

BOOKS & BONES & OTHER THINGS

Jan K. Coetzee

Contributors

*Asta Rau
Willem Boshoff
Jonah Sack
Kim Berman
Keith Dietrich
Eliza Kentridge*



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For Asta

WORDS ON THE BOOK

“This is an exceptional publication linking art, history and human interaction. As photographer, I am deeply impressed with the imagery that Jan Coetzee has created as illustration. As a consequence, the book transcends a merely academic approach to a more aesthetic one.”

Roger Ballen

South African-based American photographer best known for his images that exist in a space between painting, drawing, installation and photography. His works include Outland (2000, revised in 2015), Shadow Chamber (2005), Boarding House (2009), Asylum of the Birds (2014) and most recently, Ballenesque: A Retrospection (2017). He also created acclaimed short films such as I Fink You Freeky, as well as sculpture installations. Some of his recent installations were at Paris' Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature (2017), Australia's Sydney College of the Arts (2016) and at the Serlachius Museum in Finland (2015).

“It's high time that sociologists venture beyond the confines of academic sociology and that is exactly what Jan Coetzee has done in *Books and Bones and Other Things*. Part art installation and part sociological reflection, he shows how historical texts interact with one another and take on different meanings in the contexts in which they are read. A pleasure for anyone interested in the sociology of knowledge and the materiality of everyday life.”

Kathy Davis

Senior Research Associate, Sociology Department, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam and long-standing editor of The European Journal of Women's Studies. An award-winning author of best-selling sociological texts, the most recent being Dancing Tango: Passionate encounters in a globalizing world.

“Old texts, found objects, sculptures and an autobiographical gaze – an impressive and innovative account of reconstructing the South African lifeworld set in colonialism and apartheid. Poignant guide to future qualitative thinking.”

Thomas S. Eberle

*Emeritus Professor of Sociology, University of St.Gallen,
former Vice-President of the European Sociological Association,
and former President of the Swiss Sociological Association.*

“Through a narrative approach to human lives, this book reveals an interplay between symbolic and material objects. Knowledge, beliefs, ideologies and cultural patterns are embedded in books, artefacts, objects and art. When these books, artefacts and objects are set in visual and symbolic juxtaposition to one another and presented to the viewer as artworks, a space opens for their inherent beliefs, ideologies and cultures to be contested. Scholars in epigenetics will enjoy reading this book, which tells how societal behaviours affect phenotypic change, and *vice versa*.”

Giampietro Gobo

Professor of Sociology and Methodology, University of Milan.

“*Books and Bones and Other Things* contains a unique collection of objects and texts, calling for the appreciation and fascination of storytelling and story writing. Jan Coetzee’s sociological eye for the significance of memory and the implications of artefacts for memory, is sharp when he sets out to excavate sedimented layers of social reality. His narrative is personal, insightful and intriguing. A highly recommended story.”

Katarina Jacobsson

*Professor of Social Work and Sociology, Department of Social Work,
Lund University, and the President of the Swedish Sociological Association.*

“Curriculum, the feminist theorist Madeleine Grumet once said, is the collective story we tell our children about our past, our present and our future. In one sense, the turmoil in South African society – and recently university campuses in particular – has to do with those untold stories, unheard stories, and untroubled stories shattered by the transition from apartheid to democracy. I cannot think of a more accomplished scholar of stories, or the narrative study of lives, than Jan Coetzee who in this ground-breaking book demands a reckoning with all those stories, of ourselves and others entangled in this post-1994 dance. This attempt at excavating the ‘knowledge in the bones’ is truly an exceptional piece of scholarship by Coetzee and an outstanding set of authors and should be required reading not only for sociologists but story-tellers and -listeners across the disciplines. It is the curriculum we desperately need.”

Jonathan D. Jansen

Former Rector and Vice-Chancellor at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa and author of Knowledge in the Blood (2009), How to fix South Africa's Schools (2014), Making Love in a War Zone (2018) and several other books.

“Understanding life experiences always goes through some kind of narrative interpretation about the self. The autobiographical journey narrated in this book and the author’s artworks keenly resonate with current trends in contemplative research.”

Krzysztof Konecki

Professor of Sociology, University of Łódź, the President of the Polish Sociological Association and actively working in the field of meditation as epistemology.

“Jan Coetzee appears before us as an artistic sociologist or sociological artist. His collection of books within a book, which he has turned into artistic treasures by combining them with other artefacts, shows us in a remarkable way how complex meaning and its production are. By linking this work to his biography Coetzee illustrates the power of semiosis.”

Christoph Maeder

Professor of Visual Sociology, University of Teacher Education, Zurich, and former President of the Swiss Sociological Association.

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PROLOGUE

In today's world there is an increasing interest in the narrative study of lives. This comes in the wake of our need to better understand human experience, human motivations, and the ways in which we impact on our social and natural world. Since its inception sociology has grappled with the quest to understand social reality and the intricate interplay of relationships between self, other, community, and the social world. We know that we cannot analyse human actions and social interaction in an objective manner as these do not exist in some concrete form 'out there'. Rather, actions and social interaction are the outcome of the ongoing social and historical mediation of consciousness, and therefore they also require an understanding from within.

As a young academic in the early 1970s, I encountered John O'Malley's book entitled *Sociology of meaning*¹ and became immersed in concepts such as context, critical reflection, dialectic, encounter, existential, inquisitive practice, phenomenological, semiopraxis and subjectivity. These concepts became part of the sociological repertoire underlying my belief in the power of interpretive sociological analysis to open up better understandings of everyday experiences. They guided my epistemological journey towards unwrapping and breaking open the meanings and emotions of routine as well as exceptional moments in our everyday life and its roots in social reality. The books in this collection of *documents of life* contributed over a long period of time to present everyday social reality – specifically western social reality, and provide expressions of our past as well as reflections on our ancestry.

1 O'Malley 1972.

In his ground-breaking work *Memory, history, forgetting* Paul Ricoeur reminds us that any phenomenology of memory needs to address two essential questions: "Of *what* are there memories? *Whose* memory is it?"² The texts contained in the installations in this book relate a particular history – they tell stories that go back to Western and Central Europe. The texts also centre on my own appropriation of memory, my own capability for self-reflection. To understand how memory works and how it is embodied in this book and the bookworks, one must realise that *to be reminded of something is at the same time to remember who you are*.

To represent the road travelled by all the thoughts and ideas in this collection of books has been a personal and difficult task. Accepting the relationship between self, other and external world, I start my understanding of social reality based on my autobiography. So, the departure point is my lengthy engagement with books as an academic sociologist. I look at the world around me and at the way in which my trajectory in this world leads me *to find* – in the literal sense – the texts in this collection and in the symbolic sense – to find what they tell us about life and living.

The books in the installations are therefore not meant to be seen primarily as objects that were written, bound between two covers and shelved – waiting to be taken up and to be opened in order for the objective data between the covers to be monologically accessed. Books are human creations. The words inside the texts – as well as the bound pages – originated from and bear witness to the intentions, motivations, hopes and sometimes even the fears and sufferings of human beings. They tell us something about our lifeworld; they narrate a message or a story. But in the context of the installations their ability to narrate is undermined: many of the texts in this collection are written in old, inaccessible languages and within opaque narrative structures. So, I cannot merely present these texts; I need to re-narrate, deconstruct and even subvert narrative conventions. And this happens by presenting the texts in a way that evokes new stories in the minds of 'readers' or that prompts a re-remembering of old stories in new ways.

All the works in this collection depart from the book as we came to know it. They were all written, created and presented in the format that we conventionally associate with a book. At no point do I attempt to deconstruct the material book

2 Ricoeur 2004:3.

object. Their deeply instilled customary forms as objects and as vehicles for conveying their message via text, are largely left unchanged. Not a single one of the texts is available to the viewer to read or to browse. Many are incarcerated in museum cases – locked up in solitary confinement. Some are enclosed with other books in communal museum cases. But all are kept in custody with other objects to persuade the 'reader' to attempt a new reading.

The inaccessibility and untouchability of the books make written language somehow superfluous. But together with their accompanying sculpted and/or found objects the books take on a new, broader communicative function. Presented as part of installations, the books and their languages are excluded from interpretation and even response. All the books come from the past and contain content that is now closed, finished and largely detained, even though some of them were once perceived to be carrying the word of God. As a collection, and by means of their deliberate exhibition with other material objects, the books now require improvisation – a new interaction and experience – in order to be read.

The reader is invited to critically inquire into the aims, objectives, context, and content of the books themselves; to reinvent the books conceptually. The books therefore become artefacts that one sees and reads, without opening them and without converting the original print on the pages to meaning and message. By developing a new interactive relationship with the books and their accompanying material objects, the reader essentially constitutes a new text.

Four prominent South African artists contributed to this book and pointed to alternative ways of reading bookworks, including mine. Their contributions in 'Lenses for the viewing' follow the chapter 'Notes for an exhibition'.

As an intermezzo between the four essays and the photographic exhibition of my bookworks that follows, is a poem by Eliza Kentridge, called 'Birdlife'. It is deliberately positioned here to emphasise the immediate experience and joy of reading – the comfort of the familiar, the flight into the unknown. The poem reflects the imaginative relationship of a child to books: open to their power and receptive to their mystique.

In the first essay Willem Boshoff presents ideas on his work 'Blind alphabet', a series of artworks meant to be viewed in a gallery in the presence of a blind

person, and more intricately, by means of the blind person "reading" the work. The blind person reads a Braille text and intensely handles its accompanying sculpted wooden artwork, then explains to the sighted viewer what the particular artwork denotes. Interpretation becomes further problematised as each woodwork and Braille description refers to a most uncommon word in the English language. Just as sighted people sometimes need the blind to open their eyes to different and deeper meanings, the installations featured in my *documents of life* invite the reader to access a text that is closed, untouchable, unreadable, and must be interpreted via its juxtaposition with other objects, artefacts, and artworks.

In the second essay, 'Books in space: absorption and distance in two artists' book installations', Jonah Sack elaborates on Boshoff's tension between reading and looking. 'Blind alphabet' heightens and dramatises the strange duality of books – we need to deal with their physicality as well as their meaning. Sack points out that reading is essentially a private act, but one that we are often required to do in public – on busses, in parks, and libraries. One of his own works, 'Proposal for a new city, the same as the old one', enlists the large and unwieldy format of a newspaper – many copies which are strewn over tables and folded over stands like old fashioned fold-out maps with their awkward and impractical format. He inscribes the pages of the newspapers he creates – nesting artworks within artworks. The newspapers need to be opened in order for them to be read in the public space of the gallery, so the artwork also situates private reading within public viewing spaces.

In the third essay, 'The artist's book as democratic force', Kim Berman deals with books as a space and format for political and social activism. She aligns with Jurgen Habermas' assertion that there is a need for emancipatory intention in order to advance society's communicative capacity: speaking and writing – and by association bookworks – should purposefully aim to bring about change. As an activist artist engaged in the anti-apartheid struggle during the 1980s she used documentary communication in her artworks to highlight oppression. Her bookworks became a form of resistance, but at the same time an influence and exposé in imagining new futures. From intimate and small hand-held books to larger friezes projected on free-standing screens, these bookworks communicated the realities in South Africa at the time. The influential organisation which she founded, Artist Proof Studio, provides ongoing opportunities for transformational

arts practices and for working towards justice. Berman's essay provides a background for reflecting on topical issues – religion, colonialism, domination and struggle – alluded to in the installations of my project.

In the fourth essay, 'Bookworks and dialogic imagination', prominent South African bookwork artist Keith Dietrich demonstrates how bookworks take shape through a process of dialogical imagination. He links dialogical consciousness to the activity of reflexivity whereby an artist commits to looking back over his or her original standpoints in the light of being confronted with what contradicts and transcends the boundaries of these initial positions. He emphasises that creativity is a dialogical process that can intrinsically alter our understanding of art. In the case of bookworks, the dialogical process implies that books speak to each other across time and context in an external dialogue. But there is also an internal dialogue: bookworks speaking to and within themselves as art objects.

The 59 *documents of life* installations – contained in the section 'The bookworks' – bring books into a dialogue with each other: by gathering them together in one venue the books attain a different character and the whole collection starts telling us more than what an individual book or bookwork can do. The installations also bring the viewer into a dialogue with the wider context of time and history. If the viewer chooses to engage, then he or she is obliged to reflect – to look back on and weigh up the motivations, intentions, successes and sufferings implied in the bookworks – and to engage the wider range of historical and philosophical preconditions they offer for understanding our social reality and its making.

NOTES FOR AN EXHIBITION

Storytelling

From the beginning, humans have been dwelling in storytelling societies. We tell our stories, we listen to others' stories and we story our lives. We are the only ones on our planet to have this capability: to tell and record stories and then pass them on from one generation to another, from one culture to another. And our stories have consequences. They work their way into all aspects of our living together with other people. Storytelling is a meaning-making activity and important in our search to make sense of our lives.

Our stories tell of happenings and experiences. But they also tell of visions and of dreams. They speak of reality and of imagination, of politics and of religion. Of such importance are stories that had nobody ever spoken to us from the outside, we might only have had silence within ourselves. It is only by listening to the stories of others that we start to develop the capacity to tell our own stories. By internalising the voices of others, we come to discover ourselves and to discover our fellow humans. We are shaped by the stories preserved in our society. We are moulded in such a way that we appear similar to others in our direct community, and for this reason we can be recognised by people from *inside* and from *outside* as members who belong together in a unique collective: a society. But no child is a passive recipient of society's stories. We can resist the stories, we can participate in them and we can collaborate in the stories to varying degrees. Quite literally, even the young child starts to talk back.

This project on *documents of life* constitutes a way of making life – including my own life – intelligible to myself and to others. Early on in humankind's history we started to experiment with recording our stories. The moment when the first people started to think and plan for the future, and to remember and learn from the past, they displayed a higher order consciousness. Our ability to think gave us a huge advantage and it helped us to cooperate, to survive in harsh environments and even to conquer and to colonise. And all along, we have been using our ability for storytelling to record, to pass on and to elaborate.

Our stories and our increasing ability to verbalise our lifeworld soon opened the door to imaginary worlds and to the realms of the spiritual. And gradually our ability to make intellectual and emotional connections started to infuse our lives beyond the basic instinct to survive. From images drawn by early humans on the walls of caves it is clear that people who could think symbolically, could make visual representations of things they remembered and imagined. Not only is ancient art a marker of these shifts in cognitive activity, it also reminds us that the sophisticated ability to think abstractly has not been restricted to one part of the world as we know it today. Whether on the walls of caves in Europe or in artefacts found across Africa, the Americas and Asia, examples of our unique capacity for imagination and symbolism are found all over our planet.

Story writing

In addition to ancient art, the use of systems of symbols to convey meaning is very old. Long before writing as we know it was developed, several traces can be found of encoded utterances that provided the potential for others to accurately reconstruct a written message. Writing systems arose independently in various parts of the world. Scientists estimate that the first traces of writing originated in Egypt more than 3000 years BCE, in Ancient India around 2600 BCE and in China around 1200 BCE.³

Although obviously connected, the development of writing and the development of well thought out, coherent texts are not the same. The notion of *documents of life* encompasses too vast a field to try to incorporate all forms of text in my

3 The British Museum 2017.

work. Therefore, fully aware of many forms of proto-writing on many surfaces such as stone, tablets, tortoise shells, scrolls of leather, papyrus, clay vessels or parchments, the obvious connection to make in relation to our day and age is the book as we know it. And this is the medium I use. The predecessors of what we call "books" began with cumbersome, expensive, hugely exclusive volumes or codices, hand written and illustrated; the reserve of the rich and the powerful. It was not until the invention of movable type mechanical printing in Europe that books as *documents of life* started to be such an important influence in our everyday lives.

When Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press and movable type around the middle of the 15th Century it led to a practical system that allowed the mass production of printed books.⁴ In Renaissance Europe the arrival of this invention introduced an era of communication that permanently changed the structure of society. For the first time information could be circulated relatively unrestricted. Even revolutionary ideas could be made more available.

The ability to use mechanically movable type, adjustable moulds and a printing press similar to the agricultural screw press of that time, did not immediately make a noticeable change towards a knowledge-based economy and towards democracy. It would still have to take the Reformation in the heartland of Europe to ignite an Age of Enlightenment and to slowly start the replacement of the walls of ignorance by the light of knowledge. Books remained exclusive property, and access to the knowledge contained in them the privilege of the rich and the powerful. But slowly an increase in literacy started to erode the monopoly of the elite. The process of democracy gained momentum with the advent of a series of revolutions spreading over Western Europe.

The political revolution that started in France in 1789 and reached its pinnacle in 1799 – the French Revolution – was later carried forward by Napoleon during the expansion of the French Empire. Simultaneously the radical transition to new manufacturing processes in the period from about 1760 to about 1820 set off the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain and propelled it to other countries around the world.⁵ Almost every aspect of daily life was influenced in some way.

4 Childress 2008:42.

5 Coetzee *et al.* 2001:30-33; De la Dehesa 2006:29.

Many of the *documents of life* contained in this collection provide insight into the new way of life after the revolutions in Europe of the 18th and 19th Centuries. Their authors write about an openness and willingness towards new experiences – even if it is often mostly to warn about and condemn these new experiences. Many writers reflect on the need to accommodate the process of transformation that results from the changes in our society. They share ideas about the need for a continuous broadening of the existential lifeworlds of individuals, and exposure to new knowledge. The secular writings of the 18th and 19th Centuries mostly reflect on the advantages related to the ability to exercise effective control. Many diaries from this period also emphasise the virtues of calculating, controlling, and predicting. They talk about people’s educational and occupational expectations. And they debate issues related to the mundane and the everyday: changing family roles, changing views on family size, changing views on aging, changing consumer behaviour, and new principles related to social stratification.

Gradually an awareness of the increasing social complexity of the world started to accelerate. People began to realise that progress required control of the environment and increasing adaptation to new demands. More knowledge was produced and society was constantly confronted by pressures to absorb this knowledge and move forward. And in this process society became caught up in a spiral of change related to the necessity to accommodate the most pressing transformations.

Some of the diaries and reflections contained in the installations in this book speak about this ever changing world. They raise the issues related to the need for rational understanding. They also describe the slowly evolving social maturation of Europe in those times. This maturation became the foundation for a shift towards secularisation: a process of diminishing the role and influence of church and of religion in the everyday life.

Creating a South African rationality

The vital principle of Western modernity mentioned above, namely the need for rational understanding, was particularly hard to establish in Europe. For many centuries the Catholic Church dominated the religious, political, educational, and cultural spheres of life. Most of the codices available to church and state were

written in Latin, and mostly by monks and bishops. Not only were these texts written in a language that was mostly inaccessible to ordinary people, these texts were seldom available for wider consumption and exegesis.

The Protestant Reformation – the 16th Century schism within Western Christianity – was mainly initiated 500 years ago by Martin Luther who posted his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517⁶ on the door of the Wittenberg Castle church. Shortly thereafter Calvinism became the major branch of Protestantism. It follows the theological traditions and forms of Christian practice of John Calvin (1509-1564) and other Reformation-era theologians.⁷ The term Calvinism can be misleading, because the religious tradition it denotes has always been diverse, with a wide range of influences.

Although a slow process, signs of the evolution of rational understanding – particularly in Holland, the Kingdom of Great Britain, France and Germany, which were the main contributors to a European component in the demography of South Africa – were evident by the time European settlement in South Africa began. In many ways Western Europe provided the most emphatic contribution to rational understanding for what was to become the modern world. Not only was it in Europe that the Enlightenment started, it was also in Europe that the most important political, industrial and social revolutions of the modern era arose. In his introductory work on the role of geography in the development of global politics, Tim Marshall offers an interesting perspective on why Western Europe contributed so much to the world.⁸

Marshall points out that Europe is mainly located within the moderate agricultural zone and that the resulting production of surplus food meant that trading centres soon developed. With trading centres came towns, cities, churches, schools, universities, new ideas, and new technologies. The physical geography of Europe – its mountains, rivers, and valleys – explain why there are so many nation states. Over long periods of time Europeans were divided between geographical and linguistic regions – a division that remains to this day. And after the Enlightenment these geographical and linguistic divisions undoubtedly

6 Wuthnow 1998:809.

7 Kurian & Lamport 2015:1235.

8 Marshall 2015:90-111.

contributed to the beginning of political, intellectual, cultural, and trade competitiveness – mainly in the regions that are today incorporated into the United Kingdom, The Netherlands and Belgium, France, and Germany. These are also the areas where Christianity was the dominant religion – first as part of the Roman Catholic Church and later also the growing Protestant movement. From its foundations in Judaism, Christianity has always forged a strong link between religion and morality. But was a link beginning to form between religion and capitalism? It seems that the growth and establishment of Protestantism in the centuries following the Reformation in Central and Western Europe coincided with the growth and establishment of Capitalism.

In his ground-breaking book, *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism* (see Installation 49, 'Berkouwer: De verkiezing Gods/Divine election'), one of the founders of the discipline of sociology, Max Weber, argues for the emergence of the spirit of capitalism out of the ethics of Protestantism.⁹ From his observations of the correlations between being Protestant and being involved in business, keeping the books of a business in a rational and accountable way, constantly assessing whether the business is making a profit, and organising labour systematically, Weber attempts to understand the source of this spirit. He turns to Calvinism – one of the strongest branches of Protestantism at the time – for an explanation. Calvinists emphasise the principle of predestination – that God has already at the beginning of time determined who is saved and who is damned. As Calvinism developed and the principle of predestination was elaborated on in sermons and general scriptural exegesis, there started to arise among believers a psychological need for clues as to whether one was amongst the saved. Believers came to value their success in worldly activities, the profits in their business or other enterprises, and their material welfare in general, as signs of God's favour. A continuous cycle of dedication and confirmation took shape – the more the signs of my success, the stronger is the assurance that God chooses me, and in turn the more dedication I plough into my work, and the more the fruits of my labour increase, I become even more convinced of my salvation. Out of the ethic of salvation came the injunction to good works and charity, as well as the missionary zeal to convert others thereby saving them from damnation; and all

9 Weber 1997.

of these served the self-perpetuating cycle of dedication and confirmation that invites personal salvation via God's favour.¹⁰

The full story is, of course, more complex. Weber often reminded his readers about the limitations of his explanation. But it remains true that the principle of rationality found predominantly in Protestant communities was clearly displayed in the systematic way that many Western European countries performed business, politics, and social relations.¹¹ The emphasis on consistency, logic and efficiency in the systematic structuring, calculating and controlling of the social institutions of society is a feature in the European societies that played a key role in the settlement of their people in South Africa.

Calvinism was the main religious dogma that accompanied the Dutch East India Company's annexation of the Cape in 1652.¹² The major role of the Dutch in establishing what would later lead to the White South African nation, has always been uncontested. The link with The Netherlands in terms of language, religion and the Roman-Dutch legal system, remains widely accepted. Up to the end of the 20th Century many South African Afrikaans-speaking lawyers, theologians, educationalists and other professionals did their advanced training in The Netherlands. In this regard the role of conservative Reformed theologians in The Netherlands – such as Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck and G.C. Berkouwer – in the intellectual and ideological development of South African Dutch Reformed Church ministers of religion, for example, cannot be underestimated.

One of the first of these Reformed theologians who had a significant impact on the postgraduate training of young South African clergy in general, and on the religious foundations of Afrikaner Nationalism specifically, was Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920). Kuyper was a Dutch statesman and Prime Minister of The Netherlands between 1901 and 1905. He founded the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, the second largest Reformed denomination in The Netherlands after the Dutch Reformed Church. He also founded the Free University of Amsterdam and the Anti-Revolutionary Party. He vigorously denounced modernism in theology as a fad that would fade away. As a staunch Calvinist, he argued that Calvinism was more than theology: it provided a comprehensive worldview. According to Kuyper,

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

12 *South African History Online* 2014(b).

Calvinism had already proven to be a major positive factor in the development of the institutions and values of modern society.¹³

Kuyper famously said: "Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is no square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"¹⁴ Although Kuyper did not directly support Afrikaner Nationalism and racist views, his son, Professor H.H. Kuyper, came out strongly for White supremacy in South Africa. H.H. Kuyper, appointed Professor of Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam in 1899, wrote a number of newspaper articles that were perceived to be "Nazi friendly".¹⁵

A set of Kuyper's four weighty volumes *E Voto Dordraceno* was gifted to me in 1971 by my uncle, Ds E.C. Gouws, who was a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Walmer, Port Elizabeth. This set of *documents of life* forms part of Installation 35, 'Voices from the wilderness', which contains the circular wood carving of Jesus and John the Baptist (from the 18th Century). The four volumes deal with the fundamental catechismal principles of the Dutch Reformed Church tradition, namely the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort (Dordrecht). The embellished and colourful wood carving of Jesus and John the Baptist, in keeping with the decorative traditions often found in Roman Catholic spaces – in contrast to the four simply presented and almost drab Kuyper volumes and the seven slightly more embellished volumes containing the writings of the enlightened liberal Calvinist dissident, John Moore – alludes to the continuing tension between Protestantism and Catholicism. The importance of the Reformed theological writings by a section of the generation following Kuyper, for establishing a conservative theological orientation within South Africa's influential Dutch Reformed Church, cannot be disputed – particularly those such as the series *Dogmatische Studiën* (Studies in Dogmatics) by G.C. Berkouwer. See in this respect Installations 41-58.

