figure 50 (top)
Wendy Morris, *The Great Power Line*
(*Negrta*) (2001).
Charcoal and pencil on paper, 100cm x 65cm.

Figure 52 (bottom)
Wendy Morris, *The Great Power Line*
(*Afrika*) (2001).
Charcoal and pencil on paper, 100cm x 65cm.

Figure 51 (middle)
Wendy Morris, *The Great Power Line*
(*Negro*) (2001).
Charcoal and pencil on paper,
100cm x 55cm.

In the manner in which one drawing is drawn over another, the structure of the film resembles a palimpsest. A palimpsest conveys the notion of layered ideas or writings. It is a term used to describe an ancient writing material, such as a parchment, on which the original writing has been removed, though traces remain, to make space for new writing. It also denotes a play, novel or set of ideas that consist of several layers, with each new layer changing or hiding the previous ones. In its notion of layered time the palimpsest is contrary to ideas of linear, progressive time in which one event follows logically after another. Rather, it demonstrates simultaneity in which many times and stories are seen to co-exist. In the film *A Royal Hunger* (2002) events are drawn over each other, into one another, and out of one another. One image is partly erased to allow for the emergence of the next. Events or actions seldom lead 'logically' from one to the next, and any sense of progression is frustrated by the absurdity of many of the confrontations. There is no logic of progression through linear time. In this the structure of the film contradicts conceptions of time that are used as forms of regulation. In much (neo)colonial imagery, and in the narratives of the RMCA, Africans and Africa are bracketted out of time and projected into what McClintock (1995:40) has termed 'anachronistic space'. This anachronistic space (one cannot call it anachronistic 'time' because it is set out of time) is envisioned at a remove from European 'modern' and 'progressive' time. Through the structure of *A Royal Hunger* (as well as through its content) the conception of time is presented as multitemporal. The palimpsestic structure allows for the co-existence of past times with the present.

The mixing of the past and the present is an integral part of *Re-Turning the Shadows*. It does not insinuate a disregard for historical specificity but rather permits a perspective in which all human worlds are coeval and times are interlinked, a world in which the past is shown to be active in the present. In this the structure of the film reflects what is, according to Robert Young

Figure 53
Wendy Morris, *Backscratcher*
Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002).
Charcoal on paper, 100cm x 75cm.

Figure 54
Wendy Morris, *Backclapper*
Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002).
Charcoal on paper, 100cm x 75cm.

(2001:4), an integral aim of postcolonial theory, that of an 'active transformation of the present out of the clutches of the past'.

A film unfolds in time. One image follows another and the viewer is taken along at a pace and through the 'arguments' that are controlled and constructed by the filmmaker. The 'argument' constructed by the film— even if made up of the absurd or 'illogical' succession of images - is irreversible. The authority is with the filmmaker, making it a more didactic medium than painting. Painting is contemplative and favours the authority of the viewer. Its elements are presented all at once to be viewed simultaneously. The viewer sets her own pace for examining them, and when she reaches a conclusion, all the elements of the painting remain there for her to reverse or qualify her conclusion. The critical potentials of the two media are very different.

The speed in which connections can be made in an animation film grant the medium greater persuasive powers than painting. An examination of the fifteen second sequence of *Backscratcher* (a link piece in *A Royal Hunger*) (Figures 53,54) demonstrates this critical potential. The opening image is of a plastic backscratcher and shoe horn that is set onto a wooden block and labelled 'relic'. Above the image floats the word 'BACKSCRATCHER'. Before it begins to move the image already makes a number of references or allusions. The plastic object is being displayed, which suggests that it is an item considered to be of value. The addition of the identification plaque associates it with a public or museum display, since private displays are seldom labelled. The word 'relic' does not name the object but its category of value. The plaque points to a didactic function for the object. A plastic backscratcher is not 'ordinarily' an object of value or interest so the fact that it is presented in such a way is curious and the object becomes, by default, a curiosity. It parodies museal practices of detaching material objects (from

Figures 55, 56.
Wendy Morris, *Voor de Goede Keuken*.
Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002).
Charcoal on paper.

other cultures) of every-day use from their social, cultural or domestic use and setting them up as exotic museum curiosities.

The word 'backscratcher' describes one function of the object – an earlier function since it is now attached to a block of wood and can no longer be used as such. 'Backscratcher' has connotations of pleasure, of relieving an itch, but alludes too to the expression 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours' and with it the suggestion of something not quite 'above board'.

This amount of information can be 'read' out of one, stationary, drawing. Once the film begins to move and the images mutate, the number of connections that are made and the persuasive potential of those images, is multiplied. In quick succession the shoe horn mutates into another hand (with allusions of mutual flattery and backclapping), then both hands mutate into a knife and fork (with allusions to eating), and then they change into a whip or 'chicotte'¹ (with allusions to punishment). After each image change there follows a word change. 'BACKSCRATCHER' changes to 'BACKCLAPPER', 'BACKHANDER' and 'BACKWARMER' and then to 'BACTERIA'. There is a play between images and a play between images and words. The last word is different in structure and meaning to the others. 'Bacteria' is intended to have a double allusion, referring to both Leopold II's aversion to bacteria that bordered on the paranoiac², and to notions of Africa as the 'diseased continent'. 'Bacteria' links to images of disease, decay and rot that repeatedly appear in the film as metaphors of a diseased system.

This *Backscratcher* sequence is repeated as a link between the three 'vignettes' that make up *A Royal Hunger*³. The sequence begins to take on new associations that are informed by the content of each 'vignette' that it follows. After *Voor de Goede Keuken* and the scenes of chopped up hands and amputated heads in bully beef tins and sweet wrappers (Figures 55,56), the little plastic hand of the backscratcher begins to look more vulnerable. It

Figure 57 (top)
Wendy Morris, *Ingredients: Eyes* (2001).
Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.

Figure 58 (middle)
Wendy Morris, *Ingredients: Heart* (2001).
Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.

Figure 59 (bottom)
Wendy Morris, *Ingredients: Guts* (2001).
Oil on canvas, 100cm x 67cm.

takes on the aspect of a prosthesis, a replacement for a missing body part. The knife and fork into which the hand and shoe horn mutate look less innocent when seen after the scenes presenting human flesh as food.

A film unfolds in time, but this does not imply that the 'narrative' leads anywhere. Unfolding in time is not to be equated with progression towards a conclusion. In *A Royal Hunger* images appear, are drawn into, and merge into other images, but there is no concluding revelation. The odd, absurd, violent confrontations that occur throughout the film are intended as little shocks of non-recognition, mystifications rather than revelations. The intention has been to thicken description, to layer metaphors, to confuse expectation and to upset recognition, and by doing so, to disturb those visualizing rituals that determine how Africans are viewed in Europe.

6.2 Paintings and drawings

In *Re-Turning the Shadows* the form of the paintings and drawings are parodies of a range of museum display practices. *The Great Power Line* (Figure 50-52) series of three drawings plays with forms of taxonomic description. *Sweeteners: moulded (chocolate hand from Antwerp)* (Figure 45) mimics presentation practices that determine an object to be a fetish. *Preservatives: canned (museum-piece)* (Figure 43) describes not the Other but museum practices of Othering.

The series of drawings, *The Great Power Line* (Figure 50-52), parodies the idea of taxonomies, the scientific process of classifying living things. The images depict three items found in supermarkets (Negrita stove polish, Afrika biscuits) and in an art supplies shop (Negro pencil). All the items carry a reference to Africa or 'blackness' in their product titles. The objects are depicted next to rulers that are imprinted with the name 'The Great Power Line'. They are being measured. The drawings mimic 'scientific'

Figure 59 (left)
Wendy Morris, *Gift for Congo (back view)* (2001).
Oil on canvas, 67cm x 100cm.

Figure 60 (right)
Wendy Morris, *Gift for Congo (front view)* (2001).
Oil on canvas, 67cm x 100cm.

ethnographic practices of applying standards of measurement to Africans that were not applied likewise to Europeans. They parody taxonomic practices of classifying and cataloguing Africans as 'specimens' of Natural History. The three drawings make up one work, for taxonomies only produce meaning when they are multiples, when they form a series.

The medium of airbrushing oil onto canvas allows for the reproduction of gleaming, jewel-like, and richly translucent surfaces. The seductive, fetishistic quality of these painted surfaces becomes part of the meaning of the work. The *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary* (1995. Sv 'fetish'. Oxford: Oxford University Press) defines a fetish as both 'an object that certain people worship', and as 'a thing to which more respect or attention is given than is normal or sensible'. The *Oxford paperback dictionary* (1988. Sv 'fetish'. Oxford: Oxford University Press) is more decisive in its definition: a fetish is 'an object worshipped by primitive peoples who believe it to have magical powers or to be inhabited by a spirit' or 'anything to which foolishly excessive respect or attention is given'. In the RMCA it is the objects of Congo material culture that are labelled fetishes. In *Re-Turning the Shadows* it is objects of Belgian material culture that are presented as fetishes.

In the spirit of an insurgent aesthetic, the derogatory implication of a fetish as an object foolishly worshipped by 'primitive' Others - as it is promoted in the RMCA - is turned around. The objects depicted in the paintings are frequently macabre or gruesome – a human hand in aspic (Figure 42), eyeballs in a glass of water (Figure 57), intestines on a plate (Figure 59) – but they are presented on silver trays and pewter plates, on lace tablecloths, and in metal jewellery boxes. Added to that, the gleaming, translucent paint surfaces that describe them, invest them with 'excessive respect' and 'attention'. They become fetishes.

Christian relics function in a similar way. The wax limbs hung at the feet of statues of saints, the vessels containing the blood of Christ, the Sacred Heart pierced with knives, the Turin shroud imprinted with Christ's dead body, or the gruesome image of Christ with nails driven into his body, are macabre images and objects. Their presentation in gilded containers and gilt frames in the sumptuous settings of chapels and cathedrals is what turns them into fetishes. My paintings work on the same principle. My objects are about death and mutilation, and they too are presented in a manner that grants them an exaggerated value. The isolation of each object and the exaggerated manner of its presentation is what makes it into a fetish.

Through form and structure the paintings, drawings and film of *Re-Turning the Shadows* mimic and parody a range of museum display practices. Through inversion and reversal of these practices the intention has been to do a visual ethnography of the museum itself.

Notes

¹ The chicotte was a particularly nasty whip made of hippo hide that was used in the Belgian Congo as a means of punishment.

² Hochschild relates how Leopold II insisted on the palace tablecloths being boiled daily to kill germs and how his copy of *The Times of London* had to be ironed before he read it, again to kill the germs (1999:169).

³ The film is made up of three two minute 'vignettes' or sequences linked by the *Backscratcher* sequence. The vignettes are : *Voor de Goede Keuken*, *A Royal Hunger* and *Oxo*. Together they make up *A Royal Hunger*.

Chapter 7: Cannibal consumption and metaphors of violence in *Re-Turning the Shadows*

Re-Turning the Shadows attempts to connect metaphors of consumption and violence to narratives of Belgian colonialism. Colonialism is a form of consumption. It involves the consumption of produce – rubber, ivory, palm oil, minerals – in the case of the Belgian-Congo. It involves the consumption of labour –to collect the rubber, carry the ivory, harvest the palm oil, work the mines. It involves the consumption of bodies and body-parts - of deaths related to forced labour, punitive mutilations related to rubber collection, victims of the wars to control the ivory trade and mineral extraction. More than just a form of consumption, colonialism can be visualized as a form of cannibal consumption.

This cannibal consumption necessitates the use of violence, both psychological and physical. The violence of conquest and the consumption of bodies are two metaphors that are entirely absent from the narratives of the RMCA. It is for this reason that *Re-Turning the Shadows* has sought to find visual form for these concepts.

7.1 Metaphors of consumption

Metaphors of cannibal consumption are explored on three levels in *Re-Turning the Shadows*. There is cannibalism on a state level, on an institutional level, and on a domestic level. Leopold II, king of the Belgians and Sovereign of the Congo Free State, is depicted as a cannibal king. It was he who consumed ever-increasing numbers of African bodies in his greed for ever-increasing amounts of rubber and profit. In *A Royal Hunger* Leopold demands meat and his officers provide him with twitching human body parts.