Some thirty years after the Dutch East India Company's annexation of the Cape, on Old Year's Eve in 1687 a group of Huguenots set sail from France, among them

13 Bratt (ed.) 1998.

14 Kuyper cited in Bratt (ed.) 1998:461.

15 Gleason 2010:333.

the first of many French emigrants to the Cape of Good Hope.¹⁶ The Huguenots were the second ethnoreligious group of Protestants in the colonial origins of white South Africans. Until 1706 several groups of Huguenot families arrived at the Cape. Although numerically not such a large collective, they had a marked influence on the character of the Dutch settlers. Owing to the policy of the Dutch East India Company, which dictated that schools should teach exclusively in Dutch and that all official correspondence had to be in Dutch, the use of French as a language and the existence of a uniquely French identity dwindled and eventually disappeared. The cultural contribution of the French Huguenots, particularly to liberal thinking in the Cape, however, remained. Tribute is paid to this contribution in Installation 39, 'French hand'.

The third important colonial influence in the Cape of Good Hope formally gained momentum in 1820 with the arrival of the British settlers in Algoa Bay, known today as Port Elizabeth. Holland lost the Cape of Good Hope to Britain following the 1795 Battle of Muizenberg.¹⁷ In 1802 Britain had to return the Cape to Holland in terms of the agreements reached during the 'Treaty of Amiens',¹⁸ but they re-occupied it following the Battle of Blaauwberg in 1806.¹⁹ This re-occupation was later confirmed in the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814.²⁰ During this restless period, Britain's economy started to experience difficulties. The Napoleonic wars brought unemployment and economic recession. At the same time the colonial government of the Cape were pressed to occupy the troublesome eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, using British citizens to strengthen the buffer against invasions from indigenous tribes and help fight the cattle raids from across the Fish River border. Until that point the indigenous peoples had been manageable. Their growing unrest was a turning point in the narrative of South Africa – it was one of the first prominent indications that the land was taken from its native inhabitants. In order to consolidate their control over the indigenous resistance Lord Charles Somerset, Governor of the Cape, encouraged his colleagues in Britain to step up the emigration of Brits to the Cape.

16 Coertzen 2008:1.

17 *South African History Online* 2013.

18 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1998.

19 Steenkamp & Gordon 2005.

20 Panton 2015:33.

Approximately 4000 British settlers arrived in the Eastern Cape in different groups during the first half of 1820.²¹ Many of them initially settled near the village of Bathurst as well as in and around Grahamstown – in the area that was soon to become known as the Albany District. Coming from towns in England, a large proportion of the settlers were artisans with very little interest in rural life. For this reason a lot soon searched for a better life in the more urban areas of the Eastern Cape. Given their backgrounds and training in business, finance, education, and other professions they helped to develop strong and resilient communities in several areas such as East London, Cradock, Grahamstown, and Port Elizabeth. Soon they petitioned for new schools, often run by mainstream British churches such as the Church of the Province of South Africa (Anglican), the Methodist Church, and the Presbyterian Church. It also did not take long for them to start newspapers such as the *Grocott's Mail*, the *Great Eastern Star*, the *Eastern Province Herald*, and the *Port Elizabeth Mercury*.²²

With the establishment of newspapers, church schools, and later even universities in the Cape Province, it soon followed that other forms of printing started to thrive. *Documents of life* in the form of books found their way into the libraries of schools, universities and communities – and from there into the houses of ordinary people. For a long time books as *documents of life* were brought into South Africa from Europe. Europe after all, had the know-how and the expertise to print and to publish books – a facility only later developed and practiced in South Africa. Of importance is the fact that books as *documents of life* entered the lifeworlds of South Africans from the first occupations of Europeans. And it was not only via the British settlers; a large portion of the Dutch and the French Huguenots were also literate. All the occupiers brought books – primarily religious texts. These texts played a major role in setting up a basis for everyday life and consciousness among the White settlers. From the early days of the establishment of the Cape of Good Hope as a refreshment station *en route* to India – first by the Dutch, assisted by the French Huguenots, and later by the British – formalised religion and education played a major role. Apart from the colonial bureaucracy and the military commanders, the other professionals were mainly ministers of religion and school teachers. Occasionally a medical practitioner and a lawyer

21 Ross 2014:8.

22 Press Reference [n.d.]

formed part of the educated group of colonists. Installation 37, 'English hand' pays tribute to the strong hand of the influence of the English in South Africa.

The fourth European group to play an important role in the colonial history of South Africa, was the Portuguese. On 8 December 1487 the explorer Bartholomew Dias arrived at what is now known as Walvis Bay on the west-coast of southern Africa. His expedition aimed to find the mythical sea route to India and before being forced to return he managed to push his superstitious and fear-filled crew as far as the area known today as the Great Fish River.²³ It was left to another Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, to sail out on this quest and in 1497 he circumnavigated the southern African coast and found his way to India. A year later he returned to Portugal, but not before almost half of his crew died – mostly of scurvy. His pioneering journey heralded the development of the spice trade with India and the expansion of Portuguese influence in southern Africa.

Not only commodities such as gold, silver, ivory and timber, but also the slave trade, turned Africa – and particularly the southern part of the continent – into a sought after region. From as early as the 1480's the Portuguese operated in Africa south of the Congo River. They did not always conquer the kingdoms in these areas, but worked closely with indigenous leaders, providing Portuguese teachers and craftsmen and supporting Catholic missionaries to work among the people.

The ever-increasing demand for slaves in Brazil, São Tomé and Príncipe fuelled the trade with Africa. The guns provided by the Europeans enabled the local kings and headmen to defeat their enemies and to maintain dominance. And where there was profit and wealth, the interest of all of Europe was drawn. As was the case with the annexation of the Cape of Good Hope by the Dutch in 1652, and in turn by the British who occupied the Cape towards the end of the 18th Century and the beginning of the 19th, other regions in southern Africa also often changed hands.

In 1641, the Dutch seized the slave trade in Angola from the Portuguese.²⁴ By 1648 the Portuguese took back the control of Angola.²⁵ Although Angola only formally became a Portuguese colonial settlement after the peak of the slave

23 *South African History Online* 2017.

24 *South African History Online* 2014(a).

25 *Ibid.*

trade, the Portuguese presence of the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries resulted in introducing agricultural products such as maize, cane sugar, tobacco and coffee in Angola. They changed the nature of warfare in these regions and facilitated the export of huge numbers of young Africans to the Americas to work as slaves. The Portuguese heritage in areas such as Angola and Mozambique includes Portuguese as language and the widespread presence of Catholic Christianity.

The Portuguese had a less easy time on the east coast of southern Africa. Not only was the climate inhospitable and the casualties of tropical disease severe, but the local inhabitants were also more hostile. Hell bent between believing that it was their duty to spread the Catholic religion, and claiming their right to benefit from the profits of trade, the Portuguese hung in. Eventually they had to make way for larger colonial forces such as the Dutch, the English and the French. By 1650 they only had control in parts such as Delagoa Bay, Mozambique Island and Mombasa. Mozambique was only formally recognised as a Portuguese colony by the other European powers in 1885.²⁶ Other than in Angola, where most inhabitants speak Portuguese and are Catholic, only 30% of the Mozambican population is Christian, mostly Catholic. Installation 40, 'Portuguese hand' pays tribute to the influence of this nation in southern Africa.

The texts in the collection

A bird-eye's view on South African history – such as the one I offer above – inevitably remains open to differences in opinion, interpretation and selection. The project *documents of life* doesn't aim to provide a correct and consensus view – that would require much more detail. Rather, the project relates to my roots and my personal journey; it affirms that we are constantly creating stories and that we live in storytelling societies. We make sense of our lives and our history through telling our stories and listening to the stories of others; we see in terms of the light at our disposal and we often omit the sections that do not fit into this light. But we need to be blind and immovably insensitive not to be touched by the trauma and jubilation, the triumph and lament, the joy and tragedy, the highlight and shadow, the achievements and injustices, the glory and the mourning of our stories. We embody our stories, they haunt us and shape us. They always transform our social world.

26 *Ibid.*

When looking at the texts in this collection, we don't find a representative cross-section of important, or rare and carefully selected codices that cover neatly organised topics, themes or overviews. If the purpose of this book was to work with a representative sample of particular kinds of texts, much more attention would have been given to the selection of the codices. A representative selection of texts would have required a rich amount of information on all the books available for inclusion in order to design the sample: deciding on which topics to include, where to look for the texts, how widely the texts are distributed, and many other selection issues. The focus in this book is, however, entirely on my experiencing of texts that I came across. These books have mainly one thing in common: they presented themselves to me. In more than one way they reflect the old adage: collections find you! They come from places where I travelled, where I listened to the locals' stories, where I tried to make sense of events, where I reflected on everyday reality.

The texts in this collection tell of things real and imagined, factual and fictional. They speak about the doings, the plots, the characters and story lines of an era and sometimes of a moment. And as any serendipitous collection will do, they constitute *documents of life* of only a segment of reality. Some of the texts resonate clearly with the personal, subjective, and autobiographical dimensions of my life. Others belong more to group ideas, to the social world, to a collective. And yet another part of the texts belongs to the story of humankind, of nations and cultures. The narrative of my project brings these themes together in an intertextual dialogue between the personal and the social. All the narratives contained in the different texts and all the themes raised by them become shaped and influenced by each other. In addition, my own biography influences how I read each text as well as how I read each text in relation to the others in this collection of *documents of life*. When visiting the Edvard Munch Museum in Oslo in May 2017 I was struck by a quote on the museum wall referring to the work of Munch, Norway's most important visual artist: "Munch was preoccupied with how one picture could alter another picture when placed beside it, how the relationship and context created something greater than the individual works, a resonance, as he called it. And that is how it is with people too. Together we are more than separate individuals; it is in the face of the other that we live, not in our own. Because we cannot see." This idea is also true for books. When bringing a collection of books together in one venue, the books attain a different character;

the collection starts telling us more than what the individual books can do. In the same way as a small private library in an ordinary present-day family home can reflect something about the family, the collection of texts in this project on *documents of life* reflects something of my lifeworld as it resonates with wider social, cultural, and historical refrains.

These *documents of life* contain ambitious and wide-ranging moralistic guidelines or theologies, histories, summaries of rules and regulations, collections of sermons and speeches, diaries and journals, textbooks, dictionaries and encyclopaedias, Holy Scriptures, philosophical utterances, commentaries and exegeses, novels and volumes of poetry. They range widely in their physical size and volume, and the oldest text pre-dates the first settlement of Europeans on southern African soil. Although all these *documents of life* have something in common with the author and his journeys, and with the construction and re-construction of his life and its roots, not one of the texts is South African. The closest to a South African text is the translation into the Afrikaans language of two Bibles containing the Reformed Calvinist Christian canonical books of the original Hebrew Old Testament and the original Greek New Testament. Although seemingly unconnected, the set of more than 140 texts weave and interlink with each other in order to create a closely related intertextual panorama. Within this panorama as author I am positioned as a White Afrikaans-speaking South African whose secondary schooling as well as university training took place in Afrikaans-speaking apartheid institutions. My professional career as an academic started at a bilingual university and continued at an Afrikaans higher education institution. Right in the middle of the various states of emergencies proclaimed by the apartheid government during the second half of the 1980s I was given the opportunity to work for a quarter of a century as a professor and head of department in a cosmopolitan English-speaking segment of the South African academic world. This opportunity opened the door to almost three decades of academic contact with colleagues in, and regular visits to, the Visegrad Group of countries – The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – and Western Europe. My first prolonged stay in the Visegrad cultural and political alliance took place shortly after this Group was established on 15 February 1991.²⁷

27 Visegrad Group 2017.

At that point – the early 1990s – there were high expectations that the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 could lead to a world-wide broadening of autonomy and liberation from the shackles of oppression. Several historical events took place in quick succession. The rapid disintegration of the Soviet Union coincided with a series of events in Poland that led to that country's Communist Party losing its grip on power. For the first time in the post-World War II history of Europe a Communist government – the one in Poland – handed authority to a non-Communist opposition.²⁸ Shortly after this the ruling Hungarian Socialist Party decided that it will no longer be officially called "Communist",²⁹ and Czechoslovakia had its Velvet Revolution.³⁰ On 23 April 1990 Czechoslovakia changed its name to the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic with Václav Havel, former political prisoner and leader of the Civic Forum, as its first President.³¹

On the other side of the globe, in South Africa, the process towards democratisation was also pushed and smoothed by conditions and causes not entirely unrelated to what was happening in Central Europe. The international success of the anti-apartheid struggle against the ruling South African regime contributed to increasing awareness that the National Party's racist and restrictive domination must end.³² Effective disinvestment campaigns, cultural/sport/mercantile/academic boycotts, and extended lobbying in international council chambers forced the minority government to negotiate on the political future of all South Africans.³³

When the Cold War drew to a close in the early 1990's many people felt that the world was naturally moving toward democratisation and to an opening up of previously closed political structures. Democracy was proclaimed to champion a system of basic values built on the foundation of respect for human life and dignity. South Africa's democratisation process echoed these sentiments. Reflecting a similar shift in public views as the one when Václav Havel became president of the Czech and Slovak Republic in 1990, many saw South Africa as

28 Wnuk 2000.

29 Kort 2001:69.

30 Kuklík 2015:217.

31 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2011.

32 *South African History Online* 2012.

33 *Ibid.*

a world leader in the establishment of justice, reconciliation, equality, and peace when Nelson Mandela – like Havel, also a political prisoner – was inaugurated as its first democratically elected president in 1994.³⁴ Now, a quarter of a century later, there are world-wide signs of growing disillusionment and pessimism. The move towards democracy and greater well-being for all is not as smooth or inevitable as previously thought. The world is not moving spontaneously towards democracy. Rather, many signs of democratic decay or anti-democratic reversal are visible. Some argue that in South Africa democracy has become a shell of itself, associated less with aspirational humanistic ideals than with its mundane manifestations in free, fair, and regular elections. Once again the stories are about our world changing, fragmenting, and dispersing. The stories change because the forms and structures of the living together of people change. On the other hand: sometimes the stories change but the underlying forms and structures remain defiantly unchanged.

Sociologists widely agree that the *social structure* refers to the way in which society is organised to meet the basic needs of its members. The social structure entails all the ways of doing things that have developed over time; it implies a widely accepted way of life, a broadly agreed definition of reality, and a shared view of the overall reality within which we live. Social structure is shaped by dominant norms, but also by their contestation. Layer upon layer of the social structure becomes set and sedimented over years, but also gets eroded. Our stories help us to understand how we construct and reconstruct our lifeworld. Our stories contain and harbour our memories; they reflect the themes of our lives and our social structure.

The themes in the collection

Reflecting on the memories and stories in my small library of *documents of life*, five themes stand out – Religion; Colonialism, imperialism and racism; Language and identity; Time; and Rational thinking of a lighter kind. These themes are not separate or loose-standing. Political decision-making is often related to religious beliefs and motivations. A well-developed language facilitates political sophistication and religious acumen. Philosophical competence provides the

34 Coetzee 1994.

basis for sound reasoning. And all of these issues combine to provide the qualities required in order to bring about modernisation – a process that is deeply ingrained in the notion of progress that has dominated the Western mind.³⁵ Some would argue (cf. C.A.O. Van Nieuwenhuijze)³⁶ that the characteristics of modern people have always been related to their abilities to attain sustenance, comfort, peace of mind, material benefits, the optimisation of progress, ascendancy, and maximum control. It is against this background that the project invites the reader to take this collection of texts – some old and others not so old – as *documents of life* that tell a well-known story, but from a new angle. Presenting this book on *documents of life* gives us a bird's eye view of the important components of some of the deeply rooted principles of the development history of the West, a history that exercised huge influence on South Africa. Some of these principles are:

- A single, linear time-frame, within which it is possible to improve the quality of life.
- Social reform that is based on an historical foundation that can impact on the present.
- The inevitability of the future, combined with hope and expectations of prosperity.
- The controllability of welfare, stability, equality, freedom, peace, and justice.
- A reciprocal relationship between rationalism and idealism.
- Confidence in the autonomous contribution of future generations.

Most of the *documents of life* in this project echo the idea that the individual should constantly strive towards cultivation and learning; they praise rationality and a scientific approach. In contrast to the traditional society's restricted capacity to solve problems and to control the physical environment, a modern society must strive to control not only the present, but also anticipate and eliminate future pressures. In the light of these threads running through the texts, let us focus more specifically on five broad themes.

Religion

The oldest texts in this collection of *documents of life*, are religious books, written by members of religious orders. They deal with sacred issues, morality, directives for everyday practices as well as with guidelines for specific religious festivities. They also tell the religious believers how they should meditate and what the content of their prayers should be.

35 Cf. Nisbet 1980.

36 Van Nieuwenhuijze 1982.

Religion can be defined on the one hand, as a coherent whole of convictions or opinions regarding the transcendent or supernatural and, on the other hand, as specific practices or actions. It encompasses faith, consciousness, and ideas about a god. People who share convictions, faith and a specific form of religious awareness, often organise themselves together and wilfully attempt to experience their everyday lives in terms of these faiths and convictions. This leads to the establishment of structures, prescriptions for behaviour and a spectrum of practices. These structures – often in the form of churches – can have an effect on the broader reality of society when they have an impact at the political, the economic, the educational, and the social levels. In this way religion and religious manifestations influence the rest of society and are in turn influenced by society.

This relationship between religion and society is clear in the history of South Africa. The vast majority of South Africans describe their religious affiliation as "Christian". Within this general grouping of Christians a range of opinions and positions exist regarding the role of religion in society. For many years the Dutch Reformed Church tradition has been the most influential conventional western church grouping in this country. Within the broader Christian tradition in pre-democratic South Africa there was little consensus about the roles and responsibilities of the church and of religion to eliminate discrimination in society, to care for the suppressed in all population groups, and to take a stand against the violation of all people's rights and human dignity.

Throughout the history of South Africa, up until democratisation in 1994, White South Africans determined the shape of human rights and the distribution of wealth in the country. During this entire period religion was tied up with particular group interests. The Dutch Reformed Church supported apartheid and was even expelled from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1982 because of its role as church of the state. Congregations were racially segregated and the White segment of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa – the Mother church – was constantly in conflict with the members of the daughter churches – the sections for Coloured (the Dutch Reformed Mission Church), Black African (the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa) and Indian (the Reformed Church in Africa) – who all endorsed the World Alliance of Reformed Churches' exclusion of the Mother church.

The role of the Dutch Reformed Mother Church in setting up, sanctioning and practicing racial segregation – apartheid – is clear for all to see; this is reflected in Installation 38, 'Afrikaner hand'. Even before the National Party came into power the church proclaimed and mixed into her teachings ideas on racial purity and White superiority. And as the policy of apartheid gradually became more and more institutionalised with the proclamation of the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act in 1950, the Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and its amended version the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950, the separate Amenities Act of 1953 and various other discriminatory laws, the Dutch Reformed Church often provided biblical support for the government in order to carry out its policy of separate development.

For more than three decades the world largely allowed the institutionalised racism and discrimination of apartheid to establish itself in South Africa. There were small acts of protest from the world outside. A consumer boycott of South African goods was initiated by the end of the 1950's in the United Kingdom. This boycott was not aggressively applied because the United Kingdom was South Africa's largest foreign investor and South Africa was their third biggest export market. But gradually the pressure started to build up: South Africa left the Commonwealth in 1961, trade boycotts were supported by the United Nations General Assembly during the early 1960's, and the country was finally expelled from the Olympics in 1970.

In spite of these early forms of pressure, the world accepted South Africa's role in international affairs as one that remained important – a position maintained during the entire Cold War period. South Africa was widely regarded as of strategic importance to the West in its fight against communism. Economically South Africa provided the West with important commodities and remained of strategic importance as a route to the East. Particularly Britain and the United States of America (USA) were against implementing strict sanctions because of these issues.

Many of the books in this collection have to do with the importance of religion as a theme running through South Africa's history. Many of the documents on religion relate to the historical connection with Christianity specifically, and with the Judeo-Christian tradition in general. None of the texts speaks directly about

religion in South Africa. The closest texts particular to South Africa's religion are the 18 volumes of G.C. Berkouwer's *Dogmatische Studiën* (*Studies in Dogmatics*). Berkouwer (1903-1996) is regarded as one of the most prominent post-World War II theologians within the mainstream reformed tradition in The Netherlands. The stream of seminary graduates to study under him for the degree of Doctor of Theology included South Africans from the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk) – widely accepted as being the state church of apartheid South Africa. Most of these men became leaders in the Dutch Reformed Church and by virtue of this church's role, also became leaders in the broader Afrikaner political sphere in South Africa. Most theology students who qualified as Dutch Reformed Church ministers during 1960-1980 – the prime period of apartheid – encountered the dogmatic studies of G.C. Berkouwer. His influence on White Afrikaner religious thinking was undoubtedly considerable. In his volumes Berkouwer describes and analyses main aspects of reformed religious thinking in the context of the broad reformed church's orientations and consciousness. Based on the convictions of a church and of its believers, religion constitutes an institutional structure that will guide the members' actions and practices. And these manifestations of religion ultimately have an effect on the political, the economic and the broader cultural spheres of society.

Each of the full set of 18 volumes of Berkouwer's *Dogmatische Studiën* in this collection of *documents of life* contains a theological theme of central importance to the reformed Christian tradition. Onto each of these volumes I attach a sculpted object in order to spark a dialogue with the particular theme covered in the volume (see Installations 41-58).

Colonialism, imperialism and racism

The collection of *documents of life* contains several books on history, geography and civil rights from the period referred to by Harry Magdoff as "Old imperialism".³⁷ This period started in the 15th Century with European mercantilism in terms of which countries such as Spain and Portugal spearheaded the entry of European commerce onto the world stage – a stage that included the previously unknown continents of the Americas and Africa. The oldest text in this collection, Johannes Mariana's *Historiae de Rebus Hispaniae* of 1605 reflects on *The History of Spain* and

37 Magdoff in Alavi & Shanin (eds.) 1982.

on the discovery of new continents (see Installation 14). With the blessing of the Catholic Church the armadas set out to satisfy and expand the early appetite for industrial capital and for conquering the largest possible economic territory. The mission of priests accompanying the armadas was to expand religious conversion and conquer the territory of the soul. So, material and religious expansion went hand in hand.

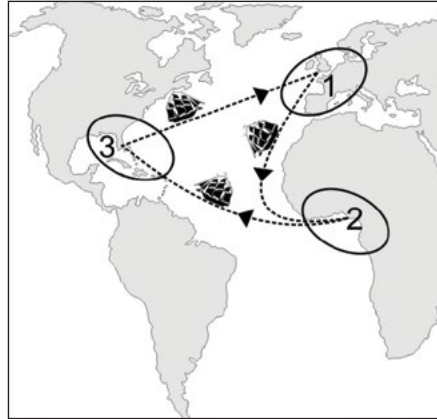
Another text in the collection of *documents of life*, the *Codex Batavus*, contains a summary of wide-ranging ordonnances, resolutions, orders and proclamations (see Installation 21). A text such as this one signifies the new order of European imperialism. This was the beginning stages of organised domination and control, of appropriation and exploitation.³⁸ And if you're a world player in the field of expansionism, accumulation – and almost inevitably, dispossession – you need a well-organised judicial system, reflecting the rational philosophy of age-old Roman-Dutch concepts of justice. In this way the desire for political and economic dominance can be packaged as a "civilising mission" and as part of the development of a rational economy. Although limited in range, the texts from this genre in the collection of *documents of life* remind us that the beginning of the South African nation was closely connected to international quests for markets and the desire for growing profits of those times. And underlying this was a disregard for the rights of indigenous peoples, their values, traditional laws, and cosmologies. History is written by the victor, and in many cases by the oppressor. The collection of books in this project are all from Europe – the oral histories of South Africa's colonised peoples are silent. Missing from all the installations is the voice of democratisation, and this makes Kim Berman's piece, in the section 'Lenses for the viewing', all the more relevant.

With colonialism and exploitation runs the slave trade and forced labour. Trading in African slaves began with Portuguese, and some Spanish, traders taking African slaves to their new-found American colonies. British pirates joined in and the British were later given the right to sell slaves in the Spanish Empire after the Treaty of Utrecht³⁹ in 1714. By that time this roaring and pernicious trade was well underway (see Installations 15 and 16).