Figure 62
Wendy Morris, *Voor de Goede Keuken*,
Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002)
Charcoal on paper

On the second level, the RMCA is depicted as a cannibal institution. It is a site where the spirit, arts and histories of 'Africa' are consumed. The image of the sprat can in *Preservatives: canned (museum-piece)* (Figure 43) is a visual metaphor for this institutional cannibalism.

The third level on which consumption is depicted as cannibal is domestic. The colony was brought into the homes and onto kitchen tables through the packaging of consumables. Food companies such as Liebig, Jacques, Anco, and *La vache qui rit* sought to ally their products with the patriotic project of colonization by introducing collectible cards into their packaging. These cards rehearsed all the stereotypes of colonial imagery. Through them the colony was brought into the home, 'consumed' along with the food products they accompanied.

Metaphors of state, institutional and domestic consumption are brought together in the paintings entitled *Preservatives* (Figures 42-44). Leopold is pictured, in *Preservatives: corned (master-piece)*, on the label of a corned meat tin that is held in the palm of an amputated hand. Practices of ethnographic museums to stop 'deterioration' and fix 'cultures' for the visual consumption of viewers are explored in *Preservatives: canned (museum-piece)*. Domestic food preparation and preservation is parodied in the image of a hand served up in aspic, in *Preservatives: jellied (severed object)*. All three images suggest a consumption that is cannibal, that involves the preparation, preservation and eating of human flesh. There is little distinction made between these three forms of consumption.

An object that appears regularly in the paintings and the film for its metaphorical richness, is that of the corned meat tin. It is an object long associated with armies of occupation. The process of preserving meat in tins was invented in the eighteenth century, in the time of Napoleon and at his request, as a means of providing field troops with transportable provisions.

Figures 63 & 64
Wendy Morris, *Voor de Goede Keuken*,
Stills from *A Royal Hunger* (2002)
Charcoal on paper

By the First World War it had become synonymous with western soldier's rations. In the Congo Free State the Belgian military and colonial agents were seen to eat it, and here it acquired a new set of meanings. Adam Hochschild (1999:166) wrote: 'As news of the white man's soldiers and their baskets of severed hands spread through the Congo, a myth gained credence with Africans that was a curious reversal of the white obsession with black cannibalism. The cans of corned beef seen in white men's houses, it was said, did not contain meat from the animals shown on the label; they contained chopped-up hands'.

The idea of human flesh as the content of corned meat tins continued to circulate in the Congo long after the rubber terror had subsided. Stories of captured Africans who were fattened up and canned aboard Sabena aircraft, and destined for European consumption, are recorded well into the 1950s and beyond (White 2000). Following historian Louise White (2000:2) the recurrent use of such metaphors, both powerful and uncertain, were a means of describing a colonial world of vulnerability and unreasonable relationships.

The corned beef tin appears in many of the paintings and drawings in *Re-Turning the Shadows*. In most instances it is connected to image of the amputated hand¹. In the film, *A Royal Hunger*, an opening sequence is of a severed hand being fitted into a tin. The image of the amputated hand is in *Preservatives: corned (severed object)* (Figure 44). It is in the background of *Largesse: Belgium grants support to the Congo* (Figure 44). Behind the golden figures of 'Belgium' and 'Congo' are a series of warheads constructed out of tins of corned meat piled one above another². The bulls' heads on either side of the target on the original packaging are replaced with images of hands, that allude to the human flesh content of the tins. As a visual metaphor it is intended to undermine Matton's image of Belgian philanthropy.

Figure 65
Wendy Morris, *General Necessity*,
Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002)
Charcoal on paper

Figure 66
Wendy Morris, *General Necessity*,
Still from *A Royal Hunger* (2002)
Charcoal on paper

The image of the severed hand became one of the most powerful symbols of the brutality of the Belgian rubber terror. Though there were few photographic records of amputated hands, there were many photographs of men, women and children showing the effects of amputation. These records formed the first instance of photographic evidence being used by human rights movements to back up accusations of human rights abuse. Edmond Morel and Conan Doyle, of the Congo Reform Society together, used the 'indisputable' evidence of Kodak images in their campaign to draw world attention to the atrocities (Doyle 1909). Emile Vandeveld, leader of the Belgian Socialists, president of the Second international, and outspoken critic of Leopold and Belgium's policies in the Congo, made the suggestion that the triumphal arch being built, on instruction of Leopold II in Jubelpark in Brussels, be renamed the Arches of the Severed Hands (Hochschild 1999:165).

The title of *A Royal Hunger* refers to the consumptive impulses of Leopold II, King of Belgium and self-appointed Sovereign of Congo. Setting him up as the ultimate cannibal, the film turns around the wilful consumption of body parts, some still twitching. The film explores metaphors of European violence that are absent from the RMCA. The generals and captains who hunt for food for the king are armed with fieldguns and pistols (Figures 65,66). Reactions in the film are prompted by weaponry. The Banania man (Figure 64) and the woman on the rum bottles are shot at by canon fire. The Madonna is launched into space by an artillery shell. A stray bullet hits the heart that lies on a plate in front of Leopold and it swells into a cabbage. The generals shoot at each other.

Metaphors of cannibalism refer not only to Leopold and the system that he instituted but also to the creation of a rebellious aesthetic. A cannibal aesthetic is one that seeks to devour and regurgitate colonialist discourses in an effort to develop new syntheses.

Notes

¹ The practice of amputation of hands (as well as feet and ears) as punishment for not producing the quota of rubber demanded by the agents of the Congo Free State seems to have been widespread. In *The crime of the Congo* (1909) Arthur Conan Doyle quotes from the diary of a traveller and ex-employee of the Congo Free State, a Mr Glave, that was written between 1893 and 1895. Glave wrote: "Mr Harvey heard ... that the State soldiers have been in the vicinity of (Clark's) station recently, fighting and taking prisoners; and he himself had seen several men with bunches of hands signifying their individual skill... Among the hands were those of men and women, and also of little children" (1909:36). Adam Hochschild (1999:165) recounts how the Presbyterian missionary William Sheppard "stumbled on one of the most grisly aspects of Leopold's rubber system. Like the hostage-taking, the severing of hands was deliberate policy, as even high officials would later admit."

² The completed work of Largesse is to be a four-sided 'column' that is set on a pedestal of steps. Placed on the floor in front of each painting will be a red carpet that is partially unrolled. The triangular gaps created between the four sides of the column and the four red carpets will be filled with pots of the sword-like plant, 'mother-in-law's-tongue'. Together, the plants and carpets will prevent close access to the paintings. It is to be an unapproachable monument.

Chapter 8: Negotiating reception and identity: *A Royal Hunger*

This chapter is a consideration of the effects of location, as well as the perceived identity of the filmmaker, on the cultural reception of *A Royal Hunger*. Through a comparison of four different viewings, the contingent nature of the film is examined.

A Royal Hunger has been shown to a number of audiences since October last year. The contexts, locations and audiences for each viewing have been very different and have brought into focus the contingent nature of the film. Rather than a fixed material object, *A Royal Hunger* could be described as an object that undergoes continual (re)translation. This is not to say that the film itself changes, for with the exception of an introductory text that has been added to the beginning, the film remains the same. Rather it is to say that factors such as the context in which the film is shown, as well as viewer perception of the identity of the filmmaker, affect how the film is read.

While drawing the film I visualized two audiences, both of whom I felt had entry points to the meanings in the film. The one was a group already familiar with work I had done into the visual presence of Africa in Europe. The other group was a theatre audience in Brussels who would see the film integrated into a satirical play about King Leopold II and his annexation of the Congo.

Once the film began to be shown in locations and to audiences not familiar with either my other visual work or (de)colonization debates in Belgium it became clear that *A Royal Hunger* needed some introduction. It was for this reason that I added a contextualizing text on to the beginning of the film¹. Now that *A Royal Hunger* has been shown to various audiences the complexities of its cultural reception and the factors that influence it have become clearer. Factors such as contextualizing frameworks - over which I

exercise certain control - and perceptions about my identity - over which I exercise less control – influence how the film is received.

To explore elements of *A Royal Hunger*'s cultural reception four different viewings will be examined. Three of these took place in Belgium and one in Italy. The film was shown as part of a theatre production, at a conference of international scholars, in an exhibition of African diaspora artists, and in a cinema. Some details of each viewing will need to be sketched in.

For the month of October 2002 *A Royal Hunger* showed in 'de Bottelarij', a theatre in Brussels, together with a play by Hugo Claus. *Het Leven en de werken van Leopold II* is a satirical play that sharply criticizes King Leopold II's annexation of the Congo. The play was written in 1969 as a form of revenge by Claus for having being awarded the State Prize and thereby becoming a Knight of the Order of Leopold. By writing *Het leven en de werken* he wished to make his feelings about the Belgian Royal family clear. Duly noted, and it is thought with royal pressure brought to bear, his play was only once produced in Belgium, in the early 70s, and in a French version. In 2002 the Royal Flemish Theatre Company decided to present the Flemish version.

A Royal Hunger - at that stage less than half completed – was commissioned by the theatre company with the intention of integrating it into the performance of Claus' play. In the end, the play and the film developed in different directions and it was decided to show the film on a large screen in the foyer of the theatre prior to, and following, each performance. The paintings and drawings of *Re-Turning the Shadows* were exhibited, simultaneously, in the foyer.

In 'de Bottelarij' the film was not presented as the work of an 'auteur' but as an auxiliary work to the main event. It played twice while people assembled

in the foyer, bought drinks or waited for the play to begin. It played again as people returned to the foyer after seeing the play. In contrast to the play that was performed in the structured, formal viewing setting of a theatre, the film was presented in an unstructured and informal setting.

My identity as an allochtone (non-Belgian) artist, and as an African in Europe, were, I would argue, a factor in the theatre company's decision to commission the film. The inclusion of other registers of perception – other than those of Claus, the dramatist or the director - were deliberately sought to lend richness and complication to translations of the play. In the presentation and reception of the film, however, my identity as a non-Belgian, an African, was not emphasized in any direct way.

The second viewing of the film took place at the 13th Festival of African Cinema in Milan, Italy. Here, clearly, my identity as African was crucial to the film's selection, since the focus of the festival was animation in Africa and the African diaspora. In the index of the catalogue filmmakers and films are listed according to their country of origin. *A Royal Hunger* is listed as a film of the African diaspora and I as a South African animation filmmaker.

My film was one of a programme of twenty short films that were shown one after another in one sitting. Unlike the audience in the theatre foyer, this cinema audience was expecting to see films, even more specifically, they were expecting to see animation films made by African filmmakers. A cinema is a structured, formal viewing setting in which viewers bring certain expectations of what is to be seen that are related to previous films seen. In this setting *Royal Hunger* had to stand alone. No longer an interdisciplinary object that could be read through, and together with, the exhibitions of paintings and the performance of the play about Leopold, it was presented here as a film amongst other films. In an interview I did with a cinematic journalist around that time, the questions I was asked concerned the influences on my work by other film makers. That surprised me at first. I had

thought I was making a visual object that would be read as the work of a visual artist, as 'art' production. It quickly became clear that because the film was now included in the film festival circuit its meanings, at these viewings, were going to be sought within the arena of film studies.

More specifically than that, meanings of the film were going to be constructed through its connection to African cinema. Of the eight festivals to which I have submitted the film, the two festivals that had no relation to Africa or to a 'north/south' focus, refused it. All festivals with a focus on tricontinental cinema (Africa, Latin America, Asia) accepted it. It does raise the question of whether *A Royal Hunger* is being selected for qualities inherent to it, or for its identity as an African product. While I view it as a critical work about attitudes, ideologies and products in circulation in Belgium, I suspect that it is being translated through the perceived identity of its maker rather than through its content.

If the viewing in the cinema in Milan had the potential for the narrowest reading of my work, the next viewing had the potential for the broadest reading. This viewing of *A Royal Hunger* was at an international conference of African and Africanist scholars at the Palace of Colonies, in the grounds of the Royal Museum of Central Africa at Tervuren. The conference *Phantom Europe (L'Europe Fantôme)* was the initiative of organizations independent of the Museum though the project was supported by the Museum and was opened by its director. The title of the conference reflected a concern with the construction of mythologies inspired by Europe.