38 Cf. Cohen 1973.

39 BBC (*KS3 Bitesize History*) 2007.

A typical British slave ship, as shown in the adjacent diagram, would set off from a port such as Liverpool or Bristol with a cargo of items containing guns, fabric, alcohol and iron. At best these traders would have bought slaves from the local chiefs in exchange for their cargo. At worst they would simply have ambushed and captured the local people and marched their victims back to the ships in chained lines. This typical ship would then sail



Triangular slave trade routes.

across the Atlantic to Barbados and Jamaica in the West Indies, which the British captured in 1625 and 1655 respectively.⁴⁰ There the slaves would be sold at an auction – in most cases for six or seven times more than what they cost. This typical ship would then return to England loaded up with sugar, rum, lumber, furs, rice, silk or tobacco – the products in demand back home.

The Dutch also participated in the slave trade. In Indonesia the Dutch enslaved entire populations and it was therefore not difficult to extend slavery to the Cape Colony, a process that began soon after the 1652 arrival of Jan van Riebeeck, the founder of the Dutch East India Company's refreshment station. Van Riebeeck's efforts⁴¹ to get labour through negotiation broke down. In 1658 the first slaves were imported – captured from a Portuguese slave trader, this group of slaves came mainly from Angola. Later that same year a group from Ghana arrived. A constant supply of slaves appeared to flow from the Dutch East India Company's returning fleets from Batavia. The slaves were not allowed entry to Holland – ironically, slavery in the mother land was illegal – so many officials sold their slaves at the Cape. Throughout the Dutch control over the Cape – until 1795 when the Cape Colony became British property – slavery was well-integrated into the everyday lifeworld.⁴² This situation continued under the British rule of the Cape Colony and until the abolition of slavery in 1834.

40 *The Abolition Project* 2009.

41 *South African History Online* 2016.

42 *South African History Online* 2011.

No doubt slavery coincides with racism. Slaves are defined as property; one human being is the legal belonging of another human. They could be sold, bequeathed or used as security for loans. Laws governed the rights of owners and secured the subordinate position of slaves. The owners were allowed to dish out harsh punishment, to withhold food, to chain and even to kill a slave – in case of a slave allegedly threatening the owner's safety. Out of slavery grows a culture of domination, control, and subordination. No doubt the early history of master and slave, of Christian believer and infidel, of rich and poor, of white and black, played an important part in setting up the intergroup relations of our present day world, including South Africa. The *documents of life* in this collection remind us that we live in a world that throughout history clearly had the potential to be a better place, but societies did not create conditions for the actualisation of each individual's full potential or personhood. Rather, the books remind us of the role religion and social practices played in the creation and maintenance of institutionalised and unequal lifeworlds. They remind us that the capacity to live a good life goes hand in hand with access to the most basic needs of social justice, humanity, and respect.⁴³

Language and identity

The *documents of life* tell a further story, of the hegemonic power of language. From the early history of the printed book as we know it, Latin played a major role in providing a framework for and basis of control in as far as the exercise of power was concerned. A significant number of the printed manuscripts of the 17th and 18th Centuries are in Latin – and a large proportion of these were written by members of religious orders such as the Society of Jesus, whose members are known as Jesuits. The Society of Jesus is a male-only religious organisation of the Catholic Church, founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1540 in Paris, with its official basis in Rome.⁴⁴ The Society was founded for "whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God"⁴⁵ and continues to strive for the defence and propagation of the Christian faith. The older books in this collection are testimony to the influence of the Jesuits in Central Europe and of the role of Latin as a vehicle in this regard.

43 Coetzee & Rau 2017.

44 O'Malley 2006.

45 O'Malley 2006: Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus (21 July 1550).

History has taught us that the ruling class often uses language to manipulate the values and norms of society. Imperial dominance goes hand in hand with language: the stronger state dictates the way in which the internal politics and the societal character of the subordinate state plays out. Antonio Gramsci, the Italian social theorist, sociologist and linguist is best known for this theory of cultural hegemony.⁴⁶ This theory describes how the state, the ruling class, and elite members of society use cultural institutions to maintain power. Through a hegemonic culture they use ideology rather than violence, economic force, or coercion. The hegemonic culture propagates and reinforces its own values and norms, which then become entrenched as the common sense values of everyday life. In this way the generally accepted conceptions of what is desirable coincide with the maintenance of the *status quo*. And the fact that the vast majority cannot read a language such as Latin, makes it easier for the dominant classes to read their own meanings into the texts and then translate their interpretations into directives for living the everyday life. Thus language is the vehicle to spread ideology.

Some early books were illustrated within the text and then translated into paintings, carvings and iconography, which would have been much more accessible to the less literate masses. And so the dominant ideology, and its interpretations of written text, would be promoted through verbal communication and then reinforced in appealing visual forms. By juxtaposing text with icons and carvings several installations in this project on *documents of life* offer this "second reading" of the notion of *language*. I expand on this later, in the section on 'Art from artefacts, books and bones'.

In order to consolidate dominant ideas and spread them into and across different languages, the compilation of dictionaries plays an important role. The practice of compiling bilingual wordlists began as far back as the production of the first manuscripts containing text. The development of printing made it possible and practical to compile glossaries with equivalents for Latin words in some of the major medieval European languages. The dictionaries in this collection signify the evolution of language processing: the ability to use language in order to determine meaning, to control culture, and to preserve identity.

46 Gramsci 1994; 2011.

Most of the texts in this project are old. The books are visibly old, and the languages in which they were composed are much older. The texts not only reflect the exhaustion that accompanies time, the engagement with ancient languages brings its own exhaustion. Recent neuroscience research⁴⁷ into cognitive processes reveals how we use different parts of the brain to process native and non-native languages. Our native tongue is the language we learn before the age of five. Once past age five, we rely more and more on our active working memory to process any new language. This requires much more conscious and strenuous effort. As we constantly use our working memory to process complex tasks, learning and using a foreign language can easily lead to cognitive fatigue. And if the foreign language requires the reader or learner to deal with complex grammatical or syntactic structures, the exhaustion levels simply increase. My personal biography led me to engage with the classics – with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew – and I experienced this exhaustion first hand. Very little of my proficiency in these languages survived my resolution to move to a career in sociology, instead of the church. What does endure is an almost intuitive interest in how the underlying rationalities and ideologies embedded in classic western languages endure and continue to shape current realities. All the installations in this project reflect aspects of aging, of endurance and exhaustion, resolution and dissolution.

Time

In Western thinking time tends to be seen as linear: a succession of existence or events from the past, through the present, and into the future. The idea of change occupies a prominent position in the way most people interpret their world. Change and the modernist focus on the possibility – indeed desirability – of progress are closely interwoven with a number of other concepts: liberation, peace, justice, equality, and communality. These concepts resound with the ambition to move away from a primitive state towards one of wisdom. And so the future becomes synonymous with our desire to eliminate or to reduce problems and shortcomings related to our physical, social, personal, and emotional environment. If we are privileged enough not to experience many problems and shortcomings in our physical and psychological lives, then we tend to strive towards transcending the base impulses of day-to-day existence for higher and greater good.

47 Volk, Köhler & Pudelko 2014.

The less benevolent underbelly of progress and its altruistic ideals is the ambition towards greater control. Our perception of change is founded in our view of the past and of the past's contribution to the present. But it is the idea of the future – and the hopes and expectations regarding the future – that drives us to control our welfare, our stability, our freedom, and our peace of mind. But as history shows, greater control can herald much darker versions of the future than envisaged or desired.

If history, change, and progress are expressed in terms of a continuum, then the two ends of the continuum are, respectively, the limits of traditionality and the promise of salvation. Traditionality has a restricted capacity to solve our problems and to control our environment. Salvation implies a capability to handle, and emerge from, wide ranges of internal and external pressures – to triumph, but without compromising the safety and freedom of others. Salvation is about reaching the higher good for all.

Time has always been a central issue in religion, philosophy, and science. But at a more mundane and realist level time is mostly regarded as what the sun shows us on a time dial or what the hour glass reveals or what the clock reads. Symbols of this realist view are dispersed throughout my artworks. Inherent in many of the installations is also the idea that time is part of an intellectual structure within which humans sequence, compare and interpret events. In the tradition of Immanuel Kant, the human mind creates the structure of experience, and space and time are forms of this sensibility.⁴⁸ So, time and space are integral to all human experience. And our experience is always of the phenomenal world as conveyed by our senses – we do not have direct access to 'things in themselves'. None of the books in the artworks are open – it is up to the reader to break open the meaning of the texts and their accompanying artefacts, to understand the phenomena from an essentially sensory space.

A lighter rationality

The ideas of free thinkers such as Voltaire, Molière, Racine, and De Crébillon circulated throughout the world at the time of the French Revolution. Their satirical observations flew in the face of the stern and self-righteous defenders of

48 Collinson 1987.

what is good and evil, providing relief from the heaviness of what was decreed in religious, moralistic, and didactic tomes. Their light hearted, and often flippant witticisms targeted the thinking of decision-makers and of ordinary people, as do those of modern day comedians who mock, jest, and exaggerate in an attempt to mirror the inadequacies of the powerful and the shortcomings of the system:

- Let us read and let us dance – two amusements that will never do any harm to the world. (Voltaire)
- People don't mind being mean; but they never want to be ridiculous. (Molière)
- On the throne, one has many worries; and remorse is the one that weighs the least. (Racine)
- Fear created gods; audacity created kings. (de Crébillon)
- If God created us in his own image, we have more than reciprocated. (Voltaire)
- It is not only for what we do that we are held responsible, but also for what we do not do. (Molière)
- Do not they bring it to pass by knowing that they know nothing at all? (Racine)
- The truths of religion are never so well understood as by those who have lost the power of reason. (Voltaire)
- Some of the most famous books are the least worth reading. Their fame was due to their having done something that needed doing in their day. The work is done and the virtue of the book has expired. (Molière)
- Faith consists in believing when it is beyond the power of reason to believe. (Voltaire)
- Of all follies there is none greater than wanting to make the world a better place. (Molière)

Some of my artworks reflect in a satirical way on my own path through religion, language and philosophy, particularly the engagement with the eighteen G.C. Berkouwer volumes loaded with heavy dogmatic teachings that I endured. One example is the hackneyed image of Cupid's arrow penetrating the heart, the love, of one of the most serious issues – that God has chosen us for salvation or damnation even before our birth (see Installation 49). Another is the caricature of the apostolic figurine of the reverend – the self-satisfied representative of church and of God (see Installation 58). Carvings such as the one mimicking 'The Scream' by Edvard Munch (see Installation 53) are juxtaposed with the proselytising zeal of Berkouwer's canon of religious texts.

Art from artefacts, books and bones

Earlier on I elaborated on the idea that we as humans live in storytelling societies and that our stories reflect our reality, our history, our dreams and future. Our ability to *story* our lives is what led us to engage with imaginary worlds, with religion, and the mysteries of the cosmos. And hand-in-hand with our stories of the everyday world, our creative engagement with imaginary worlds led us to art-making – an activity as old as humanity itself.

A recent exhibition on South African art at The British Museum in London featured 'The Makapansgat Pebble of Many Faces', which can be traced back to three million years ago.⁴⁹ It is one of the oldest objects that was collected and harboured for its non-utilitarian qualities. The pebble, fitting in the palm of one hand, contains eyes and a mouth on both sides. It could not have reached the cave in South Africa, where it was discovered, without having been carried there. It is highly unlikely that the pebble was deliberately altered to resemble a human face, but the fact that it was recognised as a face identifies it as one of the earliest examples of symbolic thinking and aesthetic sensibility in our human heritage. Another South African example, the 'Blombos Cave Beads', also points to artistic awareness reaching back to the beginning of humankind.⁵⁰ As with early western artworks and their depictions of scripture and religious life, it is likely that these early aesthetic objects related to the practices and beliefs of a primordial cosmology. They related to our capacity for creative imagination. Phenomenologists often remind us of the link between imagination and memory (*cf.* Paul Ricoeur).⁵¹ To imagine something evokes something else, often something remembered. This is what the artworks are intended to do: to trigger associations and memories through creative imagination.

Aesthetic objects are deeply integrated with the particular cultures where they were made or adopted. I use the word culture in the sense of an overall reality within which people live their everyday life. In modernity, for instance, the examples of modern, pop, and postmodern art of contemporary society link to the overall cultures within which they are created. Andy Warhol's 'Campbell Soup Cans', for

49 Gibling & Spring 2016:27-30.

50 *Ibid.* 31-35.

51 Ricoeur 2004.

example, is a commentary on consumerism that could never have emerged in earlier eras. In the same way, the so-called "primitive art" of Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas mirrored the cultures and overall reality of early human life.

Many of the texts go far back in history and can rightfully be described as old. But old gets a new meaning when we juxtapose these old texts with the oldest forms and shapes available to us – those of fossils. "Fossils are the remains of long-dead plants and animals that have partly escaped the rotting process and have, after many years, become part of the Earth's crust."⁵² At a more symbolic level, fossils tell the oldest stories of our planet; they hold the oldest memories of the past – not written memories as we find in the books as *documents of life*, but memory encoded in the DNA of natural life forms. In a symbolic sense, they are the archetype of memory. But also of forgetting, particularly forgetting the lessons of the past – of 'Walking in your footsteps'.⁵³ Natural and social change are both inevitable. Social change, encapsulated in the books, is usually slow, but can be very fast in the case of revolution: see Installation 17, 'Let them eat cake!' and Installation 36, 'Chained'. Natural or biological change, encapsulated in the fossils, is very slow, but can be swift in the case of natural or manmade upheavals. Like the ageing books on religion and philosophy, the fossils are portents of change and time; they speak of fragility and resilience, and of the possibilities of immortality.

Apart from the hardly imaginable dimension of age encapsulated in a fossil that stretches back to the Cambrian age of more than 500 million years ago, the aesthetic form and shape of some of these fossils go beyond reasoning. The deep black *Tympanic bulla* – the earbone of a whale from the Palaeocene period of 50 million years ago – reflects all the artistic qualities of a Henry Moore sculpture (see Installations 6, 12, 23, 27, 31, 32, 33 & 34). Or perhaps it may be more correct to say that Moore's understanding of the potential humanity of form is inseparably linked to "the form-giving power of the divine spirit"⁵⁴ in Nature? After all, Moore created his organic forms in line with the laws laid down by Nature. Most of

52 Walker & Ward 2000:10.

53 'Walking in your footsteps' is a song from the final studio album *Synchronicity* by the English rock band, The Police, released in 1983.

54 Lichtenstein 2008:243.

his abstract forms are based on bones and pebbles: "the comforting language of nature".⁵⁵

In the history of humankind no other forms and shapes have been used more to connect the mind to ideas on creation, sin, redemption, everyday morality, and the future than those from the world of religion. It is particularly within Christianity that religious forms and shapes became part of the everyday life-world of Western people. Luminous painted icons of Christ and the Mother Mary were meant to visually stimulate the imagination and provide foci for daily meditation and prayer (see Installation 2, 'Knowledge in the bones', and Installation 11, 'A sociologist's tale'). The symbol of the cross, the dove that exemplifies the Holy Spirit, and the chubby *putti* who represent the guilds of the tradesmen and their role in constructing the churches and their interiors – all became inextricably part of the cultural signs of everyday life.

The project uses these well-known and commonly recognisable forms and symbols from institutionalised religion, forms from the world of war and conflict, primordial forms and shapes from nature, and everyday objects from past and current life – and positions them all in relation to the old books. It is an invitation to the viewer to break open the mystery of old and inaccessible texts, to interpret them as *documents of life* – artworks that reflect the world around us, and make that world an object of reflection.

55 Stephens 2010:12.

LENSES FOR THE VIEWING

'Blind alphabet': extending our insight

Willem Boshoff

Willem Boshoff is an artist and Senior Professor in the Department of Fine Arts at the University of the Free State.

Fine artists and those given to enjoyment and criticism of visual arts are seen as exponents of the trained eye. They, of all people, in all professions, pretend to know how to *look*, and how to draw the highest semiological and visual satisfaction from that *looking*. Their total dependency on *sight* has almost entirely negated the senses of touch, hearing, taste and smell in the artwork. *Visual touching* reveals what surface and substance *feels* like: in a sense *visual touching* becomes *palpable sight*.

The skin is the largest organ of the body. If we as humans did not have eyes, we might have been, like earthworms, completely dependent on our skins for establishing where we are, what we know, and how to move around. This essay explores the idea that blind people can offer an insight into looking at art and exploring aesthetics in a different way than us, the sighted. This insight will, hopefully, help us towards an appreciation of the principal premise of this book: that a text written in an old and unknown language can be unwrapped, opened, translated and interpreted. In addition to reading the text in the conventional way,

we can also understand and experience the text. This understanding of the text does not only refer to attaching meaning to each word in the text, it also refers to a dialogical process in terms of which our understanding of the text goes beyond a mere linguistic activity.

To return to the dilemma facing blind people: the blind can only perform palpable tasks within arm's reach. They learn about the true nature of something by touching it piece by piece, and then through memorising the series of touch-experiences, they come up with a comprehended view of the extent of the thing. Because they forfeit the advantages of sight, their reliance on touch, hearing, smell and language is understandably exaggerated. Whereas the sighted person develops a philosophical *worldview* as a metaphoric extension of the ability to *see*, the blind person's *worldview* is an extension of what can be held in the hands. The sighted survey their world visually, but the blind literally *behold* and *embrace* theirs. "Behold" can be a politically correct term for "taking in", or, for what Kant in his *Critique of pure reason* calls "intuiting".⁵⁶ In talking to blind people, it transpired that they detest the term "behold". They simply say that they are "looking" at things, or that they "see" the world around them. They want to be no different from anyone else.

In the project 'Blind alphabet' I am trying to get blind people to help those who have normal sight to discover certain philosophical aspects of their vision/visionlessness. Galleries are often frequented by individuals who are "visually aware" or "visually literate" because of special training in issues of visual appreciation. They are gifted and respected as champions of sight. Blind people, on the other hand, need guidance and attention to cope with the simple things that come easily to even the weakest among the sighted. Your average art gallery is, to put it bluntly, not exactly "blind-friendly". 'Blind alphabet' turns on this and enables the English-speaking blind to guide the sighted in the privileged environment of the art gallery.

I am Afrikaans and both my grandmothers were in concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). In 1974, I realised that it would help a lot to acquire a decent command of the English language. I made certain drastic changes to my life in order to become very proficient in English. I studied at an English

56 Kant cited in Collinson 1987:91.

institution, and when I had qualified I taught at English secondary schools and an English-medium Technikon. I read incessantly and amassed a considerable library of books on philosophy, theology, art and music. I memorised the King James Version of the New Testament off by heart, married an English girl and fathered two English-speaking children – and I decided to increase my vocabulary by filling in cryptic English crossword puzzles every day – something I still do.

My lists of abstruse English words were meant as a diversion, to test and puzzle my ever-so-clever colleagues. Every night, like a monk praying, I pored over my dictionaries. By 1992 I had collected about 10 000 difficult words by reading through all the dictionaries I could find. This actually started a kind of obsession for dictionaries, and I now have a sizable collection of over 200 dictionaries.

I wanted to extend my language game to other languages and to activities that included the art-making process. I decided to make an art installation in which blind people can function as luminaries and in which sighted people are disenfranchised. So, my crazy word-lists became the mother-work for the 'Blind alphabet' project. I realised that so many words, like "caducity" (the tendency of things to fall), "bothrenchymatous" (having a surface tissue that is pitted – full of dimples) and "coarctate" (pressed together) had to do with form and texture – the very basic constituents of sculpture. From these obscure morphological terms I then prepared a morphological dictionary and made sculptures illustrating these complex morphological words.

To disempower sighted people I needed to impose upon them a sense of the disappointment blind people have when they are restricted. My way of "blinding" sighted visitors to the artwork is to hide the sculptures in small boxes under wire mesh. The art gallery with its silly signposts of "Don't Touch" will prevent them from opening the boxes so that they are overcome by frustration. Furthermore, the lid on every box is fitted with a text in Braille. This foreign text aggravates and obstructs the sighted visitor. Then, to cap everything, there are hundreds of these sculptures – row upon row, in close proximity – the sighted visitor feels denied, lost in what seems like a futile labyrinth, the solving of which might get you nowhere. As one blind guest said: "... you had it all – now it's our turn to have it all – this is ours".



'Blind alphabet'. [Willem Boshoff]

When the blind liberator comes along, he or she does not know that there are hundreds of works and is thus not daunted by their continuous extent. The blind becomes aware of the 'Blind alphabet'-installation by beginning to touch only one piece. The blind cannot read that damning art gallery sign that says "Don't Touch" and their uninhibited touch reveals a familiar Braille text. They discover that the text explains a sculptural object inside the box and they begin to enjoy the selfsame object. Then, when the blind guests are done with their first object, they don't have to scout about in the dark for the second. It is right next to the first. They don't get lost looking for the artworks. When the befuddled sighted visitors see the blind people enjoy themselves, they are prompted to ask for an explanation: "What have you got that I miss?" Usually it is blind people who ask this question about everything visual. The blind people then begin to help the sighted people to experience the work.

My 'Blind alphabet'-project is not trying to bestow charity upon blind people. It does not want to patronise the blind and is issued as a challenge to their sense of social responsibility, to rise to the occasion and to use their special gift for reading Braille to do something significant for the sighted in the valued art galleries.⁵⁷ The texts are not easy to read. They follow a typical dry-as-dust style that one

57 I apologise to those blind people who cannot read Braille, who cannot even read English – or worse still, who cannot even read: next time!

might expect in the academic languages of old-fashioned galleries, archives and museums. The writing is full of difficult words, botanical names, Latin and Greek derivatives. The blind do not have an easy time but, from watching them, they seem to give an account of what they have to offer quite admirably. My blind friend Wellington Pike works as a proof-reader at Braille Services and he is capable of checking seven languages. His ability to read faster than he can speak and the abstruse nature of the text makes him appear somewhat like a prophet when he shares the strange things in the text with his bewildered attendants.

The 'Blind alphabet' was the first offspring of my word-lists. Since completing phase one I have read through the 25 volumes of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and written a proper "user-friendly" dictionary entry for every difficult word I managed to find. This updated dictionary was completed in 1999 and has 18 000 such entries. Inscriptions like "pognotrophy" (growing a beard), "onolatry" (the worship of donkeys), "cattilate" (licking the plate clean after a meal) and "xerophagy" (eating dry foods like biltong and popcorn) are the order of the day. From these endless lists I have made several language installations that prompt conversation between people who find it difficult to talk to each other. Like the 'Blind alphabet'-project these installations serve as ice-breakers that encourage an exchange of ideas and sentiments. At the then Rand Afrikaans University (now the University of Johannesburg) I installed 'Kring van kennis', 11 large boulders of granite with texts from the 11 official languages of South Africa. There the Tswana or Venda knows he or she has something other speakers don't have. At the Havana Biennale 2000 I tried to discombobulate the predominantly "European" intelligentsia by writing "linguistic impossibilities from Africa" in the sand. In my work/s it might not be uncommon to find the Zulu lady who sells fruit on the street corner explaining difficult English to the consummate professor of English at a respected English university – or to the high-minded "yuppie" on his or her lunch break at the relocated stock-exchange in Sandton, Johannesburg.

So, next time a brave Zulu pedestrian saves the day by catching a runaway bag-snatcher and is mistakenly apprehended himself, and tries to defend himself in English – the language of his captors and of the court that tries him – believe me, he is trying to help the new "liberated" English-speaking order that can't or refuses to know Zulu, to "see", beyond doubt, that he is innocent. He is trying to help them understand – not they, him! – they could never begin to do that.

Trouble is, I think they (unwittingly) will (always) presume him to be guilty because, to their ears, he speaks so damn funny!

In this project on *documents of life* the emphasis is on books as texts. Like the Braille texts on the lids of the boxes in the 'Blind alphabet', the books in *documents of life* are written in languages that can be read by very few. To decipher a book, one needs to read the words that constitute the text and one needs to know the meaning of the words. Reading implies semiopraxis – converting signs or symbols into a process of interpretation – we look at letters and words and construe meaning from them. But like the obscure and alien English words in my artwork, the content and meaning of the texts are inaccessible, unknowable, frustrating the viewer's ability to read them in a conventional way.

Just as the sighted must be prepared to accept the analysis and interpretation of the blind in the project 'Blind alphabet', we need to allow the installations in this book to tell us something. Our understanding of the *documents of life* is not merely a result of our subjectivity and our unique way of perceiving these documents, it also depends on our openness to new ways of looking, to re-interpreting tradition and re-reading history.

Books in space: absorption and distance in two artists' book installations

Jonah Sack

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Reading is a private act, but one we frequently perform in public. On buses and trains, in parks and libraries, we often find ourselves reading alone, together. Reading re-shapes the space around us, creating a zone of intimacy and absorption within a space of distance and distraction. Many artists have explored this interaction between reading and public space by bringing books and other texts into the gallery. These artists' book installations, such as Willem Boshoff's 'Blind alphabet' (1990-ongoing), are not simply exhibitions that incorporate books, but artworks in which the book alters the predominantly visual environment of the gallery, and *vice versa*. In this essay I discuss 'Blind alphabet' as well as my installation 'Proposal for a new city, the same as the old one' (2010), to argue that

these artworks explore the tension between absorption and distance. I'll suggest that the play between legibility and obscurity in Boshoff's work also serves to heighten that tension, and to bring a sense of distance into the space of reading.