Until this conference I had found no opportunity of showing my visual work at this site that has been the central focus of my work for the last three years. This conference gave me the opportunity not only to show the film on the premises of the museum, in the presence of the director, the museologist and other staff, but also in front of an authorizing audience of international scholars. This audience was crucial in lending weight to the reception of the

work and in disallowing the management of the museum to dismiss the film as of little consequence.

In the introduction to *A Royal Hunger* I stressed its connection to the RMCA and that the objective in making it was to find a visual vehicle capable of critically challenging the stagnant narratives of the museum. The combination of this direct approach and the showing of the film angered the director of the museum who later accused the organizers of having abused the museum's hospitality and of embarrassing him personally in front of an international group of scholars, by allowing my presentation.

This is the one viewing in which the full potential of the film came to bear. Here it proved that a drawn film could function as an 'insurgent aesthetic' that could be used strategically. It points to the cruciality of location and context in the presentation of the film. The same film shown at the theatre as a lead-in to a play, or in a cinema on a film festival, does not have the same tactical power as it does when shown, for instance, at this conference. The specific framework of a location together with the text that directs the viewer towards the object of criticism, are crucial elements of the film's persuasive power.

The fourth viewing that I want to mention was as part of an exhibition of visual art by artists of the African diaspora at the Gallery Vertebra in Brussels. This was the second part of the project, *Phantom Europe*, in which Europe was the subject of investigation of African artists. Together with work by other diaspora artists as Sokari Douglas-Camp, Fernando Alvim, and Barthélémy Toguo, three of my paintings were shown with the film.

Again, this is a different context and readings of the film occurred in a different register. The authorizing discourses here fall within the field of art history and contemporary art practices. The audience comes to an opening of an exhibition of work of artists with the expectation that they will contemplate the works in the light of discourses about art – and about Africa.

What the various viewings have shown is that the film is a resolutely interdisciplinary object and that readings are relative and dependent on the authorizing discourses of each specific context. While as an artist I try to control the various readings of the work, it is clearly not possible to control more than a few aspects. The film is (re)translated in each new setting and by each viewer who responds not only to the given factors of a viewing but to the cultural history that they themselves bring along.

Notes

¹ The text reads as follows:

Based on a true story of cannibal greed in the colony of Belgian-Congo around 1900

-

Featuring Leopold II - self-appointed Sovereign of Congo- and his consortium of business associates and his military force

-

Set in the Royal Museum of Central Africa, at Tervuren, Belgium, where a century later, Leopold and his accolytes continue to be celebrated as unquestioned heroes.

Conclusion

An overwhelming sense of dereliction and neglect pervades the halls of the RMCA. The chipped figures of Herbert Ward show the white plaster under the grey-brown paint. The gilt on the golden sculptures is wearing thin. Sculptures are coated in a layer of dust. The large windows and cupola's that were intended to flood the halls with natural light have been painted over - to replicate the dimness of thick forest one might suppose – and make it all but impossible to see into some of the display cases¹. Much of the sparse contextualization of objects on display that there once was has been removed, leaving entire display cases without a word of explanation.

The pervading sense of neglect in the museum might be read as a sign of a crisis of confidence, even conscience, on the part of the curators on the ongoing relevance of a museum that celebrates European colonization, if it was not for the fact that the museum is known to moonlight as a 'prestigious'² setting for such events as the annual gala dinner of the Prince Laurent Foundation³. While by day it may resemble a temple that has lost its high priests and congregation, by night it plays host to princes, barons, counts and ambassadors. Clearly the RMCA is not viewed as a contested site by all who know it. The decision to invite the titled upper classes to feast at the feet of the *Leopard Man* or under the tortured female figure in *Slavery* can only imply that the ideologies imbedded in these works, and in the entire museum, are not seen as questionable. The holding of a gala dinner in the Rotunda and the Ethnographic Halls by a foundation that has at its head one of the princes of Belgium, not only implies no criticism of Leopold II and his Congo Free State, but is an outright stamp of approval of all that the museum represents.

The RMCA continues to exist as a text without a shadow. Roland Barthes wrote, in *The pleasure of the text*, that there 'are those who want a text (an art, a painting) without a shadow, without the "dominant ideology"; but this is

to want a text without fecundity, without productivity, a sterile text...The text needs its shadow...subversion must produce its own chiaroscuro' (quoted by Kasfir 1992:41).

Re-Turning the shadows is a call for the museum to acknowledge its shadow. This involves not only the inclusive processes of admitting the lost, marginalized, or vilified Other but, as importantly, the questioning of the museum's own role in the perpetuation of those elisions. The museum needs to acknowledge and enact a loss of some part of itself.

Notes

¹ The History Hall in particular is so dimly lit that one struggles to see the objects in the cases clearly.

² The invitation to the gala dinner describes the RMCA as 'het prestigieuze kader' (a prestigious frame or setting).

³ The Prince Laurent Foundation is an organization devoted to the welfare of pets and wild animals. The annual gala dinner was held at the RMCA on November 20th 2003. The invited guests were requested to dress in evening costume and to each pay one hundred and eighty euros for the dinner. The event was shown on the 'society' programme *De Rode Loper* on VRT the following week and the television journalist noted how 'suitable the décor of the museum was for such an event'.

Bibliography

- Adeleke, T. 1998. *UnAfrican Americans: Nineteenth-century black nationalists and the civilizing mission*. Lexington:University of Kentucky Press.
- AfricaMuseum. 1998. *Welcome to the Royal Museum for Central Africa*. Federal Office for Scientific, Technical and Cultural Affairs. [ONLINE]. Available: <http://www.africamuseum.be/UK/index.html>. Accessed on: 3.10.1998
- Arens, W. 1979. *The man-eating myth: anthropology and anthropophagy*. Oxford:Oxford University Press.
- 1998. *Rethinking Anthropophagy. Cannibalism and the colonial world*. Edited by Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Arnoldi, M-J. 1992. A distorted mirror: the exhibition of the Herbert Ward Collection of Africana, *Museums and communities: The politics of public culture*. Edited by Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, & Steven Levine. Washington:Smithsonian Institution Press.
- 1998. Where art and ethnology met: the Ward African collection at the Smithsonian. *The scramble for art in Central Africa*. Schildkrout,E & Keim,C (eds). Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Arnaut, K. 1999. *Confronting colonial recollections: memories-at-work in and around the Musée Africain de Namur (Belgium)*. Workshop 'Temporalité et muséographie' organized by Association pour la recherche en anthropologie sociale (APRAS), Paris, 27 Nov.1999. [ONLINE] Available : http://africana.rug.ac.be/texts/Department/staff/Karel_Arnaut/Paristextword.doc Accessed on: 15.05.1999.
- Asante, M K. 1996,1999. *Race in antiquity: Truly out of Africa*. [ONLINE]. Available: <http://www.asante.net/articles/lefkowitz.html>. Accessed on: 07.11.1999.
- Asselbergh, H, & Lesage, D. 1999. *Het museum van de natie: Van kolonialisme tot globalisering*. Brussel:Y.Gevaert.
- Banton, M. 1987. *Racial Theories*. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Barker, F, Hulme, P & Iversen, M (eds). 1998. *Cannibalism and the colonial world*. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Barringer, T & Flynn, T. 1998. *Colonialism and the object: Empire, material culture and the museum*. London:Routledge.
- Barthes, R. 1970. *Mythologies* Paris:Seuil.

- Bartolovich, C. 1998. Consumerism, or the cultural logic of late cannibalism. *Cannibalism and the colonial world*. Edited by Francis Barker, Peter Hulme & Margaret Iversen. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Berger, J. 1972. *Ways of seeing*. London: BBC and Penguin Books.
- Bernal, M. 1992. Animadversions on the origins of Western Science. *Isis* 83:596-607.
- Blakely, A. 1994. *Blacks in the Dutch world: the evolution of racial imagery in a modern society*. Bloomington:Indiana University Press.
- Bouquet, M (ed). 2001. *Academic anthropology and the museum: Back to the future*. New York:Berghahn Books.
- Boyens, J. 1982. *Oscar Jespers*. Antwerp:Stichting Mercator-Plantijn vzw.
- Brantlinger, P. 1985. Victorians and Africans: The genealogy of the myth of the dark continent. *Critical Inquiry* 12 (Autumn):166-203.
- Bruner, E. 1994. Maasai on the lawn: Tourist realism in east Africa. *Cultural Anthropology*. 9 (2):435-470.
- Butchart, A.. 1998. *The anatomy of power. European constructions of the African body*. London:Zed Books.
- Ceuppens, B. 2003. *Onze Congo? Congolezen over de kolonisatie*. Leuven:Davidsfonds.
- Crary, J. 1991. *Techniques of the observer: On vision and modernity in the nineteenth century*. Cambridge:MIT Press.
- Conrad, J. 1971. *Heart of Darkness*. In the Norton Critical Edition. Edited by Robert Kimbrough. New York:Norton and Company.
- Corbey, R. 1989. *Wildheid en beschaving: De Europese verbeelding van Afrika*. Baarn: Ambo.
- Claesener, H. 1912. La mission Matton au Congo. *L'expansion belge*. March. No 3:155-156.
- Clifford, J. 1988. *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-century ethnography, literature, and art*. Harvard University Press.
- Coombes, A. 1995. *Reinventing Africa: Museums, material culture and popular imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*. New Haven:Yale University Press.
- Darwin,C. 1861. *On the origin of the species by means of natural selection*. 3d ed. London:J.Murray

- Dias, N. 2000. The visibility of difference. Nineteenth-century French anthropological collections. In *The politics of display: Museums, science, culture*. Edited by Sharon Macdonald. London:Routledge.
- Dietrich, K. 1993. Of salvation and civilization: The image of indigenous Southern Africans in European travel illustration from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. University of South Africa.
- Dembour, M.B. 2000. *Recalling the Belgian Congo*. New York:Berghahn.
- Diop, Cheikh Anta. 1980, 1997. Origin of the Ancient Egyptians. UNESCO. *General History of Africa Vol 2, Ancient Civilizations of Africa*. Edited/translated by G.Mokhtar. Reproduced online in *The MAAT Newsletter*. Available: http://www.melanet.com/clegg_series/diop.html. Accessed on: 23.03.1999.
- . 1974. *The African origin of civilization, myth or reality*. Westbrook, Connecticut:Lawrence Hill Books.
- Doyle, A.C. 1909. *The crime of the Congo*. London:Hutchinson.
- DuBois, WEB. 1961. *The world and Africa: An inquiry into the part which Africa has played in world history*. New York:International Publishers.
- Eagleton, T. 1991. *Ideology, an introduction*. London:Verso
- Edwards, E. 1992. *Anthropology and photography 1860- 1920*. New Haven:Yale University Press.
- Fabian, J. 2000. *Out of our minds: Reason and madness in the exploration of Central Africa*. Berkeley:University of California Press.
- 1983. *Time and the other: How anthropology makes its object*. New York:Columbia University Press.
- Fanon, F. 1995. The fact of blackness. In *Post Colonial Studies Reader*. Ashcroft, B (ed). 1995. London:Routledge.
- Flynn, T. 1998. Taming the tusk: the revival of chryselphantine sculpture in Belgium during the 1890s. *Colonialism and the object: Empire, material culture and the museum*. Edited by Tim Barringer & Tom Flynn. London:Routledge.
- Foucault, M. 1972. *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse of language*. Translated by Sheridan Smith, A.M. New York:Pantheon Books.
- Gates, H.L. (Jr)(ed). 1985. *'Race', writing and difference*. Chicago:University of Chicago Press.
- Gilman, S. 1985. Black bodies, white bodies: Towards an iconography of female sexuality in late nineteenth-century art, medicine, and literature. *Critical Inquiry*. 12 (Autumn):204-241.