Long before the advent of smartphones, we already had a tool that served to disconnect us from our surroundings and from each other. Books are a lonely medium, usually consumed by one person at a time. It's true that one can read aloud to someone else, but this is an intimate experience, a way of inviting someone to share a private space. Of course there is a long history of public books, including religious documents such as the large Ethiopian gospels that are meant to be seen by many people, and the scrolls of the Torah. But even these books are typically carried around the church or synagogue in a ceremonial procession so that everyone can see them, and then are read aloud by just one person at a time. The congregation follow along in their own prayer books, each reader in their own separate sphere of concentration and absorption, more or less imperfectly aligned with one another.

This gives us an image of a communality, a public space, which is constructed out of a series of separate zones of attention. This image, of an array of self-contained units of attention and immersion, could describe Boshoff's 'Blind alphabet', with its grid of objects secluded within boxes on plinths. The work is an object dictionary – a set of sculptures based on English words having to do with shape, form and texture. These sculptures are presented inside wire mesh boxes, each containing a single object. The boxes are lidded, and covered with an inscription in Braille on aluminium, giving the definition of the word embodied within it. Only blind visitors are allowed to handle the objects or read the Braille texts. To sighted viewers, the entire installation is just a field of aluminium sheets, dotted with code, and hazy forms lurking in the black boxes beneath them. They are like pages of a book spread out in front of us, but written in an unfamiliar language. Sighted viewers depend on blind readers to interpret and explain the texts for them, like congregants relying on their priests to explain the Latin bible.

This play between what is revealed and what is hidden is a common theme in Boshoff's work. As Ivan Vladislavić notes, there is often an intriguing – or frustrating – obscurity in Boshoff's pieces:

If the woodworks are concerned with how knowledge is *packaged* in the form of the book, *Kykafrikaans* [Boshoff's collection of concrete poems, published in 1980] is concerned exhaustively, and occasionally exhaustingly, with how it is *unpacked* in the act of reading. And with how reading sometimes yields nothing at all and must give way to looking. (Author's emphasis)

(Vladislavić 2004:28)

'Blind alphabet' is a particularly rich example of this tension between reading and looking. Sighted people have no direct access to the contents of the work, so they depend on someone else to do their reading for them. A blind visitor has access not only to the text, but to the objects themselves, which are – magically – both words and things. The sculptures embody the meanings of the words they illustrate. "Illustrate" is actually the wrong word here: the sculptures don't refer to words, or words to them, they *are* both words and things, simultaneously. In this way 'Blind alphabet' could be seen to be the ideal book. It is a text which realises the dream of perfect legibility, of perfect correspondence between word and world. The sculpture which corresponds to the word *dacryoid* – "tear-drop-shaped" – really is shaped like a tear drop. *Echinoid* means spiked like a sea urchin, and so is its sculpture. There's none of the arbitrariness of "real" words – every one of Boshoff's words *means* exactly what it *is*.

But there's also an obscurity built into the work, obviously so for sighted visitors, but even for blind visitors. Even they are likely to become exhausted by the sheer number of objects, and by the technical language of the text, as Boshoff acknowledges.⁵⁸ So it's a book that is designed ultimately to defeat almost any reader. We only get a partial glimpse of that world of harmony between words and things.

As Vladislavić notes, when Boshoff's works frustrate our reading, we fall back on viewing. Then we are pulled in again – because it is writing and we can't help trying to read writing – and find ourselves pushed away again. As we oscillate

58 Boshoff writes, "My 'Blind alphabet' does not intend to patronise the blind. [...] The texts are not easy to read: they follow the dry-as-dust academic language used in old-fashioned galleries, archives and museums. The writing is full of difficult words, botanical names and Latin and Greek derivatives. The blind have to struggle to explain them, but I have watched them giving admirable accounts." (Siebrits 2007:74)

between the impulse to read and the necessity of viewing, the work leaves us in a limbo of partial understanding. As David Paton writes about *Kykafrikaans*, Boshoff's works are "rich sites for the iconicity of doubt".⁵⁹ This seems to be the real meaning of 'Blind alphabet'. It is not so much about the specific definitions of some set of obscure English words. Rather, it's about how we come to know the world. It's about the movement between obscurity and comprehension, and about making us conscious of that movement, rather than having the illusion of effortlessly assimilating knowledge from text. It's about blurring the lines between reading and other modes of experience – touching, tasting, smelling – and, perhaps, making us more aware of those other modes as a kind of reading, too.

Looking at 'Blind alphabet' is a bodily, spatial, three-dimensional act, even for sighted people, and even more so for blind people. It is reading made physical. The array of boxes is arranged in a grid to suggest infinite extension from a viewer's initial, static encounter with the work. We move between the boxes, aware of a different kind of space inside them. They have depth, and even if only in our imaginations, we can plunge our hands and our minds into them. Finally, if we are allowed to handle the objects, the act of understanding the object and of reading its meaning is itself a physical act.

This is fundamentally different to our usual interactions with artworks in the gallery space. We usually stand back from the artwork, taking it in with an almost disembodied eye. The act of reading – even the imagined act of reading – is engaged, intimate, close.

'Blind alphabet' heightens and dramatises the strange duality of all books and texts in general. It makes us attend to their physicality as well as to their meaning. This is something we encounter every time we read, though we don't usually think about it. Newspapers are a good example from daily life. They are large and unwieldy, and require an ungainly flapping action of turning and folding just to navigate them. They're like maps, which also have – or had, back in the day when maps were things on paper – an awkward, impractical physicality. Newspapers may be even worse, because they're composed of separate sheets which are not bound together, and which can start to slip out and come apart in the reading of them. There's a comedy to reading a newspaper, just as there's something faintly

59 Paton [n.d.]:13.

ridiculous about someone consulting a map – getting lost in a piece of paper, trying not to get lost in the world.

The comedy results from a sense of obliviousness to the real world. The reader is so attentive to the world contained in the book or newspaper or map that he or she loses contact with the physical world around them. It's a form of attention that is also a state of distraction. Absorption is a state of engagement in inner space, in fictional space – it's not about engagement in something solid and real. Absorption is the kind of experience one has when one is swept away by a text, or by a painting, or even by a play – but not by nature, not by the world around us. That's a different kind of attention, which we don't usually call "absorption". We say you're absorbed in a book, but not that you're absorbed in a view, or in a walk. There's an inattention that is essential to absorption. It's not so much that it pulls you in, it's that it pulls you away.⁶⁰ It pulls the readers away from their particular position in time as much as away from their particular place. In this way the aesthetics of absorption runs completely counter to the philosophy of relational aesthetics, which is about creating spaces which connect people. A book is a space which disconnects you from your context.



Proposal for a new city, the same as the old one. [Jonah Sack]

60 See Ostas 2010:25, for a formulation of this idea that connects Michael Fried's account of absorption to Immanuel Kant's account of disinterest. Ostas concludes that these two terms are both names for the same state of attention.

Newspapers are a particularly vivid example because they are *made* for public space – they're a kind of public book – but every person reads their own paper. Everyone might be reading the same paper, the very same article, but they're all secluded with their own copy. In my installation, 'Proposal for a new city, the same as the old one' (2010), hundreds of copies of a single artist's newspaper were strewn across the gallery, on tables which were constructed like scaffolding out of thin lengths of blackened wood. The tables incorporated lightbulbs, angled low to encourage viewers to huddle over the papers. Inside, they found a comic-strip-like series of images, depicting an abandoned city. The scratchy ink lines echoed the lines of the scaffolding. There was a correspondence between the scaffolding and the image, so that the world contained within the newspaper was continuous with the world created in the installation. To enter the installation was thus to become absorbed into the space of reading, to be contained by the space of the newspaper.

This state of public absorption is the subject matter – or at least the unintended effect – of many artists' book installations. They create spaces in which we can reflect on the various forms of attention which we pay to the world. Within these spaces we explore the tensions between distance and intimacy, attention and distraction, viewing and reading. In artists' book installations individual acts of reading happen within a larger environment which creates a context for the reading. This context or structure bridges the gap between the world that is contained within the book and the world outside it. Stepping into the installation, the viewer is already immersed in the space of the book, before even opening a page.

As Michael Fried argues, the point of absorption is that it allows us to forget that we are viewers. When we look at paintings and other images of people in a state of absorption – reading, sleeping, lost in reverie – we can watch without being watched. Fried argues that these images "establish the ontological fiction that the beholder does not exist".⁶¹ It's a view without a viewer. The importance of this, for Fried, is that these images are part of a long series of reflections, in the history of painting, on the nature of painting itself. They're investigating the problematic relationship between painting and beholder – problematic because it is artificial.

61 Fried 2007:501.

It's only by allowing the viewer to forget his or her own presence that the painting can elide the strangeness of that relationship.

But that strangeness, and estrangement, is embraced in these artists' book installations. In these works there is a push-pull of drawing the *reader* in and pushing the *viewer* back. We're asked to perform these two roles simultaneously, or to alternate between them. They invite absorption, but they don't ask us to forget ourselves as viewers, or to forget the strangeness of the act of beholding. By combining absorptive and distancing elements, artists' book installations play with the tension between absorption and self-consciousness, intimacy and distance, precisely in order to make us reflect on what it means to be a viewer, and what it means to be a reader.

The artist's book as democratic force

Kim Berman

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Books have survived censorship, burnings, pulping and bannings because of the democratising impetus to listen, understand, and do something about the knowledge they share. Books, which can be symbols of repression, can also become a space and format for passionate political and social calls to action. I argue in this reflective essay that artists' books are able to achieve this powerfully because they communicate more directly and do not rely on text alone.

In her preface to the catalogue titled *The silent scream: political and social comment in books by artists*, Sara Bodman explains the power of books and "the fear of their contents that has instigated all those burnings throughout history".⁶² She maintains:

Since ink was first applied to paper to publish books, they have been smuggled, treasured, protected and passed from one set of hands to the next. Messages have been devoured and discussed, ideas imbued in the minds of those who read them.⁶³

62 Bodman in Oppen & Lyssiotis (eds.) 2011:8.

63 *Ibid.*

Karen Vernon, writing about the same exhibition, states:

It is the quality of the interaction we have with a book by an artist that heightens this conversation. The interaction is not just intellectual and emotional, not just a simple 'viewing', but also a physical participation with the work, the turning of pages, the weight, texture and feel of the book in our hands. The conversation inevitably deepens to become a story. The best stories will change the way we see the world and the way we see ourselves.⁶⁴

Perhaps this is the context Jan Coetzee had in mind when he called for an essay on book art that responded to Habermas' assertion that communication holds the key to the creation of a better society,⁶⁵ and considered "the possibility of the book artist to remind members of society that they find themselves in a social reality that can become different or better than their present reality".⁶⁶

One may ask what Habermas' theory of communicative action⁶⁷ has to do with the artist's book. If we think of the South African liberation movement in the 1980s, which will be the focus of my essay, philosophers such as Habermas, Dewey, and Freire, who were writing about liberation from oppression, and understood the need for greater cultural fluency, were important. For those infused with a burning desire for social justice, equality and human rights, they demonstrated a belief in the capacity to relate and function across identity, cultural and worldview boundaries.

As an activist artist in self-elected exile in the 1980s, I made artist's books as a political act. I was engaged in the anti-apartheid struggle and joined the African National Congress (ANC) exile movement as an active volunteer. We smuggled out documentary photographs from South Africa – in particular the work of the Afrapix photography collective that was banned there – and arranged multiple exhibitions around the USA university divestment campaigns. My own work became increasingly didactic and political, drawing from and re-presenting these documentary photographs. Documentary communication seemed to be the key to both oppression and liberation.

64 Vernon 2011:179.

65 Habermas 1987.

66 Coetzee in a letter to me in 2017.

67 Habermas 1987.

At the time I was a Master's student at the Museum School of Fine Arts in Boston where abstract expressionism was celebrated as a universal language to transcend politics and overt social messages. But, at that moment in history, I saw the artist's book as taking on a role of a democratic and documentary mission. In South Africa, books were banned because it was recognised that they were powerful, so they were seen as a threat to the state. Art became a form of resistance and artists' books held a power to influence, expose, and present possibilities as well as to imagine new futures. In 1988, for my Master's show, 'State of emergency', I made small limited editions of books of etchings, drypoints and monoprints. From the intimacy of small hand-held books, they became larger friezes as narratives spanning free-standing screens. I think the increase in size and volume of my works was partly due to the frustration of trying to communicate the realities in South Africa at the time, and getting the art community around me to engage with my work beyond the seductive painterly surface of the print. I displayed the work at various university campus anti-apartheid organising rallies. Today one of those works, 'Alex under siege', hangs in the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg as a reminder of the political resistance of the 1980s and the struggle for liberation.



Alex under siege (1987), detail of panels 5 and 6 (ref Afrapix collective) Drypoint/monoprint. [Kim Berman]



Alex under siege (1987), displayed in the Constitutional Court. [Kim Berman]

In *Why stories matter*, Marshall Ganz claims that stories not only teach us how to act, they inspire us to act: "A story communicates fear, hope and anxiety, and because we can feel it, we get the moral not just as a concept, but as a teaching

of our hearts".⁶⁸ He goes on to ask; "How do we recapture that power of public narrative and learn the art of leadership storytelling?"⁶⁹ and explores the idea of the narrative as social organising. He talks about the first story of self and the importance of your own story that moves you to act, and which may move others as well. The second story Ganz refers to is the story of us, of a community, and its shared purposes, goals and vision. Then there's the story and urgency of now, and the values that are, as well as those we aspire to and wish for our world. How do we seize an opportunity and turn it into action, he asks.⁷⁰

Ganz's cycle, the cycle of democratic organising, parallels the story of how I used the artist's book as a democratic force. My *story of self* was reflected in the way I used my artwork as personal testimony in sharing the atrocities taking place in my country during my seven years away from home. The *story of us* developed in the sharing of my journey through my work and activism when returning home in 1990, after Nelson Mandela's release. I recruited others to share in the building of an organisation called Artist Proof Studio. The organisation's goal was to create an equal, non-racial and accessible space for artists to make work that would contribute to the vision we held in our newly established democracy in 1994. The *story of now* provided us the opportunity for transformational arts practices to be a powerful force for social justice. Ganz notes that, based on shared purpose, organised communities accept the responsibility to act, build relationships, tell stories, devise strategies and take action in campaigns that are highly energised and focused. Like the democratising process which is iterative and non-linear, each time you tell a story of now, it affects what went before.

Harry Boyte extends this notion of democratic citizenship in his understanding that skilled, well-educated and savvy citizens are essential to the functioning of a healthy democracy. He argues that the most important question is not why more people are not engaged in contemporary communities, but rather "what works to develop cultures that sustain powerful citizen action?"⁷¹ This is a vital question for engaging citizens and enlivening democratic processes, and can be

68 Ganz 2009.

69 *Ibid.*

70 *Ibid.*

71 Boyte 2010:xi.

addressed through structures, policies, and politics as well as creative and imaginative modes, which can balance the dual pulls of agency and engagement. Boyte further advocates for renewing civic life through everyday engagement. When people feel involved in the decisions that affect them, they experience greater agency. When they do not, democracy falters.

An example of a collaborative project where participants experienced the idea of everyday engagement as democratic process is a group project I initiated in 2006 as both artists' book and public action called 'Reclaiming lives'. It started with a personal story of loss in which a young graduate and dynamic educator at Artist Proof Studio, dear to our whole community, died as a result of the stigma and silence surrounding HIV/AIDS. His fear and shame had prevented him from seeking treatment. The HIV/AIDS campaign objective we initiated at Artist Proof Studio was to provide education and awareness around the possibility of saving one's own or another's life through knowledge and action. One hundred students and artists were invited to make a portrait or symbolic portrait using a personal item identified with a person with whom they had shared a relationship, and who had died as a result of an AIDS-related illness. The five weeks of research, interviews, drawing and etching became a dedicated and reflective commitment of time to mourn and engage with the loss of a brother, sister, role-model, friend, or relation. The hundred portraits were etched on steel plates and printed in an artists' book with statements about each tribute portrait. In addition to the limited edition of books, large composite printed panels were displayed in a public forum. When the editions of the prints were completed, the steel etched plates were mounted as tiles to create a wall of remembrance, a 'Tribute wall'.



Artist book of 100 tributes. Etchings and artists' statements on handmade paper. Edition 1/2 compiled by Kim Berman, bound by B Marshall. [Kim Berman]



100 Tribute portraits. Artist book and panels. [Kim Berman]

The last phase of the project presented each artist with the option to participate in a voluntary HIV testing and counselling program on site, leading into an art-therapy workshop to make an image or text responding to that process. Given the heightened awareness that resulted from the project, many took part. Each of the prints that the participants made was dipped in wax and overlaid onto the individual steel plates that made up the 'Tribute wall'. In this way the work symbolised the effect the project had and honoured each participant's own story, as well as the narrative of loss that had been created initially. The book of etchings, as well as the wall panels, travelled to an international AIDS exhibition at the Smithsonian Museum of African Art, and is now installed at the Wits University Medical School. It remains an example of the potential of art to save lives using dynamic arts processes with the ability to facilitate not only renewed dialogue but action.

Mary Richards observes that humans are pulled between twin poles of belonging and autonomy: "... there is a *dialogue* between the impulses growing toward independence and those growing toward relationship. There is a questioning and answering, an offering and a resisting".⁷² Organising narratives can effectively respond to this tension.

72 Richards 1998:237.



Reclaiming lives: 'Tribute wall', Aardklop Exhibition Sept 2006. [Kim Berman]

Book arts, and the power of the narrative, are just one of many modalities that can respond to "the emancipatory intention to aid the development of the communicative capacity in society".⁷³ Through the ability for participation, reciprocity and dialogical engagement, not only the maker but also the reader can become more attuned to the process of enacting or engaging the experience of the narrative. The aesthetic experience of the artist's book draws the reader in and makes what was unseen visible and possible. In her writings on the dimensions of aesthetic encounters in *Creative approaches to reconciliation*, Cynthia Cohen⁷⁴ acknowledges that aesthetic experiences engage both cognitive and sensory faculties, draw us into spaces bounded in space or time, and root our experiences in known structures or familiar genres or conventions. In this way the aesthetic gaze can be more easily linked to social justice. Aesthetic experiences are intrinsic to the political and social context in which arts initiatives exist. The artist's book is a particularly charged form that disrupts the more conventional reading of a book as text, and instead explores a personal iconography and individual narrative that can at the same time be political and liberating.

73 Romm 2001:143.

74 Cohen 2005.

Bookworks and dialogic imagination

Keith Dietrich

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Anyone who has not been maimed by some imposed "ideology in the narrow sense," anyone who is not an "ideologue," respects the fact that each of us is a "we," not an "I." Polyphony, the miracle of our "dialogical" lives together, is thus both a fact of life and, in its higher reaches, a value to be pursued endlessly.

(Wayne Booth cited in Bakhtin 1984:xxi)

In his essay 'Negotiating meaning: the dialogic imagination in electronic art', Eduardo Kac makes the point that the terms "dialogical" or "dialogism" are frequently found in literary criticism and philosophy, but little has been said about their meaning in the visual arts.⁷⁵ With reference to two examples of my own bookworks, I will demonstrate how artists' books, or bookworks,⁷⁶ take shape through a process of *dialogic imagination*.

One of the most prominent features of artists' books is their lack of a clearly delineated identity or definition of what a bookwork is. It is because of this lack of a fixed identity and definition that artists' books find themselves in the liminal and hybrid space they occupy. Transgressing the boundaries of regular books by defying their existing limitations and definitions is one of the primary features of artists' books. Other important characteristics are their intermedial, intertextual and transdisciplinary features, and the desire to transgress the established aesthetic norms and expectations of art and books. These qualities and characteristics call to mind Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic principle.

In his *The dialogical imagination*,⁷⁷ Bakhtin counter poses the idea of single-voiced speech or the monologue of a single consciousness, against the notion of dialogue, or multiple voices expressing a variety of perspectives. Whereas the former may be associated with the centred system of a single perspective uttering a single truth, the latter acknowledges diverse viewpoints that arise within the context of

75 Kac in Bostad *et al.* (eds.) 2004:199.

76 The synonymous terms "book art", "book object", "bookwork", and "artist's book" refer to art objects that are informed by the concept of the book and are realised in the form of a book.

77 Bakhtin 1981.

a conversation, exchange and interchange, and where truths are debated and negotiated.⁷⁸ For Bakhtin, writes Kac, "language is not an abstract system, but a material means of production. In a very concrete way the body of the sign is negotiated, altered, and exchanged via a process of contention and dialogue".⁷⁹

The media philosopher Vilém Flusser argues that dialogue is made possible when engaging in creativity: "One can therefore speak of creation as a dialogical process, in which either an internal or external dialogue takes place ..."⁸⁰ "Creativity", points out Anke Finger, Ranier Guldin and Gustavo Bernardo, "arguably Flusser's most central philosophical concept, lies at the basis of all communication, dialogue, and life because the aesthetic experience lies at the centre of human perception".⁸¹ Kac observes that when Bakhtin's ideas are employed in the visual arts, the idea of dialogism generally remains limited to "a literary trope".⁸² He advocates that dialogism be explored aesthetically precisely because it is fundamentally engrained in the reality of our everyday lives.

The dialogic principle alters our understanding of art; it offers a new way of thinking that requires the use of bidirectional or multidirectional media and the creation of situations that can actually promote intersubjective experiences that engage two or more individuals in real dialogic exchanges.⁸³

Bakhtin develops his examination of dialogism by means of his notion of heteroglossia, which calls attention to the complex nature of images/texts in that they display traces of other images/texts, such as found, quoted or ambiguous images/texts, which give rise to multiple meanings. He explains heteroglossia as a "double-voiced discourse"⁸⁴ that can simultaneously serve more than one speaker and at the same time express more than one intention:

In such discourse there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions.
And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they – as it

78 Lachmann 2004:50.

79 Kac 2004:201.

80 Flusser cited in Finger *et al.* 2011:132.

81 Finger *et al.* 2011:133.

82 Kac 2004:202.

83 Kac 2004:203.

84 Bakhtin 1981:324.

were – know about each other ... it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other.⁸⁵

David Paton echoes Flusser's "external dialogue" when describing dialogism in artists' books as "books speaking to each other across time and context".⁸⁶ As an example, he uses Marcel Broodthaers' parody of Stéphane Mallarmé's book *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*,⁸⁷ where these books engage in a conversation between themselves. By contrast, Flusser's "internal dialogue" corresponds with Paton's definition of heteroglossia as bookworks that speak "to and within themselves as multi-vocal art objects".⁸⁸ In the context of artists' books, this embraces an array of voices woven together in an intertextual palimpsest, ranging, for example, between formal devices, processes and techniques. Kac makes the important point that dialogic artworks "cannot be limited by visibility; instead they are lived experiences based on contextual reciprocity".⁸⁹ Although Kac refers here to the reciprocal experiences inherent in electronic art, where the reader is able to "interfere and alter the experience", the action of the reader is crucial when physically engaging with and understanding the complex experiences of bookworks.⁹⁰ These interchanges, therefore, also include the dialogical relationship between the artist, the work and the reader where the reader's voice becomes part of the exchange.

In such an open system, the reader is enabled to adopt a freer, more associative method of constructing meaning. This implies that works of art are *incomplete* when they are released to the world and that the reader/viewer participates in the creation of the work, thereby completing the work for herself or himself. Meanings therefore emerge and merge through a process of dialogic exchanges

85 *Ibid.*

86 Paton 2012:75.

87 Broodthaers constructed a replica of Mallarmé's book (1897) but *censored* his words by blocking them out with black strips that correspond to its typographic layout. Broodthaers, M. 1969. *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*. Antwerp: Wide White Space Gallery.

88 Paton 2012:75.

89 Kac 2004:205

90 Because of their fragility, artists' books are often displayed in glass cases, which defeats the very purpose and function of book objects, thereby reducing them to visual objects.

between the artist, artwork/bookwork and reader. In this ongoing interplay, components mutually inform and enrich each other, and our understanding of the work becomes enriched by our accumulative experience of it. As the process is theoretically unlimited, closure can never really be arrived at. This notion of dialogised heteroglossia is strongly present in the interaction between the text- and image-based languages in two of my own bookworks, where the contents, forms, graphics, typography, composition, papers, folding, binding and printing of each book, as well as the interactive process of involving the reader, engage in various dialogic exchanges.