- Gilroy, P. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Cambridge:Harvard University Press.
- Godby, M. 1999. 'Some little bit of effective representation': *Photography and painting on the South West Africa expedition of James Chapman and Thomas Baines, 1861-62*. Encounters with photography conference, Cape Town. [ONLINE].
Available: <http://www.museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/godby.htm>.
Accessed on: 17.05.1999.
- Gryseels, G. 2003. Foreword. *Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-afrika: Centrum voor onderzoek en verspreiding van kennis*. Tervuren:KMMA.
- Hart, J & Bauman, R (eds). 1996. *Explorations in difference: Law, culture, and politics*. Toronto:University of Toronto Press.
- Hayes, P. 2001. Book Reviews: Speaking with vampires: Rumour and history in colonial Africa. *African Affairs*. 100 : 151-170.
- Hergé. 1974. *TinTin in the Congo (Kuifje in Afrika)*. Paris:Casterman.
- Hersey, G. 1993. *The evolution of allure: Sexual selection from the Medici Venus to the Incredible Hulk*. London:MIT Press.
- Hochschild, A. 2000. *King Leopold's ghost: A story of greed, terror and heroism in colonial Africa*. London:MacMillan.
- Hulme, P. 1995. Columbus and the cannibals. In *Post Colonial Studies Reader*. Ashcroft,B (ed). 1995. London:Routledge.
- JanMohammed, AR. 1985. The economy of Manichean allegory: The function of racial difference in colonialist literature. In *'Race', writing and difference*. Edited by Henry Louis Gates (Jr). Chicago.University of Chicago Press.
- Karp, I & Lavine, SD. 1991. *Exhibiting cultures: The poetics and politics of museum display*. Washington:Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Kasfir, SL. 1992. African art and authenticity: A text with a shadow. *African Arts* 25(2):41-53.
- Klieman, K. 2000. Posting to the H-Africa listserve. Feb 10. Subject: *Film on Ota Benga: Reply*. [ONLINE].
Available: H-AFRICA@H-NET.MSU.EDU
Accessed on: 10.02.2000.
- Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-afrika: Centrum voor onderzoek en verspreiding van kennis*. Statement of intention. 2003. Tervuren:KMMA.
- Leak, A. 1994. *Roland Barthes: Mythologies*. London:Grant & Cutler.
- Lindqvist, S. 1996. *Exterminate all the brutes*. Translated by Joan Tate. New York:The New York Press.

- Le Soir. 1952. Sculptures d'Arthur Dupagne. (The author is credited with the initials, PC): [s p].
- Lestringant, F. 1997. *Cannibals: The discovery and representation of the cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne*. Translated by Rosemary Morris. Berkeley:University of California Press.
- Macdonald, S (ed). 2000. *The politics of display: Museums, science, culture*. London:Routledge.
- MacKenzie, J. 1999. *Propaganda and empire: The manipulation of British public opinion 1880-1960*. Manchester:Manchester University Press.
- Maeder, J. 1998. The little man in the zoo. Ota Benga, 1906. Big Town-Big Time. A New York epic:1898-1998. Chapter 22. *New York Daily News Online*. Available: <http://www.nydailynews.com/manual/news/bigtown/chap22.htm> Accessed on: 23.08.1999.
- Mamdani, M. 1998. When does a settler become a native? Reflections of the colonial roots of citizenship in Equatorial and South Africa. Text of Inaugural Lecture as A.C.Jordan Professor of African Studies, University of Cape Town. *Electronic Mail and Guardian* May 26. [ONLINE]. Available: <http://www.mg.co.za/mg/news/98may-mamdani.html>. Accessed on : 26.05.1998.
- Massing, JM. 1995. From Greek proverb to soap advert: Washing the Ethiopian. *Journal of the Warbourg and Courtauld Institutes*, 58:180-201
- Matton, A. 1911. Nieuws uit Kongo. *De Vlaamsche Gazet*, 27 (October 1911): [s p].
- Mbembe, A. 2002. African modes of self-writing. *Public Culture* 14 (1, Winter):20-30.
- McClintock, A. Soft-soaping empire: Commodity racism and imperial advertising. In *The visual culture reader*. Mirzoeff, N (ed). 1999. London:Routledge.
- McClintock, A. 1995. Imperial leather: Race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest. New York:Routledge.
- McClintock, A, Aamir, M & Shohat, E (eds). 1997. *Dangerous Liasons*. Minneapolis:University of Minnesota Press.
- Miller, C. 1986. *Blank Darkness: Africanist discourse in French*. Chicago:University of Chicago Press.
- 1997. Review of 'Aethiopia: Peuples d'Ethiopie', Africa Museum, Tervuren, Belgium. H-NET BOOK REVIEW. Published by H-AfrArts@h-net.msu.edu. June, 1997. Accessed on: 16.06.1997.
- Mirzoeff, N (ed). 1999. *The visual culture reader*. London:Routledge.
- Mitchell, T. 1999. Orientalism and the exhibitionary order. In *The visual culture reader*. Mirzoeff, N (ed). London:Routledge.

- Moorehead, A. 1933. *The White Nile*. London:Penquin.
- Muteba Luntumbue, T. 2001. *ExitCongoMuseum: Hedendaagse kunst, art contemporain, contemporary art*. Tervuren:RMCA.
- Muteba Rahier, J. 2003. The ghost of Leopold II: The Belgian Royal Museum of Central Africa and its dusty colonialist exhibition. *Research in African Literatures* 34(1, Spring):58-84.
- Obeyesekere, G. 1998. Cannibal feasts in nineteenth-century Fiji: Seamen's yarns and the ethnographic imagination. *Cannibalism and the colonial world*. Edited by Francis Barker, Peter Hulme & Margaret Iversen. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Ogbechie, S. 1997. Review: Uzo Egonu, an African artist in the west. Reviewed for H-AfriArts (Humanities on Line). [ONLINE]. Available: <http://satie.arts.usf.edu/ooguibe/egonu.htm>. Accessed on: 10.04.1999.
- Oguibe, O. 1993. In the 'Heart of Darkness'. *Third Text* 23 (Summer):3-8.
- , 2000. The burden of painting. Catalogue essay for Cinco Continentes, the 3rd international salon of painting, Mexico City, 2000. [ONLINE]. Available: http://www.camwood.org/Olu_Oguibe_on_painting.htm. Accessed on: 08.07.2003
- , 2001. 'Double Dutch' and the culture game. Catalogue essay for exhibition Yinka Shonibare: Be-Muse, Rome 2001. [ONLINE]. Available: http://www.camwood.org/Olu_Oguibe_on_shonibare.htm. Accessed on: 08.07.2003.
- Oha, O. 2000. 'Eating nothing raw, committing suicide: the politics and semiotics of food culture' *Mots Pluriels*. 15. September. [ONLINE]. Available: <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP1500oo.html>. Accessed on: 30.09.2000.
- Oxford Paperback Dictionary*. 1988. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pakenham, T. 1992. *The Scramble for Africa*. London:Abacus.
- Pang, AS. 1999. *Visual Representation and post-constructivist history of science*. [ONLINE]. Available: <http://www.jps.net/hpang/Visual/text.html>. Accessed on: 10.12.1999.
- Pieterse, JN. 1990. *Wit over zwart: Beelden van Afrika en zwarten in de westerse populaire cultuur*. Amsterdam:Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen.
- Phillips, J. 1998. Cannibalism qua capitalism: The metaphors of accumulation in Marx, Conrad, Shakespeare and Marlowe. *Cannibalism and the colonial world*. Edited by Francis Barker, Peter Hulme & Margaret Iversen. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.