The first book, *Fourteen Stations of the Cross*⁹¹ (hereafter referred to as *Fourteen Stations*), is informed by the first fourteen Christian mission stations established in the interior of southern Africa between 1799 and 1813. The three volumes are structured according to the verses of the 'Stabat Mater',⁹² a Latin hymn associated with the devotional Stations. Volume 1 includes background information arranged according to the first four verses of the hymn. Volume 2 is divided into fourteen chapters, each introduced by a parallel verse from the hymn, and Volume 3 closes with the last two verses.

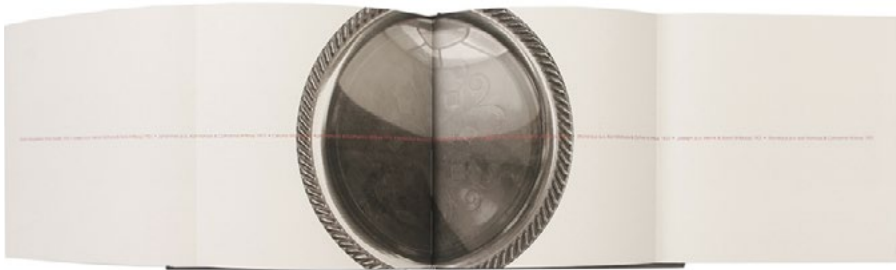
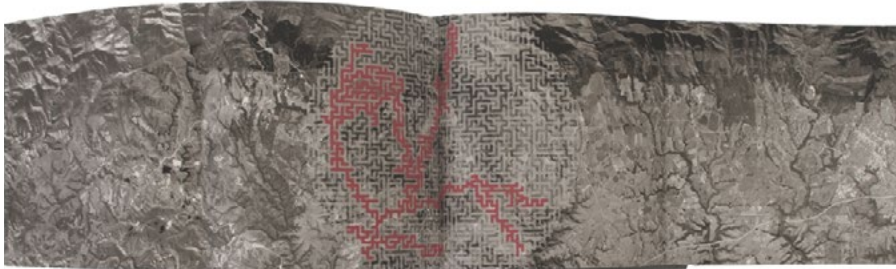


Each chapter of Fourteen Stations, Volume 2, opens with a spread providing brief details of the place names of the station, as well as the names of the missionaries involved in establishing it. Running across the following three spreads is a reversed duotone photograph of a strip of ground documented at the site of each station. [Keith Dietrich]

91 *Fourteen Stations of the Cross*. 2007. Three volumes in a slipcase, 25 x 25 cm when closed. Stellenbosch: The Strange Press.

92 Also called the 'Via Dolorosa'. A devotion that meditates on the different scenes from the final hours or passion and death of Jesus Christ.

The first spreads of each station open to 100 cm-wide gatefold spreads in the form of reversed duotone aerial photographs of the sites. Superimposed over these images is a labyrinth over which the routes followed by the missionaries are mapped out in red. Each second gatefold spread opens to a duotone photograph of a bowl containing water, with a reflection of a church window associated with the site. Stretching horizontally across these spreads runs a single line of red type, constituting the text of the book, which includes the names and dates of people baptised at these stations.



Two gatefold spreads in *Fourteen Stations*. [Keith Dietrich]

The second book, *Fragile Histories, Fugitive Lives / Justice and Injustice at the Cape, 1700-1800*⁹³ (hereafter referred to as *Fragile Histories*), is informed by 1,220 court trials that took place at the Cape of Good Hope between 1692 and 1802, and pays particular attention to the details of the individuals who were tried and sentenced, and the atrocious punishments that were meted out to them. The work comprises two accordion-fold volumes bound together into a single set of covers. Volume 2 contains background information regarding the composition of

93 *Fragile Histories, Fugitive Lives / Justice and Injustice at the Cape, 1700-1800*. 2012. Two volumes bound in single covers within a slipcase. 30 x 20 cm. when closed. Stellenbosch: The Strange Press.

the population at the Cape during the 18th Century, while Volume 1, constituting the main volume, takes the form of a 25-running-metre accordion-fold book providing details of each of the above-mentioned court trials.



Accordion-fold spreads inside Fragile Histories. [Keith Dietrich]

In *Fourteen Stations*, external dialogues are established between the devotional Stations and the mission enterprise in southern Africa during the colonial period, and particularly the role the Church played in converting the land and people. These are buttressed by an interchange between the names of places,⁹⁴ the names of missionaries and other significant figures,⁹⁵ and those of baptismal catechumens whose names run across each alternative gatefold spread. Names such as Geertruij Kok, Leipoldt Koopman, Geertruide Goeieman, Moses Adam Renoster, Cupido Kakkerlak, Anna Vigilant, Moshwabolwe Makgetla, Eva Maria Blaattie, Jager Afrikaner, Elisabeth Pofadder, Salmon Veldskoendraer, Regina Armoed and Dyani Tshatshu, resonate with the complex histories of the region and the hybrid origins of its people. The red lines of type that run along these spreads suggest a life force or river, which speaks to the red routes mapped over the labyrinths on the first gatefold spread.

Further external dialogues take place between these two books regarding the interplay between names, colonisation, and power. The text that runs through the second volume of *Fragile Histories* provides the dates of the respective trials, and the ages and origins of the offenders rendered in dark grey type,⁹⁶ and

94 e.g. Blij Vooruitzicht, Zakrivier, Aakaap, Zoetemelks Valleij, Baviaanskloof, Tyhume, Mgqukhwebe River, Kookfontein.

95 Amongst others, Adam Kok, Jacob Kicherer, William Edwards, Cornelius Kramer, Jager Afrikaner, David Bergover, Johannes van der Kemp Ngqika, Coenrad de Buys.

96 With slaves, the names of their owners are included, while with people of Khoi origin, the owner of the farm where they lived is mentioned. The occupation, places of origin or residence of European settlers are mentioned.

summaries of both their crimes and sentences set in red type. Like the names of the catechumens in *Fourteen Stations*, the type block suggests a river of names of people who passed through the colonial system, and who were tried, punished, and subsequently forgotten about.

A range of internal conversations also takes place within each book. In *Fourteen Stations*, for example, the interplay between places and names, dark and light, land and water, conversion, baptism and cleansing, and blood and life give rise to a range of dialogues read through ambiguous photographic images, formal devices, and technical processes.⁹⁷ The effort to distinguish between the aerial photographs and close-up ground strips associated with each station, gives rise to particular ambiguous exchanges. As a central feature of Bakhtin's dialogical heteroglossia, ambiguity takes the form of "double-voiced" speech, where these images are dialogically interconnected, possessing multiple voices that simultaneously convey multiple expressions in conversation with one another.

The folding structures of the books, their directional modes of reading, and their use of text and typesetting likewise induce dialogical exchanges. In contrast to monologic works that are limited to their *visuality*, these books cannot be flipped through and require interactive experiences that arise during the action of reading. In *Fourteen Stations*, the gatefold pages must be carefully unfolded, examined and refolded before moving on to the following gatefold spread. Besides working against the grain of conventional books, this action of unfolding, pausing, contemplating, and refolding again, parallels the pauses in the devotional Stations. In *Fragile Histories* an uneasy exchange arises between the text, typesetting, and the action of reading the book. The volume is sub-divided into eight type blocks, each running across eight pages, which are interspersed with graphic medical images of vital organs. As such, the lines of type wrap across almost three metres, which goes against the grain of orthodox books and reading. Like the pauses in *Fourteen Stations*, the images of vital organs also act as pauses, providing interior glimpses of bodies in pain. In order to comprehend the text one must continuously page forwards and backwards, and then forwards again to scan along the wrapping lines of text.

97 Photographic processes, graphic treatment, typography, illumination, colour, composition, and folding and binding systems.



An unfolded spread that runs across eight pages – almost three metres in length – in Fragile Histories. [Keith Dietrich]



The folding method for Fragile Histories arose from that of Fourteen Stations, Volume 3, as a challenge to create a particularly long and more complex accordion-fold work. In both books, the spreads may be folded out into a single 9.5-metre or 25-metre strip. Both books may also be interacted with in bidirectional modes of reading, this being a significant characteristic of artists' books. [Keith Dietrich]

The idea of a river of names that emerged with *Fourteen Stations* was extended to *Fragile Histories* to create an entire book comprising names of people who passed through the colonial landscape. The ambiguous exchange between the names as red words, and the names as red images, calls to mind Johanna Drucker's assertion that "writing is a visual medium".⁹⁸ Where the red lines of type

98 Drucker 1995:57.

in *Fourteen Stations* suggest a life force or blood, the interaction between the grey and red typography in *Fragile Histories* suggests streams of blood flowing between islands of dark grey type that provide the names and details of these people, while their sentences and punishments are printed in red type. As such, the text reads simultaneously as text and image, or what W.J.T. Mitchell refers to as "imagetext".⁹⁹ As a reminder of our traumatic past, folded into these bodies, organs and texts, are the traces of our complex and fragile hybrid ancestral interconnections.

In dialogical terms, these two books explore the ambivalent terrain between image, text and object. Images and texts combine, enhance or stand in for one another, or engage and collide with one another, giving rise to a variety of questions and possibilities. It is precisely this ambiguous space between artwork and book that draws me to work with this medium. In this undefined space where boundaries dissolve, the bookwork transcends the threshold from one space to another.

In these books I have explored an intertextual interplay and dialogue between a range of elements that include subject matter, images and metaphoric references, and a variety of formal devices such as images and texts, photography, illustration and collage, typography and design, and folding and binding devices. The convergence and coexistence of texts and images in these books, establish a dialogue between various *utterances*, be they between image and text; phenomenon and concept; form, content and context; figure, paper, fold and binding; or between reader and author. This interweaving of images and texts within the margins of a single work is a deliberate artistic device, argues Bakhtin, that allows for the "double-voiced and double-accented", and "double-languaged".¹⁰⁰ As such, a single work can maintain a number of dialogues or voices in a single *utterance*, be they styles, belief systems, or social languages.

99 In *Picture theory*, Mitchell writes that the interaction between images (pictures) and texts is "constitutive of representation as such", and redefines this interaction with his notions of imagetext, image/text and image-text (1994:5).

100 Bakhtin 1981:359-360.

BIRDLIFE

Eliza Kentridge

Eliza Kentridge lives in the United Kingdom.

In the winter I was like a lizard
Seeking out the sun
Following it around the house
My finger keeping my place in the book

WHAT PAGE ARE YOU ON?
DON'T TELL ME THE ENDING

Granny Smith was my companion
Pages sometimes spattered with juice and pips
Scuffs and stains I remembered on my return
Always the return to certain books
Is that a kid thing?

The grand widening of horizons
Throwing open the windows of knowledge and mystery
Stepping into love and adventure
Adult books taken from parental shelves

ARE YOU IMPRESSED?
WERE YOU WATCHING?

Then back to the burrow
A safety in pages known by heart
Puffins, penguins, birdlife
My signature on the inside covers
Practised over and over in Geography

THE BOOKWORKS

1. *Brooding over the dark vapours*





Quadragesimale

Title page: Latin	Title page: English
Quadragesimale.	Forty days/Lent.
Hoc est:	This is:
Conciones Super omnes Ferias, et Dominicas	The Discourses concerning all the Feast Days and the Lord's days
totius Quadregesimae a Die Cinerum usque ad Sabbatum Sanctum inclusive. Qua ita sunt dispositae, ut simul etiam integrum Dominicale, et Festivale exhibeant.	of all the complete Lenten days from the day including of Ashes (Ash Wednesday) up to Holy Sunday. Whereby they were arranged in such a way, so that they may similarly also display the complete days of the Lord and Feast days.
Authore Ven. P. Fr. Joanne a Jesu Maria Navarraeo Maneruvienti, Ordinis Excalceatorum SSS, Trinitatis de Redemptione Captivorum, SS. Theologiae Lectore Primario, Provinciali, et Definitore Generali emerito, qui has insignes Conciones, quas olim communi plausu ad frequentissimum Auditorium peroraverat, Hispanice edidit, Eas nunc pro omnium utilitate in Latinam linguam transtulit.	By the author Venerable Father Brother Joanne a Jesu Maria of Navarre of Maneru, of the discalced order of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament, of the Trinitarians for the redemption of captives, distinguished reader of Sacred Theology, and emeritus Definitor General (counsel to the superior general of the order), who gave these Discourses in Spain which, at that time he delivered to the crowded lecture hall with communal applause, he has now translated these for the benefit of all into the Latin language.
P. Fr. Josephus a Maria, eiusdem S. Ordinis	Father Brother Joseph a Maria, of the same holy order

Definitor Generalis.	Definitor General.
Opus Divini Verbi Praeconibus summe proficuum 62, Conciones in se complectens.	The work of the Divine Word is exceedingly profitable to the heralds 62, embracing the Discourses as his own.
Quibus pro maiori Concionatorum utilitate nunc adiecti fuerunt sex valde commodi Indices, quorum primus exhibit synopsis singularum Concionum:	To which for the greater usefulness of preachers six very complete indices/catalogues have now been added, of which the first exhibits a summary of each of the Discourses:
Secundus demonstrat Conciones, quae in Quadragesima ab illis usurpari possunt, qui tunc temporis super Psalmum Miserere commentantur.	The second describes the Discourses, which are able to be used by those during Lent, who then during that time consider/ think over the Psalm 'Have Mercy'.
Tertius ostendit Conciones super omnes Dominicas, sicut & Quartus super Omnia Festa, et solemnitates totius anni.	The third shows the Discourses concerning all the Lord's days, thus also the fourth of all the feasts, and solemnities of the whole year.
Quintus praecipuos sacrorum Bibliorum Textus hic explanatos indicat;	This fifth points out the main explanations of the Sacred Books;
Sextus denique rerum memorabilium loca designat.	Finally the sixth traces the places of memorable things.
Tomus primus.	Part one.
Viennae Austriae, Expensis interpretis, & prostat apud Georgium Lehmannum, bibliopolam, Anno MDCCXXXIII.	Vienna Austria, through the payment of the translator/interpreter, and sold by George Lehmann, a bookseller, in the year 1733.

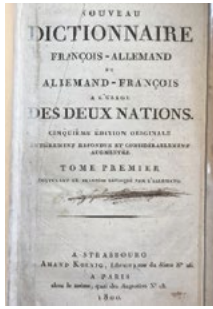


Fossils in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Cockscomb oyster	Rastellum	Jurassic/Cretaceous (± 150 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide
Ammonite	Mortoniceras	Cretaceous (± 100 Million yrs. ago)	Europe, Africa, USA
Whale vertebra	Odontocete Cetacean	Pleistocene (± 10 000 yrs. ago)	Worldwide

2. *Knowledge in the bones*

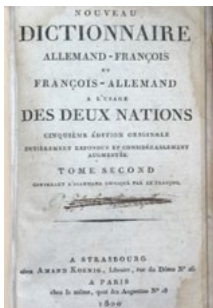




Nouveau dictionnaire François-Allemand et Allemand-François a l'usage des deux nations

Cinquième édition originale tierement refondue et considérablement augmentée. Tome premier. Contenant le François expliqué par l'Allemand.

A Strasbourg Amand Koenig, Libraire a rue du dome no 26.
A Paris chez le même, quai des Augustins No 18.
1800.



Nouveau dictionnaire Allemand-François et François-Allemand a l'usage des deux nations

Cinquième édition originale intierement refondue et considerablement augmentée. Tome second. Contenant l'Allemand expliqué par le François.

A Strasbourg chez Amand Koenig, Libraire, rue du Dome No 26.
A Paris chez le même, quai des Augustins No 18.
1800.



Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
Translated by Dr W. M. L. de Wette.
First Part.

The historical books of the Old Testament.
Edition 3 Extended.
Heidelberg, bei J. C. B. Mohr.
1839.



Russian icon

Russian icon painting was strongly influenced by religious paintings and engravings from Catholic Europe during the 17th Century. From this period, icons began to be painted in a mixture of Russian style and Western European realism, very much like Catholic art in Western Europe.

Russian icons are typically painted on wood and are often small in size. Russians speak of an icon as having been "written", because in the Russian language the same word is used for writing and painting. Icons are considered to be the Gospel in paint, and therefore careful attention is paid to ensure that the Gospel is faithfully and accurately conveyed.

The fact that both an icon and a book are written, suggests their commonality as *documents of life*.

The icon in this installation dates from the early 19th Century and was obtained from a deceased estate.

Fossils in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Desert rose (<i>Stromatopora</i>)	Actinostroma	Cambrian (± 500 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide
Mammoth femur knob	Mammuthus	Pleistocene (± 10 000 yrs. ago)	Northern Eurasia and North America

3. *Golgotha's king*





Totius Latinitatis Lexicon

Title page: Latin	Title page: English
Totius Latinitatis Lexicon, consilio et cura Jacobi Facciolati, opera et studio Aegidii Forcellini, Alumnus Seminarii Patavini Lucubratum.	The Lexicon of complete Latinity, through the deliberation and care of Jacobus Facciolatus, the works and study of Aegidius Forcellinus, an alumnus of the seminary of Padua, a work composed at night.
Secundum Tertiam Editionem, cuius curam gessit, Josephus Furlanetto, Alumnus eiusdem seminarii, correctum et auctum, labore variorum.	To the advantage of the second edition, of which Josephus Furlanetto has taken care of, an alumnus of the same seminary, corrected and increased through the labour of various (scholars).
Editio in Germania prima, cum privil. Reg. Saxon.	The first edition in Germany, with the privilege of the King of Saxony.
Tomus tertius.	The third book
Lipsiae, Sumptibus Ch. E. Kollmanni, Londini, apud Black et Armstrong. MDCCCXXXIX.	In Leipzig, printed by Ch. E. Kollmann, In London, by Black and Armstrong. 1839.

Crucifix

Arms, legs and halo taken from an antique wooden carved Crucifix from late 18th or early 19th Century. Manipulated, cleaned from layers of enamel paints.

Acquired in the Jewish Quarters of Kazimierz, Krakow, Poland.



Relief block

This block was used to print an illustration of Jesus Christ appearing to the apostles after the resurrection. The artwork is based on a famous painting by English painter and printmaker William Blake (1757-1827). The letterpress method is used to print from raised surfaces and applies to both text and printing illustrations from relief blocks. This example was used in London at a printing press in the 19th Century.

Fossil in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Trilobite	Elrathia	Cambrian (± 500 Million yrs. ago)	Utah, North America

4. *Imperial principles*





Analysis Institutionum Imperialium

Title page: Latin	Title page: English
Analysis Institutionum Imperialium.	The analysis of imperial principles.
Julii Pacii A. Beriga J.C. Cl.	By Julius Pacius of Beriga, a celebrated lawyer. (<i>Giulio Pace 1550-1635 was the original author</i>)
Bernardi Schotani, J.C. & in Academia Lugdunensi[s] Iuris Professoris Primarii, Scholiis Illustrata:	Commented on by the notes of Bernardus Schotanus, a lawyer and chief professor of law at the University of Leiden: (<i>Bernardus Schotanus 1590-1652 provided comments</i>)
Et nunc demum perpetuis Notis & brevibus additamentis, tam theoreticis quam practicis, ex optimis quibusque Auctoribus, ipsisque legibus passim aucta, correcta, & distincte edita,	And now at last with thorough remarks and brief additions, as well as practical theses, from all the best authors, and generously expanded with precise legal definitions, corrected, and published separately,
Studio & opera Gerardi a Wassenaer, J.C. Ultrajectini.	Through the work and study of Gerardus of Wassenaer, a lawyer from Utrecht. (<i>Gerardus van Wassenaar 1589-1664 was the editor</i>)
Accedunt eiusdem Pacii selecta. Titt. Dig. & Decret. de Verb. Signis. & Reg. Iur. & alia; Cum Indicibus exquisitissimis.	Included with selections from the same (Julius) Pacius. With exhaustive indices, Chapters on the Digests, and the Decrees concerning the meaning of words and the rule of law, and other things; <i>(Text contained in the printing firm Trajecti ad Rhenum's logo)</i>

PAX ARTIUM ALTRIX	Peace, the nourisher of the Arts
MINERVA TRAIECTINA	Minerva of Utrecht
Trajecte ad Rhenum, Ex Officina Rudolphi a Zyll, Bibliopolae	Utrecht on the Rhine, From the shop of Rudolph van Zyll, a Bookseller (<i>Rudolph van Zyll was active in Utrecht 1674-1691</i>)
Anno C C C C LXXXVI. (Apostrophus numbering)	In the year 1686



Church key

Antique handmade brass church key from the late 18th Century attached to an antique handmade chain and handmade key holder.

The key was acquired from Bergen Antik, Bergen, Norway.

Keys go back very far in history. The earliest known lock and key device was discovered in the ruins of Nineveh, the capital of ancient Assyria, dating back to long before the Common Era of A.D.¹⁰¹

All the keys in this project are from warded locks, which use a set of obstructions, or wards, to prevent them from opening unless the correct key is inserted. The correct key has notches or slots corresponding to the obstructions in the lock, allowing it to rotate freely inside the lock.

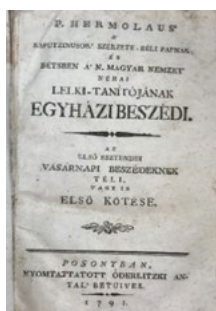
Keys have always been associated with wealth. Not only was a lock and key device an expensive item, but carrying a key signalled wealth that needed to be secured.

Keys symbolise opening and closing powers. They also have metaphysical powers and symbolisms: they represent knowledge, mystery, initiation and curiosity. For this reason keys are closely connected in meaning to any codex, manuscript, or book.

101 Morgan & Chavalas 2006.

5. *Sermons for a Sunday*





Egyházi-beszédek

**P. Hermolaus. A' Kapuzinusok' Szerzete-béli
Papnak, és Bétsben A' N. Magyar Nemzet'
Néhai Lelki-Tanítójának Egyházi-beszédek.**

P. Hermolaus. The Kaputzin Convent – Priest of Bel's and
in Vienna and Grand (Nagy) Nation of Hungarians the
deceased spiritual-mentor's Ecclesiastical Speeches.

The first year's Sunday Sermons for Winter, the First Edition.
Posonyban/Pressburg/Bratislava.

Nyomtatott Oderlitzki an-tal' Betüivel/Printed
by the Press of Oderlitzky Antal. 1791.

This publication by P. Hermolaus was found close to Banská Štiavnica, the Slovakian town from which the two Leopold coins originate. The sermons by Hermolaus reflect on the everyday reality and on the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the aftermath of the rule of Leopold I.

Leopold coins

The historic town of Banská Štiavnica was a medieval mining centre and to this day the town – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – displays vital relics of the mining and metallurgical activities of the past. It is the oldest mining town in Slovakia. The first Mining and Forestry Academy in Europe was established there in 1762. Because of the rich deposits of silver in this region, Banská Štiavnica played an important role in the coin minting industry.¹⁰²

The Leopold I coins of 1672 and 1698 in this installation were struck at the mint in Banská Štiavnica during the reign of Leopold I (also known as Hogmouth). Leopold I ruled from 18 July 1658 to 5 May 1705. He was the second son of Ferdinand III who was known as Holy Roman Emperor. Leopold I took over this title as well as the titles Archduke of Further Austria and Prince of Transylvania. Leopold and his three wives were all Roman Catholic; in succession he married Margaret Theresa of Austria in 1666, who died in 1673; Claudia Felicitas of Austria in 1673, who died in 1676; and Eleonor Magdalena of Neuburg in 1676. Not dissimilar from his predecessors and successors, Leopold I's reign is known for conflicts with the Ottoman Empire to the east as well as with Louis XIV to the west.

102 Plicková 1982.



Head of a putto

The antique wooden carved head in this installation is from the late 19th Century, slightly manipulated and repainted. Acquired from De Porcelyne Lampetkan, Delft, The Netherlands.

A *putto* (Italian singular form of the plural *putti*) is a figure representing a naked or semi-naked male child, usually depicted as a chubby, winged cherub or cupid. *Putti* appear in both mythological and religious paintings and sculpture, especially from the Renaissance and Baroque periods. These charming little figures serve to illustrate worldly parallels to Christian religious dogma. They are often included in the frescoes on the ceilings of churches, chapels

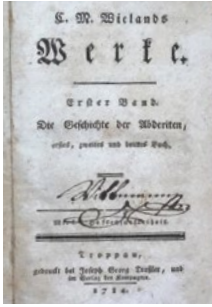
and cathedrals and represent professions from the worlds of science, arts and crafts: the poet, the physician, the botanist, the carpenter, the bell caster, the gun maker, the goldsmith, the flautist, the singer, the painter, the merchant, the astronomer, the architect and the geographer. No analysis of church architecture, design and decoration is complete without the inclusion of the *putti*.

Rosary

The rosary was found at a flea market in Delft, The Netherlands.

6. *Failing to learn, doomed to repeat*





S. M. Wielands Werte

Die Geschichte der Abderiten, erstes, zweites und drittes Buch.

S. M. Wieland's Works. The History of the Abderites, first, second and third book. Troppau, gedruckt bei Joseph Georg Trassler, und im Verlag der Compagnie. 1784.