- Rassenfosse, M. 1929. Le sculpteur Arsène Matton. *L'expansion belge*. 2 (February):23-26.
- Richards, C. 1999. Bobbitts Feast: Violence and representation in South African art. In *Grey Areas: Representation, identity and politics in contemporary South African art*. Edited by Brenda Atkinson & Candice Breitz. Johannesburg:Chalkham Press.
- Rogoff, I. 1999. Studying visual culture. In *The visual culture reader*. Mirzoeff, N(ed). 1999. London:Routledge.
- Root, D. 1998. *Cannibal culture: Art, appropriation and the commodification of difference*. Toronto:Westview Press.
- Said, E. 1985. An ideology of difference. In *'Race', writing and difference*. Edited by Henry Louis Gates(Jr). Chicago:University of Chicago Press.
- . 1993. *Culture and imperialism*. New York:Alfred A Knopf.
- . 1995. *Orientalism*. London:Penquin Books.
- Saunders, B. 2001a. Congo-Vision. In *Academic anthropology and the museum: Back to the future*. Bouquet, M(ed). 2001. New York:Berghahn Books
- 2001b. *Lafitau's denial of coevalness*. Paper presented at the 22nd American Indian Workshop, Bordeaux. Draft.
- 2001c. The photological apparatus and the desiring machine. Unexpected congruences between the Koninklijk Museum, Tervuren and the U'mistà Centre in Alert Bay. In *Academic Anthropology and the museum. Back to the future*. Bouquet, M(ed). 2001. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Schildkrout, E. 1991. The spectacle of Africa through the lens of Herbert Lang: Belgian Congo photographs 1909-1915. *African Arts* (October):70-83.
- Shohat, E & Stam, R. 1999. Narrativizing visual culture: Towards a polycentric aesthetics. In *The visual culture reader*. Mirzoeff, N (ed). 1999. London:Routledge.
- Smith, B. 1992. *Imagining the Pacific: In the wake of Cook*. New Haven:Yale University Press.
- Smithsonian Institute. 1922. *Exhibition of the Herbert Ward African Collection*. Natural History Museum Building. Washington D.C. March 1, 1922.
- Stafford, B. 1992. *Body Criticism: Imaging the unseen in enlightenment art and medicine*. Cambridge, Massachusetts:MIT Press.
- Stoler, A. 1995. *Race and the education of desire: Foucault's history of sexuality and the colonial order of things* Durham:Duke University Press.

- Street, B. 1975. *The savage in literature: Representations of 'primitive' society in English fiction 1858-1920*. London:Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Sypnowich, C. 1996. Some disquiet about 'Difference'. In. *Explorations in difference: law, culture, and politics*. Edited by Jonathon Hart & Richard Bauman. Toronto:University of Toronto Press.
- Taylor, C. 1998. *The mask of art: Breaking the aesthetic contract - film and literature*. Bloomington:Indiana University Press.
- Teslow, TL. 2000. Reifying race: Science and art in *Races of Mankind* at the Field Museum of Natural History. *The politics of display: Museums, science, culture*. Edited by Sharon Macdonald. London:Routledge.
- Van Binsbergen, W. 1997,1999. *Black Athena ten years after: towards a constructive reassessment*. [ONLINE]. Available: <http://share.geocities.com/Athens/Atrium/2327/gen3/Talanta1.html>. Accessed on: 18.12.1999.
- Van der Zwet Slotemaker, N. 1997. *Kongo-tentoonstelling*. [ONLINE]. Available: <http://www.telegraaf.nl/krant/enverder/v...is.Belgie/reis.970719kongotentoonst.html>. Accessed on: 18.12.1999.
- Van Eetvelde, G. 1996. *Les groupes ethnographiques réalisés par Julien Dillens, Charles Samuel et Isidore De Rudder pour la section du Congo de l'Exposition universelle de Bruxelles-Tervuren en 1897*. Unpublished dissertation. Institut Supérieur d'Histoire de l'Art et d'Archéologie de Bruxelles.
- Van Lennep, J. 1992. *Catalogus van de beeldhouwkunst: Kunstenaars geboren tussen 1750 - 1882*. Brussel:Vita Foutry.
- Verstraete, J. 2000. *Arsene Matton: Een veelzijdig kunstenaar (1873-1953)*. Harelbeke:Heemkundige Kring De Roede van Harelbeke.
- Walz, R. 1998. *Of cannibals and prostitutes: Figures of obsession in modern French culture*. H-Net Book Review. Published by HFrance. May. [ONLINE]. Available at H-Net Discussion Logs.
- Warner, M. 1998. Fee fi fo fum: The child in the jaws of the story. *Cannibalism and the colonial world*. Edited by Francis Barker, Peter Hulme & Margaret Iversen. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Wastiau, B. 2000. *An essay on the 'social life' of the masterpieces of the Tervuren museum* Catalogue to ExitCongoMuseum exhibition. Tervuren:Royal Museum for Central Africa.
- White, L. 2000. *Speaking with vampires: Rumour and history in colonial Africa*. Berkeley:University of California Press.

----- 2001. *On unpacking the occult: why we need to go back to Friuli (or Transylvania for that matter)*. Paper presented at the *Magical Modernities in Africa* Conference , Wisconsin, April 6. Draft.

Wolff, J. 1988. *The social production of art*. London:MacMillan Education.

Young, R. 1995. *Colonial desire: Hybridity in theory, culture and race*. London:Routledge.

Young, R. 2001. *Postcolonialism: An historical introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