Fossils in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Trilobite	Crotalocephalus	Devonian (± 350 Million yrs. ago)	Alnif (Morocco)
Cockscorb oyster	Rastellum	Jurassic/Cretaceous (± 150 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide
Whale ear bone (<i>Tympanic bulla</i>)	Cetacean	Palaeocene/Miocene (± 50-20 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide
Sea urchin	Plesiolampas	Palaeocene/Eocene (± 50 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide



7. *The alpha and the omega*





Tükör

**Makula-Nélkül-Való Tükör Melly Az üdvözítő
Jesus Krisztusnak, és Szent Szülőjének Eletét,
Keserves Kinszenvedését és Halálát Adja Elo.**

The mirror that reflects the blissful savior Jesus Christ's holy parents' life, grievous excruciation and death.

10th Edition.

Budapest, 1872.

University Press of the Hungarian Royal University.



Scull

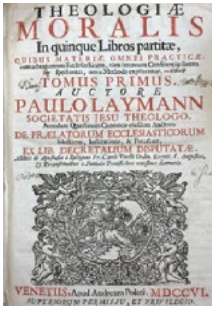
Carved from sandstone found on the beach at Kenton-on-Sea, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Bronze hourglass

Found at a flea market in London, United Kingdom.

8. *Theology of morality*





Theologiae Moralis

Title page: Latin	Title page: English
Theologiae Moralis in quinque Libros partitae,	A theology of morality, divided into five books,
Quibus materiae omnes practicae,	With which all the practical material,
Cum ad externum Ecclesiasticum, tum internum Conscientiae forum spectantes,	Looking, both to the external scriptures and the internal court of the conscience,
Nova methodo explicantur.	Are set forth in a new method.
Tomus Primus, Auctore, Paulo Laymann, Societatis Iesu Theologo.	The first book, by the author Paulus Laymann (1574-1635), theologian of the Society of Jesus.
Accedunt quaestiones canonicae eiusdem auctoris, de Praelatorum Ecclesiasticorum, Electione, Institutione, & Potestate,	Added to the canonical inquiries of the same author, concerning the election, instruction and power of the Church prelates,
Ex Lib. Decretalium Disputatae,	From the books of decretal (i.e. Papal decrees) debates,
Additis de Apostasia a Religione Fr. Caroli Tirelli Ordini. Eremit. S. Augustini, & Propositionibus a Summis Pontificibus novissime damnatis.	With additions from the Apostasy from Religion by Br. Carolus Tirellius, order of the Hermits of St. Augustine, and from the latest pontifical statements with regards to the severest sentences.
Venetis, apud Andream Poleti. MDCCVL. Superiorum Permissu, et Privilegio.	In Venice with Andrea Poleti. 1745. With permission and privilege of the superiors.

Crucifix

Antique wooden carved Crucifix from late 18th or early 19th Century. Manipulated, cleaned from layers of enamel paints.

Acquired in the Jewish Quarters of Kazimierz, Krakow, Poland.



Relief block

Used to print an illustration based on the 'Praying hands' by the German artist and printmaker Albrecht Dürer. The original version of this Dürer work is in the Albertina Museum in Vienna. The letterpress method is used to print from raised surfaces and applies to both text and printing illustrations from relief blocks. This example was used in London at a printing press in the 19th Century.

9. *Divine intervention*





Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift des alten und neuen Testaments, nach der deutschen Uebersetzung D. Martin Luthers

The Bible or the entire Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, translated into German by Dr Martin Luther. With an introduction by Prelate Dr. Huffell.

Karlsruhe, im Kunstverlag.
1836.

Ceramic dolls' heads

When I came across the ceramic dolls' heads in the bronze display bowl in this installation – at an antique dealer in Port Alfred, in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa – I was told that these heads were found on a rubbish dump. The heads are too clean, too clinically broken from the rest of the body, and too similar in appearance, to have been randomly and haphazardly collected over a period of time. The fact that they were dumped at the same time on the same spot also suggests that they came from the same place.

When I showed the heads to a friend who grew up in the Roman Catholic tradition, she was adamant: these heads are connected to religious "magic". They were parts of ceramic dolls that might have been used as spells, charms, and other artificial means to enlist the support of supernatural powers in order to bring about a particular effect or to achieve a particular outcome.

Religion and magic have always been connected. To enlist the supernatural powers in order to achieve a particular aim was and still is a normal and ubiquitous part of everyday life. Classicists acknowledge that magic forms the starting-point for the investigation of religion in antiquity,¹⁰³ and anthropologists agree that magic has always been at the centre of belief systems.¹⁰⁴

When a colleague drew my attention to an academic article based on research in the northeastern region of Brazil,¹⁰⁵ I started to wonder: to what extent are the little

103 Fowler 1995.

104 Rankin-Smith 2011.

105 Da Silva 2010.

ceramic heads in the bowl related to what this research found? Votive offerings – ex-votos – in the Roman Catholic Church normally consist of something left in the Church in gratitude for wishes and miracles received. Ex-votos can take the form of candles being lit, flowers being offered, monetary donations or so forth. The gifts are usually deposited at sacred shrines in the cathedral, church or chapel.

The research in Brazil found a vibrant tradition of votive offerings in the church of São Lázaro (Saint Lazarus) which even provided a special votive room. The majority of offerings are sculptures of body parts, suggesting that the primary interventions that people seek relate to matters of physical health. The researcher, Natalia Marques de Silva, draws attention to the contact between the populace in the area of the São Lázaro church and followers of Candomblé – an Afro-Brazilian religion combining aspects of Catholicism with the religion of the Yoruba people and other West-African groups.¹⁰⁶

There is an intricate syncretism between African religions and Catholicism – by far not unique to Brazil. In the case of São Lázaro – dedicated to the patron saint Lazarus, who is said in the New Testament to have spent his life begging at the doorsteps of a ruthless, rich man – the message is clear: all those who are affected by diseases and/or physical handicaps are invited to bring their misery to the church and to overcome their diseases with faith.

Is it possible that, in a somewhat different way, in the poor informal settlements around Port Alfred, a priest might detach a leg from a ceramic doll to give it to a church member or believer with a leg problem as a coping mechanism, a talisman from the divine? Can it be that this priest would detach an arm from the same ceramic doll as an offer of relief from pain and distress, and hand it to another individual with an arm problem, who in turn will carry this as a symbol of her/his expectations of healing through spiritual intervention? Although the mere carrying of a ceramic body part might not lead to self-healing or an immediate change in one's situation, the faith in a divine capacity for intervention can bring about positive attitudes, confidence, and even healthy behaviours. By carrying a ceramic shard that resonates with your ailing body part, you internalise a coping mechanism for your negative situation. It becomes easier to process circumstances that might have been otherwise too heavy a burden.

106 *Ibid.*

Why would only heads remain, later to be discarded on a rubbish dump? It is much easier for a simple-minded person to formulate a complaint of some *other* physical illness or ailment than to petition a deity or priest in pursuit of healing depression, fear, or a mental instability or disorder. Maybe most of the ceramic dolls' heads stay behind in the possession of the priest because he has less use for them, because few believers disclose an illness that might stigmatise them or might open them for labels such as demented, crazy or deranged.

Putto

The antique wooden carved *putto* in this installation is from the late 19th Century. It is manipulated and cleaned from layers of enamel paints. I acquired it from a street market in The Hague, The Netherlands.

For more information about a *putto*, see Installation 5 'Sermons for a Sunday' on page 81.

10. *The key*





Orbis Antiqui et Hodierni Geographiam

Title page: Latin	Title page: English
Ioannis Tomka Szaszky, Introductio in Orbis Antiqui et Hodierni Geographiam,	John Tomka Szasky, Introduction to Geography of the ancient and contemporary world,
in duos tomos divisa, quorum prior continet cum Praecognitis, Europam, posterior Asiam, Africam, et Americam.	divided into two parts, of which the first part comprises with foreknown knowledge Europe, the second part Asia, Africa and America.
Plurimis in locis emendata, novisque aucta supplementis.	With corrections in many places, and an abundance of new supplements.
Opera ac studio Ioannis Severini.	The works and study of John Severinus.
Editio Altera.	Second Edition.
Posonii at Cassoviae, impensis Ioannis Michaelis Landerer, MDCCLXXVII.	Printed by Posoni and Cassovia, paid for by John Michael Landerer, 1777.



*Histoire du Vicomte de Turenne,
Par l' Abbé Raguenet*

Title page: French	Title page: English
Histoire	History
du Vicomte	of the Nobleman
de Turenne,	of Turenne,
Par l' Abbé Raguenet.	by Abbot Raguenet.
Tome Premier.	First Volume.
A Paris,	In Paris,
Chez la Veuve Didot, Quai des Augustins, á la Bible d' or.	At the Veuve Didot, Quay of Augustin, at the Golden Bible.
M.DCC.LIX.	1759.
Avec Approbation & Privilege du Roi.	With the approval and entitlement of the King.

Key

Early 19th Century key – presumably of a business enterprise or warehouse.

Acquired from De Porcelyne Lampetkan, Delft, The Netherlands.

For more about keys see Installation 4: 'Imperial principles'.

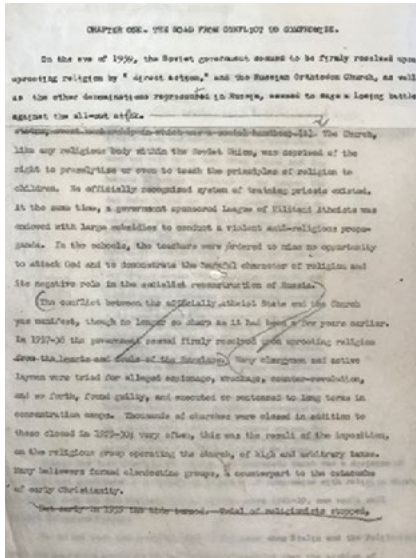
Crucifix

Found in a flea market in The Hague, The Netherlands.



11. *A sociologist's tale*





The Nicholas Timasheff manuscript

Nicholas S. Timasheff (9 November 1886 – 9 March 1970) was a Russian sociologist and writer. He came from an old family of Russian nobility: his father was Minister of Trade and Industry under Nicholas II. He attended the best schools and universities in Russia and France. Following an alleged involvement with the Tagantsev Conspiracy¹⁰⁷ in 1920 he fled to the United States of America.

He took up a professorship at Fordham University, and as an authority on the Russian Orthodox Church, he published

widely on religion in Communist Russia. His book *Religion in Soviet Russia, 1917-1942*¹⁰⁸ is one of the authoritative publications on the Russian Orthodox Church of that period. The original type-written manuscript in this installation – with hand written annotations and loose insertions – was given to a postgraduate student who attended a series of lectures delivered by Timasheff at the University of Groningen in The Netherlands in 1956. A possible explanation for the gifting of the manuscript to the student might be related to the rejection of this work by publishers. The most obvious reason for rejecting the publication proposal might have been related to the fact that the publishers felt that the manuscript did not add sufficiently new material to warrant an additional publication.

Timasheff is best known in sociological circles for his book *Sociological theory; its nature and growth*,¹⁰⁹ which became a standard text. I encountered the revised edition of this book as a prescribed text during my undergraduate studies in sociology at the University of Pretoria in the late 1960's.

107 The Tagantsev Conspiracy allegedly involved hundreds of the University of Petrograd (Saint Petersburg) professors, scientists, engineers, literary, and artistic figures. Petrograd was the university where Timasheff taught. They were found guilty of organising a combat organisation and preparing an insurrection. Cf. Zubok 2017.

108 Timasheff 1942.

109 Timasheff 1955.



Small Russian icon

Russian icon painting became strongly influenced by religious paintings and engravings from Catholic Europe during the 17th Century. From this period, icons began to be painted in a mixture of Russian style and Western European realism, very much like Catholic art in Western Europe.

Russian icons are typically painted on wood and are often small in size. Russians speak of an icon as having been "written", because in the Russian language the same word is used for writing and painting. Icons are considered to be the Gospel in paint, and therefore careful attention is paid to ensure that the Gospel is faithfully and accurately conveyed.

The fact that both an icon and a book are written, confirms their commonality as *documents of life*.

The small icon depicting 'Mother and Child' dates from the late 18th to early 19th Century. It was acquired from Lapidarium Antiques, Warsaw, Poland.

Stained glass panel of a Russian Orthodox bishop

This stained glass panel comes from the collection of the late Mrs Liselotte Hardebeck (1920-2014), a Johannesburg philanthropist and socialite. She outlived her husband by 25 years. The Hardebecks travelled extensively and collected numerous artefacts during their travels. In 2009 Liselotte Hardebeck set up the *Umamawothando Trust* to help disadvantaged students obtain a second degree.

Ceramic portrait

The ceramic sculpture in this installation was given to me by the South African artist, Martin Wessels, in the early 1980s. Wessels at that stage fired clay sculptures in an open fire kiln in a cave near Clarens in the Eastern Free State. During a visit I noticed the ceramic head – covered by runny and smudged glazing – and immediately associated the face with that of Jesus of Nazareth.



My perception of what the face of Jesus might have looked like is intrinsically linked to the centuries-old linen cloth that bears the image of a crucified man, known as 'The Shroud of Turin'. Millions believe that the linen cloth was wrapped around Jesus's crucified body and that an imprint of his body and face was left on the cloth. 'The Shroud of Turin' is regarded to be the single most studied artefact in history, at the pinnacle of all unusual artefacts. When visiting the

Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Turin in August 2014, I was disappointed to find that 'The Shroud' is no longer on display because of its fragility. Whether the linen cloth physically presents a reality beyond our current ways of understanding, is not for me to say. I can merely ponder that such a fragile object made it through time, memory, travels, political upheavals, earthquakes, and fire.

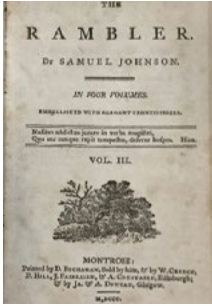
Talking about fire, this ceramic sculpture was created in an open fire. During the firing the original intention of the sculptor was interrupted and the portrait took on a different face. This new and unintended face triggered an image in my mind – the imprinted face of the bearded man with the shoulder-length hair parted in the middle on the linen cloth of Turin. Having read that Nicholas Timasheff was a devoted Christian and knowing that he wrote extensively on religion, the sculpture is confidently positioned on Timasheff's manuscript on the Russian Orthodox church.

Paperweight

Bronze hand on rusted steel base; found in an antique shop in Port Alfred, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

12. *Fossilised*





The Rambler

By Samuel Johnson.
In Four Volumes.

Embellished with elegant frontispieces.

Montrose: printed by D. Buchanan, sold by him, & by W. Creech, P. Hill, J. Fairbairn, & A. Constable, Edinburgh; & by JA. & A. Duncan, Glasgow.

M,DCCC.
1800.

Fossils in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Trilobite	Elrathia	Cambrian (± 500 Million yrs. ago)	Utah, North America
Ammonite	Dactyloceras	Jurassic (± 165 Million yrs. ago)	Runswick Bay (UK)
Dolphin vertebra	Delphinus	Pleistocene (± 10 000 yrs. ago)	Worldwide



13. *In the shadow of the cross*





Considerationes Christianae

Title page: Latin	Title page: English
Considerationes Christianae pro singulis anni diebus.	Christian meditations for every day of the year.
Authore R. P. (Reverendo Patre) Francisco Nepveu, Societatis Jesu.	By the author, Reverend Father Francis Nepveu, of the Society of Jesus.
Latine redditae a R. P. Andrea Leuckart, ejusdem societatis sacerdote.	Rendered in Latin by Reverend Father Andrea Leuckart, of the same priestly society.
Primum trimestre complectens Ianuarium, Februarium, Martium.	The first three months, comprising January, February and March.
Cum facultate superiorum, & privilegio.	With the sanction of the superiors and privilege.
Ingolstadii, Sumptibus Viduae Johannes Andrea de la Haye, bibliopolae Academ.	Ingolstadt, paid for by the widow of Johann Andrea de la Haye, an Academic bookseller.
Typis Monachii Mariae Magd. Riedlin, Viduae, 1741.	Printed by the widow, Maria Magdalene Riedlin (the widow of the publisher, Matthias Reidlin) Munich, 1741.

Wood carvings

Manipulated and hand-painted figurines, originally found at Izmailovsky Market in Moscow, Russia.

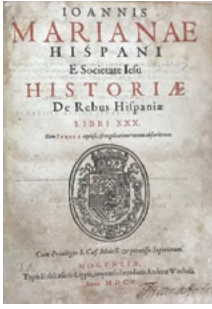
Crucifix

Found in an antique shop in Lučenec, Slovakia.



14. *All in the name of the Lord*





Historiæ de rebus Hispaniæ

Title page: Latin	Title page: English
Ioannis Marianaë Hispani	John Maria the Spaniard
E Societate Jesu	Of the Society of Jesus
Historiæ de rebus Hispaniæ	A history of the Spanish
Libri XXX.	30 Books.
Cum indice copioso, & explicatione vocum obscuriorum.	With an abundant index, and an explanation of obscure words.
Cum Privilegio S. (suae) Caes. (Caesareae) Maiest. (Maiestatis) & permissu Superiorum.	With the privilege of His Imperial Majesty and permission of the Superiors.
Moguntiae, Typis Balthasaris Lippii, impensis heredum Andrae Wecheli, anno MDCV.	Mainz: printed by Balthazar Lipp, paid for by the heirs of Andrae Wechel, in the year 1605.

Crucifix

Antique wooden hand-carved Crucifix from late 18th to early 19th Century. Slightly manipulated. Acquired from De Porcelyne Lampetkan, Delft, The Netherlands.

Relief block

Used to print the illustration of the cross of Jesus Christ, combined with the cloud that presumably elevated him to heaven. The letterpress method is used to print from a raised surface and applies to printing both text and illustrations from relief blocks. This example was used in London at a printing press in the 19th Century.

15. *Dominium and control*





Explanatio in Psalmos

Title page: Latin	Title page: English
<p>Roberti Bellarmini Politiani, Societatis Iesu S. R. E. Cardinalis, Explanatio in Psalmos, editio novissima a multis mendis & omissionibus expurgata.</p>	<p>Explanation of the Psalms, the newest edition purged of many errors and omissions, by Robert Bellarmine of Politianus (Montepulciano, Italy), of the Society of Jesus and a Cardinal of the Most Holy Roman Church.</p>
<p>Venetis, MDCCLIX, Apud Thomam Bettinelli sub signo S. Ignatii. Superiorum permisso ac privilegio.</p>	<p>Venice, 1759, with Thomas Bettinelli, under the seal of Saint Ignatius, with the permission and privilege of the superiors.</p>

Stained glass panel of sailing ship

From the collection of the late Mrs Liselotte Hardebeck (1920-2014), Johannesburg philanthropist and socialite. The Hardebecks travelled extensively and collected numerous artefacts during their travels. See also the note on the Hardebecks on page 99, under Installation 11.



Skulls

Carved from Wild Olive (*Olea europaea africana*).

Crucifix

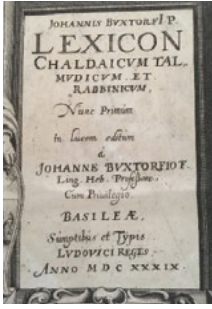
Found at a flea market in London, United Kingdom.

Coins

Portuguese coins from the 19th Century.

16. *In the name of our sorrow*





Lexicon Chaldaicum, Talmudicum et Rabbinicum

(First) Title page: Latin	(First) Title page: English
Johannis Buxtorfii. P.	By Johannes Buxtorf, the father.
Lexicon	A Dictionary
Chaldaicum Talmudicum et Rabbinicum,	of (Aramaic) Chaldean, Talmudic and Rabbinic literature,
nunc primum in lucem editum á	now published for the first time for the world/public, by
Johanne Buxtorfio F.	Johannes Buxtorf, the son.
Ling. Heb. Professore, Cum Privilegio Basileae, sumptibus et typis Ludovici Regis Anno MDC XXX IX.	Professor of the Hebrew Language, with the privilege of Basel, paid and printed by King Louis, in the year 1639.



Lexicon Chaldaicum, Talmudicum et Rabbinicum

(Second) Title page: Latin	(Second) Title page: English
<p>Iohannis Buxtorfii P. Lexicon Chaldaicum, Talmudicum et Rabbinicum, in quo omnes voces Chaldaicae, Talmudicae et Rabbinicae, Quotquot in univ[er]sis Vet.(Veteris) Test.(Testamenti) Paraphrasibus Chaldaicis, in utroque, Talmud, Babylonico & Hierosolymitano, in vulgaribus & secretioribus Hebraeorum Scriptoribus, Commentatoribus, Philosophis, Theologis, Cabalisticis & Iureconsultis extant, fideliter explicantur,</p>	<p>Iohannis Buxtorfii, the Father's Dictionary of (Aramaic) Chaldean, Talmudic and Rabbinic literature, in which all the words of the (Arameans) Chaldeans and the Talmud of the Rabbis are faithfully arranged, however many are extant in all the (Aramaic) Chaldean paraphrases of the Old Testament, in the Talmud, both the Babylonian and Jerusalem versions, in the common and more obscure Writers of the Hebrews, Commentators, Philosophers, Theologians, Cabalists and Lawyers.</p>
<p>Et copia ac delectu exemplorum Targumicorum, Talmudicorum & Rabbinicorum, eleganter declarantur;</p>	<p>By means of a multitude and selection of examples from the Targum, the Talmud and Rabbinic literature, are they (the words) explained.</p>
<p>Passim etiam, suis locis, Hebraeorum et Chaldaeorum Proverbia, Apophthegmata, Sententiae, Ritus, aliaque ad Sacrum hanc Philologiam pertinentia, ex propriis ipsorum libris producuntur, & explanantur;</p>	<p>Also in no particular order, are the Proverbs of the Hebrews and Arameans/ Chaldeans, from their own particular books exposed and explained in their own passages of this book, as well as Aphorisms, Opinions, Rites, and anything related to this holy Philology.</p>
<p>Quamplurima denique Vet. & Nov. Test. Loca ex Antiquitate & Historia Hebraica nove exponuntur & illustrantur;</p>	<p>Finally a multitude of locations of the Old and New Testament from Antiquity and the history of the Hebrews are explained and illustrated.</p>

<p>Ut non solum vulgaris Lexici, sed amplissimi & instructissimi Thesauri Philologici loco esse possit;</p>	<p>In order that it not only serve as ordinary dictionary, but as a very ample and instructive philological thesaurus.</p>
<p>Opus XXX Anorum, nunc demum, post patris obitum, ex ipsius autographo fideliter descriptum in ordinem aequabilem digestum, & multis propriis observationibus passim locupletatum, reipublicaeque christianae bono in lucem editum</p>	<p>A labour of 30 years, now at last, after the death of my father, from his original, faithfully transcribed in the uniform order of a digest, and embellished generally with many particular remarks, published in the open for the good of the Christian Republic (Switzerland).</p>
<p>A Johanne Buxtorfio Filio, Ling. Heb. in Acad. Bas. Prof. ord.</p>	<p>By Johannes Buxtorf, the son, ordinary professor of the Hebrew Language at the university of Basel.</p>
<p>Cum indice vocum Latinarum, & locorum N. T. illustratorum, cum privilegio Basiliae, sumptibus & typis Ludovici Konig, MDCXXXX.</p>	<p>With an index of Latin words and locations of the New Testament illustrated, with the privilege of Basel, by the undertaking and print of King Louis, 1640.</p>



Notes on Buxtorf

Among Christian scholars, Johannes Buxtorf the elder (the father) was an esteemed scholar of rabbinical writings. He was born on Christmas Day 1564, at Kamen, Westphalia and died on 13 September 1629, at Basel. In August 1590 he graduated as doctor of philosophy and in the following year was appointed professor of Hebrew at the University of Basel, a position he continued to fill until his death.

The most noteworthy of Buxtorf's publications are his rabbinical Bible and his *Lexicon Chaldaicum Talmudicum et Rabbinicum*, which he began in 1609, and which was completed by Buxtorf the son in 1639, nine years after Johannes Buxtorf's (senior) death.



Stained glass panel of hallowed lady

From the collection of the late Mrs Liselotte Hardebeck (1920-2014), Johannesburg philanthropist and socialite. The Hardebecks travelled extensively and collected numerous artefacts during their travels. See also the note on the Hardebecks on page 99, under Installation 11.

Skulls

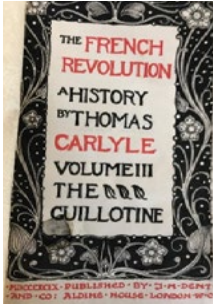
Carved from Wild Olive (*Olea europaea africana*), Iroko (*Chlorophora excelsa*), Sneezewood (*Ptaeroxylon obliquum*), and Yellowwood (*Podocarpus latifolius*).

Rosary

Found at a flea market in London, United Kingdom.

17. *Let them eat cake!*





The French Revolution: A History

by Thomas Carlyle. *Volume I: The Bastille; Volume II: The Constitution; Volume III: The Guillotine.*

Published by J. M. Dent and Co: Aldine House, London WC.

MDCCCXCIX.

1899

Notes on The French Revolution: A History, Volumes 1-3

The French Revolution: a history, was written by Scottish essayist, philosopher, and historian Thomas Carlyle. The three-volume work, first published in 1837 (with a revised edition in print by 1857) charts the course of the French Revolution from 1789 to the height of the Reign of Terror (1793-94) and culminates in 1795. It is an ambitious undertaking that draws together a wide variety of sources. Despite the unusual style in which it is written, Carlyle's history is considered an authoritative account of the course of the Revolution.¹¹⁰

John Stuart Mill, a friend of Thomas Carlyle's, apparently found himself caught up in other projects and unable to meet the terms of a contract he signed with his publisher for a history of the French Revolution. Mill proposed that Carlyle produce the work instead; he even sent his friend a library of books and other materials concerning the Revolution and by 1834 Carlyle was working on the project. After completing the first volume, Carlyle sent his only complete manuscript to Mill. While in Mill's care the manuscript was destroyed, according to Mill by a careless household maid who mistook it for trash and used it as a firelighter. Carlyle then rewrote the entire manuscript, achieving what he described as a book that came "direct and flamingly from the heart."¹¹¹

The book immediately established Carlyle's reputation as an important 19th Century intellectual. It also served as an influence on a number of his contemporaries, most notably, perhaps, Charles Dickens, who compulsively engaged with the book while producing *A tale of two cities*. The book was also

110 Wikipedia 2017.

111 Cobban 1963:306-316.

closely studied by Mark Twain during his last year of life, and it was reported to be the last book he read before his death.

In Vincent van Gogh's letter of Tuesday 30 October 1877 to his brother Theo, he wrote "I rather envy your having read Carlyle, 'French Revolution', it is not unknown to me but didn't read all of it. I found parts of it in another book, namely by Taine".¹¹² This reference is most likely to Taine's *Histoire de la littérature Anglaise* that deals with Carlyle and quotes from his *The French Revolution*.

In his letter of 3 April 1878 Vincent van Gogh quotes – most likely from Carlyle, via Taine – on *The Constitution*, and in Van Gogh's notes from 22-24 June 1880 he refers to the metaphor of "the moulting bird", which derives from Taine's discussion of Carlyle. He also referred to Carlyle in his letters of 11 March 1882, 22 June 1883, 2 July 1883, and 3 July 1883.¹¹³



Eleven years after his first reference – in the letter of 4 April 1889 – Van Gogh made his last reference to Carlyle when he pointed out the similarities in the writings of Dickens and Carlyle. According to the authoritative *Vincent van Gogh: the letters (The complete illustrated and annotated edition)*, edited by Leo Jansens, Hans Lujten and Nienke Bakker (Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 2009) there are altogether 30 references to Thomas Carlyle in the Van Gogh letters that survived.

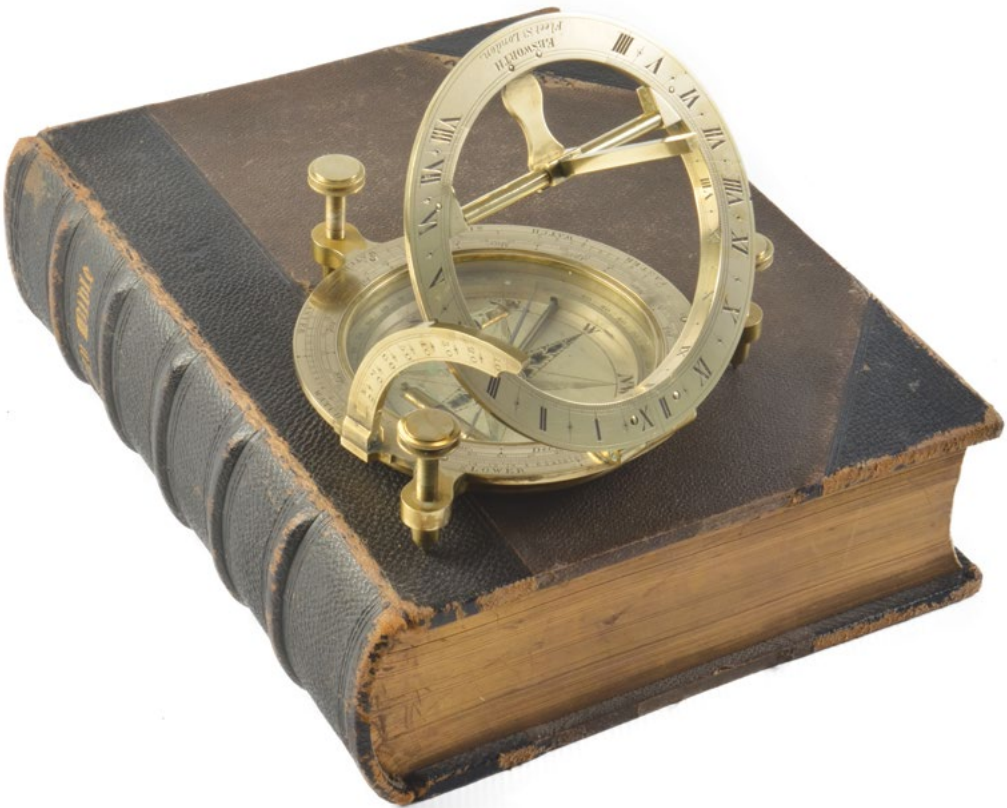
Hands

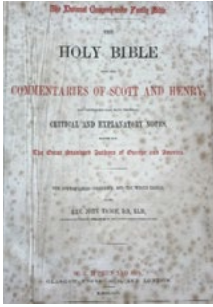
Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

112 Jansens, Lujten & Bakker (eds.) 2009.

113 *Ibid.*

18. *Direction*





The National Comprehensive Family Bible

The Holy Bible with the Commentaries of Scott and Henry, and containing also many thousand critical and explanatory notes, selected from The Great Standard Authors of Europe and America.

The Commentaries Condensed, and the Whole Edited by the Rev. John Eadie, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Biblical Literature to the United Presbyterian Church.

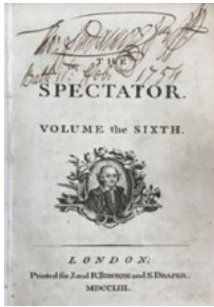
W. R. McPhun and Son.
Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London.
M.DCCC.LXVI.
1866.

Compass

From 1820 to his death in 1828, Richard Ebsworth ran an optical and scientific instrument manufacturing company from two addresses: 41 and 68 Fleet Street, London, Great Britain. The Ebsworth compass in this installation might have come to South Africa with the 1820 British Settlers or shortly thereafter. It consists of a round, silvered dial, two built-in spirit levels, three screw adjusters and folding co-signs and bars. The brass bezel is twice struck with numerals.

19. *Travelling in time*





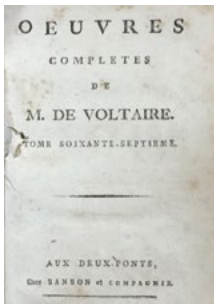
The Spectator. First Volume & Third to Seventh Volumes

London:
Printed for J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper.
MDCCLIII
1753.



Oeuvres de Molière, avec des remarques grammaticales, des avertissemens et des observations sur chaque pièce, Par M. Bret

Works of Moliere, with grammatical remarks, warnings and observations on each piece.
Moliere (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, known by his *nom de plume* Moliere)
London: Chez J. Johnson *et al.*
1809.



Oeuvres Complètes de M. de Voltaire

Complete works of M. de Voltaire. Volume six to seven.
Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet, known by his *nom de plume* Voltaire)
Aux Deux-Ponts.
Chez Sanson et Compagnie.
1792.

Silver pocket watch

Acquired from De Porcelyne Lampetkan, Delft, The Netherlands.

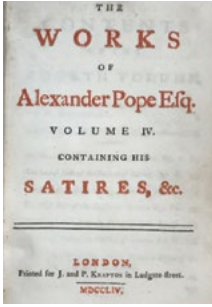
Fossil in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Whale vertebra	Odontocete Cetacean	Pleistocene (± 10 000 yrs. ago)	Worldwide



20. *A proper degree of terror*





The Works of Alexander Pope Esq

London,

Printed for J. and P. Knapton in Ludgate-Street.

MDCCLIV

1754.

The set of The Works of Alexander Pope Esq

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) is regarded as one of the finest English poets and satirists of his time. Due to severe illness as a child he suffered from a curvature of the spine and never grew taller than 4 feet 6 inches. He is well known for his translations of the legendary classical Greek poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, by Homer. *The Iliad* tells the story of the Greek struggle to rescue Helen, a Greek queen, from her Trojan captors. *The Odyssey* departs from the fall of the city of Troy and crafts an epic around the Greek warrior, the hero Odysseus. This installation refers particularly to the first poem, *The Iliad*, which tells of the battles and events during the quarrel between King Agamemnon and the warrior Achilles.

Skulls

Carved from Sneezewood (*Ptaeroxylon obliquum*) and Yellowwood (*Podocarpus latifolius*).

Russian Orthodox cross

A handmade Russian Orthodox cross is contained in the vase.



21. Rule of law





Codex Batavus

Title page: Dutch	Title page: English
<p>Codex Batavus, waer in het algemeen Kerk- en Burgerlyk Recht van Holland, Zeelant, en het Ressort der Generaliteit Kortelyk is Begrepen: getrokken uit alle de Edicten, Ordonnantien, Plakkaten en Resolutien voor de Oprechtinge der Republyk, en wel byzonder der Staatsbestieringe van Holland en West-Vrieslant tot op den jare 1710 gemaekt en uitgegeven.</p>	<p>Codex Batavus, in which the general Church and Civil Law of Holland, Zeeland and the General Area have been included: taken from all the Edicts, Ordnances, Posters and Resolutions for the establishment of the Republic, and in particular the State Rulings of Holland and Western Vriesland that had been made and promulgated until 1710.</p>
<p>Nader verklaert, uitgebreit en verhandelt volgens de Roomse en Hedendaegse Rechten.</p>	<p>More precise explained, expanded and executed in terms of the Roman and Contemporary Laws.</p>
<p>Door: Eduard van Zurck.</p>	<p>By: Eduard van Zurck.</p>
<p>Te Delft: Adriaen Beman, 1711.</p>	<p>Delft: Adriaen Beman, 1711.</p>

Pen and inkpot

19th Century pen made of Oak (*Quercus robur*), acquired from Steinkjelleren, Bergen, Norway.

The inkpot is hand made.

22. *Breaking open*





Selecta Sacra

Title page: Latin	Title page: English
JOHANNIS BRAUNII, Palatini S.S. Theologiae Doctoris, ejusdemque ut & Hebraeae Linguae, in Academia GRONINGAE & OMLANDIAE Professoris	Johannes Braunius, Palatine (A region of south western Germany, which borders on the Saarland), Doctor of Sacred Scripture of Theology, the same as of the Hebrew Language, Professor at the University of Groningen and Omlandia (the surrounding area of Groningen).
SELECTA SACRA.	Chosen/selected sacred scriptures.
LIBRI QVINQUE.	Five books.
Cum INDICIBUS locupletissimis, & TABULIS AENEIS elegantissimis.	With very substantial/reliable indices and very fine brazen/copper maps/catalogues.
AMSTELÆ DAMI apud Henricum Wetstenium clō lb cc.	Amsterdam, with Henryk Wetsten. 1700 (in apostrophus numbering).

Silver pocket watch with silver chain

Silver pocket watch with winding key and silver chain.

Acquired from Bergen Antik, Bergen, Norway.



Fossils in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Ammonite	Mortoniceras	Cretaceous (± 100 Million yrs. ago)	Europe, Africa, USA
Trilobite	Elrathia	Cambrian (± 500 Million yrs. ago)	Utah, North America

23. *Learning from history: nothing*

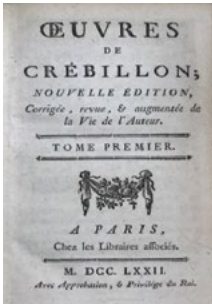




Oeuvres de Jean Racine

The works of Jean Racine.

Paris, Stereotype D'Herhan.
Dabo et Tremblay, Libraires,
rue de Vaugirard, no. 46.
1819.



*Nouvelle édition, corrigée, revue,
& augmentée de la vie de l'auteur*

The Oeuvres of Crébillon
Tome Premier.

A Paris, Chez les Libraires associés. MDCCLXXII. Avec
Approbation, & Privilège du Roi.
1772.

Fossils in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Trilobite	Crotalocephalus	Devonian (± 350 Million yrs. ago)	Alnif (Morocco)
Cockscomb oyster	Rastellum	Jurassic/Cretaceous (± 150 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide
Whale ear bone (<i>Tympanic bulla</i>)	Cetacean	Palaeocene/Miocene (± 50-20 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide







Bailey-Fahrenkrüger's Wörterbuch der englischen Sprache. In zwei Theilen

Zwölfte auflage, gänzlich umgearbeitet von Adolf Wagner. Erster Theil. Englisch-Teutsch.

Jena: Friedrich Frommann.
1822.



Bailey-Fahrenkrüger's Wörterbuch der englischen Sprache. In zwei Theilen

Zwölfte Auflage, gänzlich umgearbeitet von Adolf Wagner. Zweiter Theil. Teutsch-Englisch.

Jena: Friedrich Frommann.
1822.

Keys

Three keys found at a flea market in Delft, The Netherlands.

For more about keys see Installation 4: 'Imperial principles' on page 78.

25. *Joseph and his family*





We Gménu Pàné!

Die Drusy ro némz se Bremnssl'omànj Epistolidà na mssed'n dnr, Redélnj n Gmàtecny to Roce obfahugj.

In God's name! Book which includes the Meditations on the Epistle for all the days, on Sundays or during the Festive Season.

Printed in Zitawa,
By Jan Gottlieb Mikolas. 1757.

Wood carvings

Manipulated and hand-painted figurines, originally found at Izmailovsky Market in Moscow, Russia.







Cithara Sanctorum. Apocalyps. 5 v. 8

Pjsně Duchownj, Staré y nowé, kterýchž Cyrkw Křesťanská při Wýročnjch Slawnostech a Památkách, jakož y we wsselikých potřebách swých, obecnych y obzwlásstnijch, s mnohým prospěchem vžjwá; K Obecnému Cyrkwe Božj vzdělánj, někdy shromažděné a wydané od Kněze Giřjka Tranowského, služebnjka Páně při Cyrkwi Swato.

Old and new songs among Christians during anniversary celebrations and also as a result of other needs for love and to the knowledge of the Church of God, collected here and edited by the priest Jiří Třanovský.

Published by Jiří Třanovský. 1877.

Head

Carved from rock found in the sea at Morgan Bay, Eastern Cape, South Africa.



27. *Dodington's diary*





The diary of the late George Bubb Dodington, baron of Melcombe Regis: from March 8, 1749, to February 6, 1761

With an appendix, containing some curious and interesting papers, which are either referred to, or alluded to, in the diary. Published from his Lordship's Original Manuscripts, by Henry Penruddocke Wyndham. The Third Edition.

London: Printed for G. and T. Wilkie, No 71, St. Paul's Church Yard; and E. Easton, Salisbury. MDCCLXXXV. 1785.

George Bubb Dodington

George Bubb Dodington, 1st Baron Melcombe PC (1691 – 28 July 1762) was an English politician and nobleman. Christened simply George Bubb, he acquired the surname Dodington around the time his uncle, George Dodington, died in 1720 and left him his estate. Enormously rich, he became a friend of Frederick, Prince of Wales, who took advantage of their acquaintance to obtain loans that helped clear his debts, and, on being thrown out of St James's Palace by his father, King George II, moved into a London house belonging to Dodington. Dodington is said to have been involved in a spy-ring, collecting valuable information about Jacobite activities. In 1761, following the accession of Frederick's son to the throne as George III, he was created Baron Melcombe.



Fossils in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Ammonite	Dactylioceras	Jurassic (± 165 Million yrs. ago)	Runswick Bay (UK)
Whale ear bone (<i>Tympanic bulla</i>)	Cetacean	Palaeocene/Miocene (± 50-20 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide





Biblia Sacra

Title page: German	Title page: English
Biblia Sacra, oder die Heilige Schrift	Biblia Sacra, or the Holy Scripture
des alten und neuen Testaments,	of the Old and New Testaments,
mit Genehmigung und Gutheissen	with the permission and approval
Seiner Eminenz des Fürst Erzbischofes Kardinals Von Migazzi	of his Eminence the Prince Archbishop Kardinal Von Migazzi
in deutscher Sprache herausgegeben,	republished in the German language,
und von unzähligen Sprachsehlern gereinig	and cleansed of countless language errors
von Franz Rosalino, Weltpriestern.	by Franz Rosalino, Worldly priest.
Swenter (zweiter) Theil.	Second Part.
Gedruckt ben Johann Thomas Edlen von Trattnern,	Printed by Johann Thomas Edlen von Trattnern,
kaiserl. konigl. Hofbuchdrucktern und Buchhändlern.	imperial royal printer of the court and bookseller.
1781	1781

Head

Carved from Namibia White Marble.

29. *Death of the author*





Dzieje Powszechne Ilustrowane

Na podstawie najnowszych badań i dzieł historycznych opracowali przystępnie. Prof. Michał Lityński, Dr Karol J. Nitman, Czesław Pieniążek, Robert Ryszka, Dr. Henryk Sawczyński, Alfred Szczepański, Bronisław Zawadzki. Pod kierunkiem Prof. Dra Ludwika Kubali.

Cześć Pierwsza Czasy Starożytne. Tom IV. Liczne Illustracje, Kartony Kolorowane, Mapy, Podobizky. Wiedeń. Nakładem Franciszka Bondego.

The Illustrated World History.

Developed by Professor Michał Lityński, Dr Karol J. Nitman, Czesław Pieniążek, Robert Ryszka, Dr Henryk Sawczyński, Alfred Szczepański, Bronisław Zawadzki. Under the direction of Professor Dr Ludwika Kubala based on the most recent studies and historical works.

Part 1 Ancient times. Volume IV. Multiple illustrations, coloured paperboards, maps, effigies.

Vienna. Published by Franciszek Bondy.



Death mask

Carved from Black Ironwood (*Olea capensis*).

Notes on 'Death of the author'

So far I have refrained from guiding the reader of this book regarding interpretation and meaning of the installations. Since we are now halfway through the installations, I want to emphasise again: this book seeks to re-narrate – to deconstruct and subvert narrative conventions. It wants to persuade the reader to attempt new readings.

Installation 29 plays on the title of the seminal work by the French literary critic Roland Barthes *The death of the author*.

Barthes argues that there is no author of a text, but merely a "scriptor"¹¹⁴ whose ideas are not original in the true sense of the word. According to Barthes, a scriptor is always subject to several influences whilst writing. He goes further to say that we can never know nor identify the true influences on the scriptor because writing destructs every point of origin. The scriptor's voice vanishes at the point of writing when language itself takes over and begins to speak. So, once the scriptor is removed, meaning becomes created by and within the reader of the text. Barthes regards text as open to multiple interpretations a scriptor may not have intended originally. The reader is, therefore, the more creative force.

If Barthes is correct, it means that we should abolish the classical literary position that requires us to analyse a literary work within the biographical and personal context of the *author* of the work. The mere fact that I am neither analysing the content of any book in this collection, nor attempting to reconstruct the background within which a single codex had been written, positions me precariously in relation to Barthes' thesis. I am not in support of it and I am not rejecting it either. I remain convinced that books as human creations originate from and reflect intentions, hopes, fears, joys and sufferings of human beings. A book tells us a story that needs to be unlocked, even co-created, by a reader.

114 Barthes 1967.

30. *Bite size reading*



Little Leather Library Corporation, New York

Undated, abridged, miniature edition of classic books free of copyright and royalties.

The *Little Leather Library Corporation* was an American publishing company. It was founded in New York by bookshop owners and brothers Charles and Albert Boni, and advertising executives Harry Scherman and Max Sackheim. Between 1916 and 1923 the company sold more than 25 million miniature books. Their rather unconventional distribution style entailed supplying miniature and abridged copies of literary classics to chocolate manufacturers, for instance, Whitman's Candy Company, who included a 'Library Package' with a box of chocolates. Later more than a million copies were sold through the department store Woolworth's. During World War I the *Little Leather Library Corporation* marketed these small books as gifts to be sent to soldiers overseas, and with the purchase of each set of ten books, offered a box in which to ship the gifts. After the War they started marketing the books directly by mail thereby circulating them to those who bought mainly by mail and also to some customers who never set foot in traditional bookstores. Despite the name *Little Leather Library Corporation* only a small quantity of their earlier publications were bound in leather. Most copies were bound in a synthetic leatherette material. The corporation published altogether 101 titles, mostly from iconic authors.

The following copies from the *Little Leather Library Corporation's* publishing list are included in Installation 30:

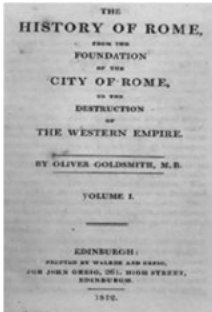
Author	Title
Barrie, James M.	A Tillyloss scandal
Browning, Robert	Poems and plays
Burns, Robert	Poems
Coleridge, Samuel T.	The ancient mariner
Dante	Inferno Vol. I
Dante	Inferno Vol. II
De Balzac, Honoré	Christ in Flanders and other stories

De Maupassant, Guy	Short stories
Dickens, Charles	Christmas carol
Doyle, Conan	Sherlock Holmes
Drummond, Henry	The greatest thing in the world
Dumas, Alexander	The Contesse De Saint-Géran
Emerson, Ralph W.	Essays
Emerson, Ralph W.	Uses of great men
Gilbert, W. S.	The 'Bab' ballads
Hale, Edward E.	The man without a country
Ibsen, Henrik	Ghosts
Irving, Washington	Old Christmas
Kipling, Rudyard	Barrack-Room ballads
Kipling, Rudyard	City of the dreadful night
Kipling, Rudyard	The man who was and other stories
Kipling, Rudyard	The phantom ricksaw and my own true ghost story
Lamb, Charles	Dream children
Lincoln, Abraham	Speeches and addresses
Longfellow, Henry W.	Evangeline. A tale of Acadie
Longfellow, Henry W.	The courtship of Miles Standish
Longfellow, Henry W.	Hiawatha Vol. I
Macaulay, Thomas B.	Lays of ancient Rome
Maeterlinkck, Maurice	Pelleas and Melisande
Poe, Edgar A.	The murders in the Rue Morgue and other tales
Schreiner, Olive	Dreams
Shakespeare, William	A comedy of errors

Shakespeare, William	Midsummer-night's dream
Shaw, George B.	On going to church
Stevenson, Robert L.	A child's garden of verses
Stevenson, Robert L.	The strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
Tennyson, Alfred L.	Enoch Arden and other poems
Tennyson, Alfred L.	The coming of Arthur
Tennyson, Alfred L.	The holy grail
Thoreau, Henry	Friendship and other essays
Various	Fifty best poems of America
Washington, George	Speeches and letters
Wilde, Oscar	The happy prince and other tales
Whitman, Walt	Memories of President Lincoln
Yeats, W. B.	The land of heart's desire

31. *Pay Caesar!*



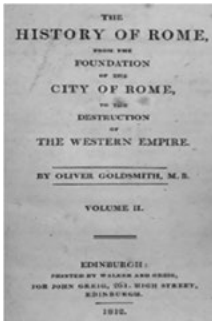


The History of Rome

From the Foundation of the City of Rome, to the Destruction of the Western Empire. By Oliver Goldsmith, M.B.

Volume I.

Edinburgh: Printed by Walker and Greig, For John Greig, 261. High Street, Edinburgh.
1812.



The History of Rome

From the Foundation of the City of Rome, to the Destruction of the Western Empire. By Oliver Goldsmith, M.B.

Volume II.

Edinburgh: Printed by Walker and Greig, For John Greig, 261. High Street, Edinburgh.
1812.

Roman Empire

The Roman Empire generally refers to the post-Roman Republic period of the ancient Roman civilisation and is characterised by large territorial holdings around the Mediterranean Sea in Europe, Africa and Asia. During the period 100 BC and AD 400 Rome was the largest city in the world. Since Julius Caesar's expeditions in 55 and 54 BC, the Roman political, economic and cultural influence also spread to Britain. This influence was later further formalised by Augustus, the first Roman Emperor who reigned over the Roman Empire during the historic turning point in the Western calendar between "before Christ" (BC) and "anno Domini" (AD). (AD, literally meaning "in the year of the Lord".)

The Roman conquest of Britain was a gradual process that began under Emperor Claudius in AD 43. Apart from being a bulwark against northern *barbarians*, Britain also provided a good source of recruits for the Roman army. But Britain was by no means the desirable province among the 45 provinces of the Roman

Empire. At best the climate could be described as damp, the inhabitants were hostile, and its remoteness made it into an expensive outpost.¹¹⁵

When the Romans quit Britain in AD 410, they left behind an established Romano-British town in the area around what was then known as Aquae Sulis (The Waters of Sulis; Sulis being the Celtic goddess of the local inhabitants). Aquae Sulis was the original name of what is known today as the City of Bath. Right from their arrival at Aquae Sulis the Romans treasured the hot springs and channeled the hot water to various baths. The city of Bath is to this day a site of great historical interest and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Bronze coins

The two bronze coins in this installation were found in Bath and date from the times of the Roman occupation.

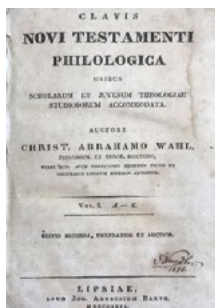


Fossil in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Whale ear bone (<i>Tympanic bulla</i>)	Cetacean	Palaeocene/Miocene (± 50-20 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide

115 Winsor 1980.





Clavis Novi Testamenti Philologica

Title page: Latin	Title page: English
Clavis Novi Testamenti Philologica Usibus Scholarum et Juvenum Theologiæ Studiosorum Accommodata.	A philological key to the New Testament for the use of scholars and fit for young students of theology.
Auctore Christ. Abrahamo Wahl, Philosoph. et Theol. Doctore, Verbi Div. apud Ossitienses ministro primo et dioeceseos eiusdem nominis Antistite.	By the author, Christian Abraham Wahl, Doctor of Philosophy and Theology, first minister of the Divine Word at Ossitienses (Oschatz, Saxony?) and superintendent of the diocese of the same name.
Editio secunda, emendatior et auctior.	The second edition, corrected and extended.
Vol. I. A-K. Lipsiæ, Apud Joh. Ambrosium Barth. MDCCCXXIX.	Volume I. A-K. Leipzig, with John Ambrose Bartholomew. 1829.



Preuves Historiques de la Religion Chrétienne

Title page: French	Title page: English
Preuves Historiques de la Religion Chrétienne,	Historical proofs of the Christian Religion,
pour lui servir d'apologie contre les sophismes	to serve as its justification against the sophisms
de l'irréligion, ouvrage destiné a l'éducation de la jeunesse;	irreligiousness, an opus destined for the education of the youth;
par Beauzée,	by Beauzée,
suivis d'extraits de diverses lettres de Fénelon,	followed by excerpts from diverse letters of Fénelon,
et des entretiens de ce prélat avec Ramsai.	and conversations of this prelate with Ramsai.
Si testimonium hominum accipimus, testimonium Dei majus est.	We accept human testimony, But God's testimony is greater.
1. Joan. v. 9.	1. John 5:9.
A Paris,	In Paris,
a la société catholique des bons livres, hôtel palatin, près saint-sulpice	at the Catholic Society of Good Books, Palatin House, close to Saint-Sulpice
M. D. CCC. XXV.	1825.



Fossils in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Ammonite	Dactyloceras	Jurassic (± 165 Million yrs. ago)	Runswick Bay (UK)
Whale ear bone (<i>Tympanic bulla</i>)	Cetacean	Palaeocene/Miocene (± 50-20 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide

33. *Heed my words!*





Cithara Sanctorum. Apocalyps. 5 v. 8

Old and new songs among Christians during anniversary celebrations and also as a result of other needs for love and to the knowledge of the Church of God, collected here and edited by the priest Jiří Třanovský. Published by Jiří Třanovský. 1877.

Fossil in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Whale ear bone (<i>Tympanic bulla</i>)	Cetacean	Palaeocene/Miocene (± 50-20 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide







New Complete Dictionary of the English and Dutch Languages, In Two Parts

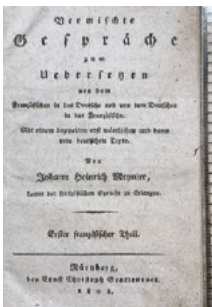
Containing,

1. All words and expressions, proverbs etc., most in use in both languages;
2. The figured pronunciation of the English words;
3. Geographical, mythological and historical proper names;
4. Participles of the irregular verbs;
5. The gender of nouns substantive in both languages, and the plural where it deviates from the general rule;
6. (In the Dutch part) the new orthographical system.

By I. M. Calisch.

Teacher of Languages and sworn Translator, Amsterdam
English and Dutch

Tiel, H. C. A. Campagne. 1875.



Vermischte Gespräche

Title page: German	Title page: English
Vermischte Gespräche zum Übersetzen von dem	Various conversations for translating from
Französischen in das Deutsche und von dem	French into German and from
Deutschen in das Französische.	German into French.
Mit einem doppelten erst wörtlichen und dann rein deutschen Texte.	With a double, first literal and then purely German text.

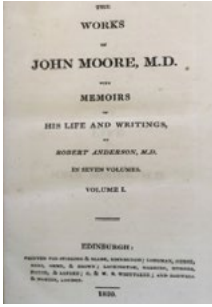
Von Johann Heinrich Meynier	By Johann Heinrich Meynier
Lektor der französischen Sprache zu Erlangen.	Lecturer of the French language at Erlangen.
Erster französischer Teil.	First French part.
Nürnberg, bey Ernst Christoph Grattenauer. 1801.	Nuremberg, by Ernst Christoph Grattenauer. 1801.

Fossils in this bookwork

Name	Genus	Period	Found
Ammonite	Dactyloceras	Jurassic (± 165 Million yrs. ago)	Runswick Bay (UK)
Whale ear bone (<i>Tympanic bulla</i>)	Cetacean	Palaeocene/Miocene (± 50-20 Million yrs. ago)	Worldwide

35. *Voices from the wilderness*





The Works of John Moore, M.D.

With Memoirs of his Life and Writings by Robert Anderson, M.D. in Seven Volumes.

Edinburgh:

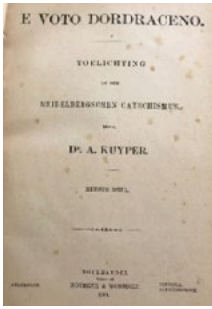
Printed for Stirling & Slade, Edinburgh; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown; Lackington, Harding, Hughes, Mavor, & Lappard; G. & W. B. Whittaker; and Rodwell & Martin, London. 1820.



Set of John Moore books

John Moore (1729-1802) was a Scottish physician and writer. He was born at Stirling, United Kingdom, the son of a minister of religion. After taking his medical degree at Glasgow, he served in the army in Flanders during the Seven Years' War – a global conflict fought between 1756 and 1763 – which involved every European power of the time and spanned five continents. After the War Moore proceeded to London to continue his studies, and eventually to Paris, where he was attached to the household of

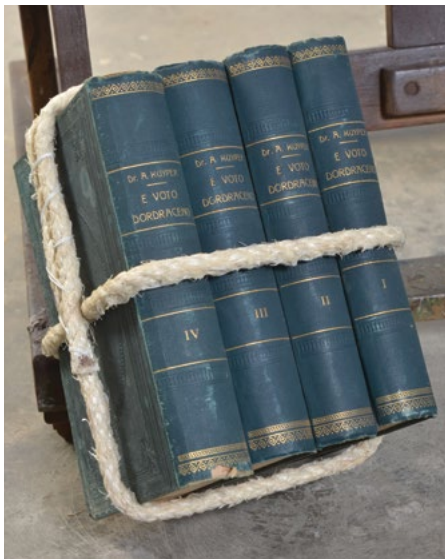
the British Ambassador. In 1792 he accompanied Lord Lauerdale to Paris and witnessed some of the principal scenes of the French Revolution. His *Journal during a residence in France* (1793) is the careful record of an eye-witness and is frequently referred to by Thomas Carlyle – whose three books on the French Revolution are included on pages 116-117, under Installation 17.



E Voto Dordraceno

Title page: Dutch	Title page: English
E Voto Dordraceno	From the vote taken at Dortrecht
Toelichting op den Heidelbergischen Catechismus.	Elucidation of the Heidelberg Catechism.
Door Dr. A. Kuyper	By Dr. A. Kuyper
Amsterdam, Höveker & Wormser.	Amsterdam, Höveker & Wormser.
1904	1904

See the writing on Abraham Kuyper on pages 13-14, in the section 'Creating a South African rationality'.





Circular carving from hard wood

This religious carving probably originated in Central Europe and dates from the 18th Century. During this period Central Europe was politically fragmented and largely administered by German-speaking nobility. Although it was the scene of frequent military conflict, the area had a good road system, excellent postal service, and high level of cultural development. This was a time shared by three of the greatest figures in the history of Western music, Johann Sebastian Bach, Joseph Hayden and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, as well as philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottfried Herder.

The huge numbers of books published in this area during the 18th Century – the period from which this artefact originates – is testimony to the region's high levels of cultural and academic development. In this regard, the oldest university in Central Europe is the Charles University in Prague, founded in 1348.

The carving depicts Jesus and St John the Baptist and was done during the 18th Century.

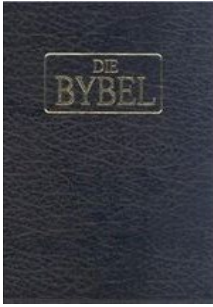
Obtained from a deceased auction.

Artist's easel

Donated to me by Noel Hodnett, former Head of Painting, Department of Fine Art, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa.

36. *Chained*

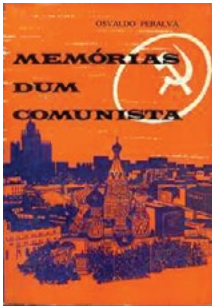




Die Bybel

The Bible, the Holy Scripture containing all the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament. From the original languages and issued on behalf of the Joint Commission representative of the three Afrikaans Sister Churches in South Africa.

Die Bybelgenootskap van Suid-Afrika, 1963.



Memórias dum Comunista

Memories of a communist

Osvaldo Peralva

Lisbon: Aster, 1963.

Osvaldo Peralva

Osvaldo Peralva (1918-1992) was a Brazilian journalist and international reporter. He was director of *Correio da Manhã* and correspondent of *Folha de S. Paulo* in Beijing. As a member of the Brazilian Communist Party (BCP) he was sent to Moscow in the early 1950s for a training course. The experiences of this trip led him to break with the BCP shortly after the denunciations of Krushov in 1956, as documented in his book *O Retrato* in which he recounts his disappointment with communism in the Soviet Union. He was arrested by the military dictatorship soon after the AI-5 – the Ato Institucional Número Cinco, or the Institutional Act Number Five – which was the fifth of seventeen major decrees issued by the military dictatorship in the years following the 1964 *coup d'état* in Brazil. He shared a prison cell with Gerardo Melo Mourão, Zuenir Ventura, Ziraldo, and Hélio Pellegrino.

Brass locks and chains

Manipulated.

37. *English hand*



Bible on dictionary

Copy of *The Holy Bible*, with dedication: "To Ruth from her father, August 24th 1899".
In 1899 the Anglo Boer War started.

Dictionary

Funk and Wagnalls. *Practical "Standard" Dictionary of the English Language*.
Chicago: J. G. Ferguson and Associates. 1946.

Hand

Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

See the section 'Creating a South African rationality', on pages 15-17.

38. *Afrikaner hand*



Bible on dictionary

Die Bybel, printed in 1947 – my year of birth – the year before the National Party took political control in South Africa.

Dictionary

HAT. Verklarende Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal. Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers. 1965.

Hand

Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

39. *French hand*



Bible on dictionary

La Sainte Bible, printed in 1903.

Dictionary

Cassell's New French-English English-French Dictionary. London: Cassell. 1962.

Hand

Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

See also the section 'Creating a South African rationality' on pages 14-15.

40. *Portuguese hand*



Bible on dictionary

A Biblia Sagrada, printed in 1958.

Dictionary

A Dictionary of the Portuguese Language. London: The Technical Press. 1948.

Hand

Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

See also the section 'Creating a South African rationality' on page 17-18.



Four hands

Depicting the four major European colonial influences in southern Africa.

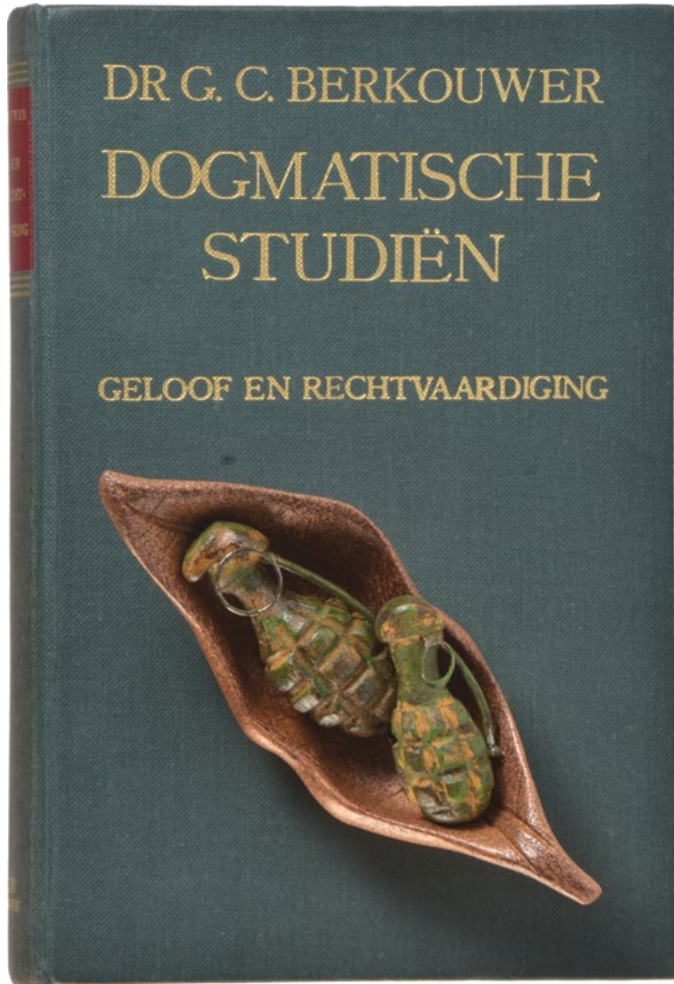
From left to right, on Bibles: Portuguese hand [40], Afrikaner hand [38], English hand [37], and French hand [39].

[41-59] *G.C. Berkouwer: Dogmatische Studiën
/ Studies in Dogmatics*

Dutch titles (published by Uitgeverij Kok)	English titles (published by W.B. Eerdmans)
G.C. Berkouwer. Dogmatische Studiën. (18 Volumes published individually in the original Dutch.) Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Kok. 1949-1972.	G.C. Berkouwer. Studies in Dogmatics. (14 Volumes published individually in an English translation.) Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans. 1952-1976.
Geloof en rechtvaardiging (1949)	Faith and justification (1952)
Geloof en heiliging (1949)	Faith and sanctification (1952)
Geloof en volharding (1949)	Faith and perseverance (1952)
De voorzienigheid Gods (1950)	The providence of God (1952)
De algemene openbaring (1951)	General revelation (1955)
De persoon van Christus (1952)	The person of Christ (1954)
Het werk van Christus (1953)	The work of Christ (1965)
De sacramenten (1954)	The sacraments (1969)
De verkiezing Gods (1955)	Divine election (1960)
De mens het beeld Gods (1957)	Man: The image of God (1962)
De zonde I (1958)	Sin (1971)
De zonde II (1960)	
De wederkomst van Christus I (1961)	The return of Christ (1972)
De wederkomst van Christus II (1963)	
De heilige schrift I (1966)	Holy scripture (1975)
De heilige schrift II (1967)	
De kerk I (1970)	The church (1976)
De kerk II (1972)	

For further information on C.G. Berkouwer see also the section on 'Creating a South African rationality' on pages 10-18, and the theme 'Religion' on pages 23-26 in the section 'The themes in the collection'.

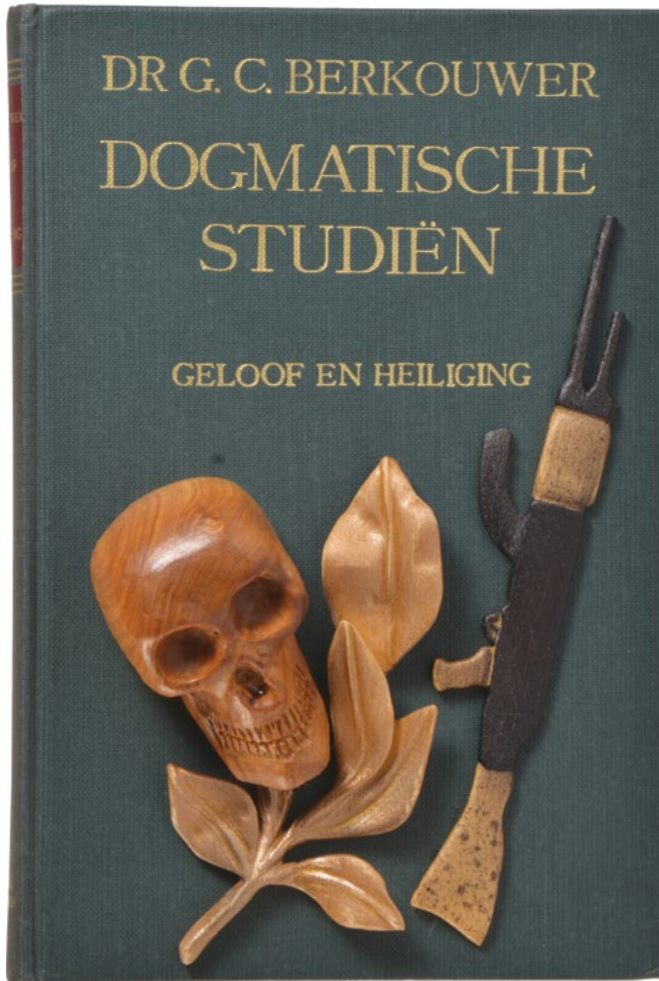
41. *Berkouwer: Geloof en rechtvaardiging*
(*Faith and justification*)



Book objects

Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

42. *Berkouwer: Geloof en heiliging*
(Faith and sanctification)

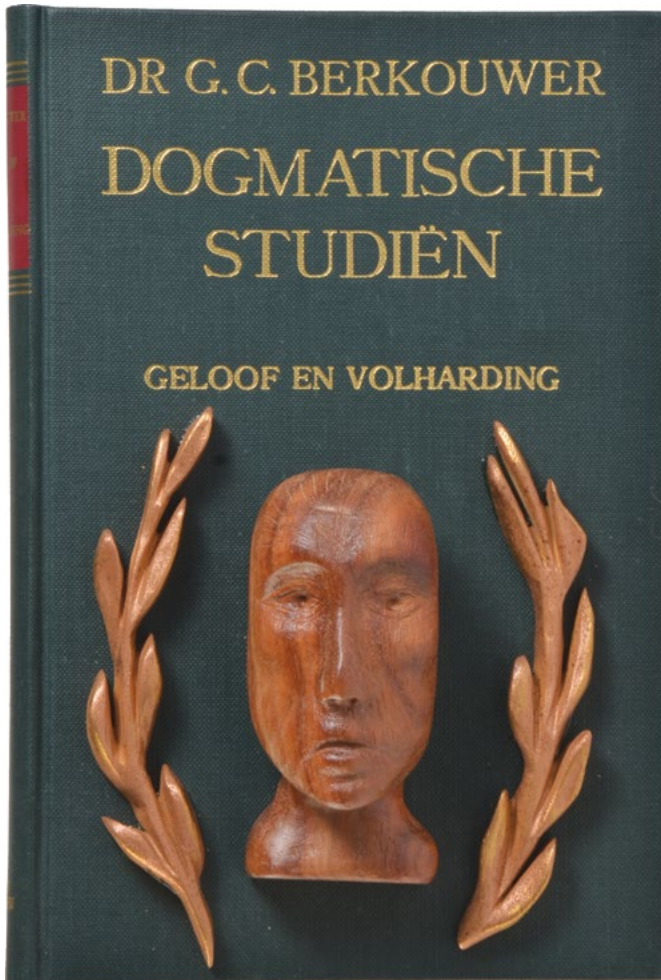


Book objects

Skull carved from Sneezewood (*Ptaeroxylon obliquum*).

Other objects carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

43. *Berkouwer: Geloof en volharding*
(Faith and perseverance)

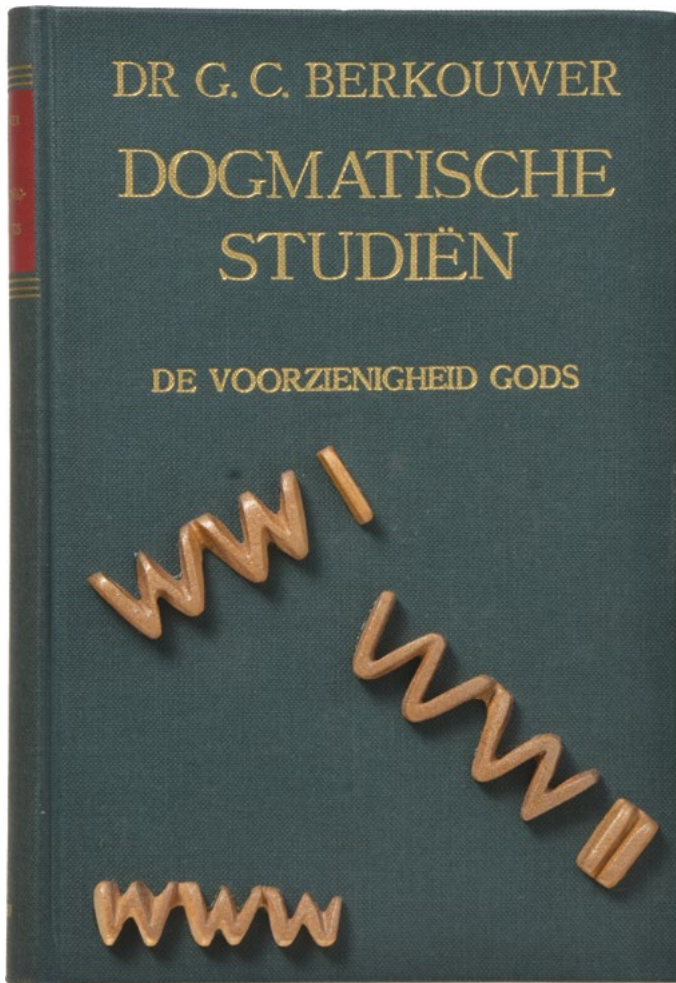


Book objects

Head carved from Kakula (*Pterocarpus soyauxii*).

Other objects carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*).

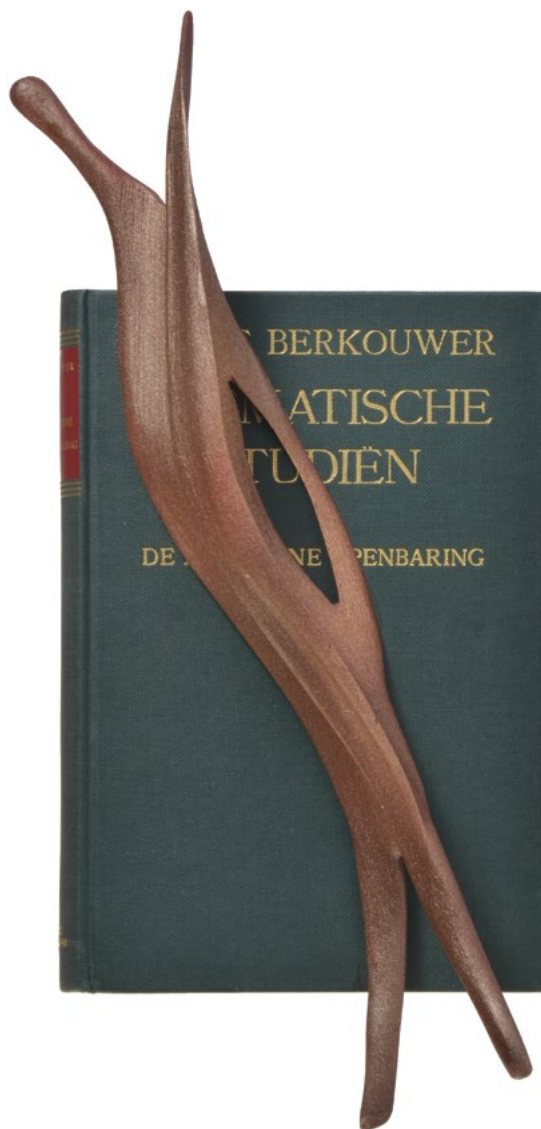
44. *Berkouwer: De voorzienigheid Gods*
(The providence of God)



Book objects

Text carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*).

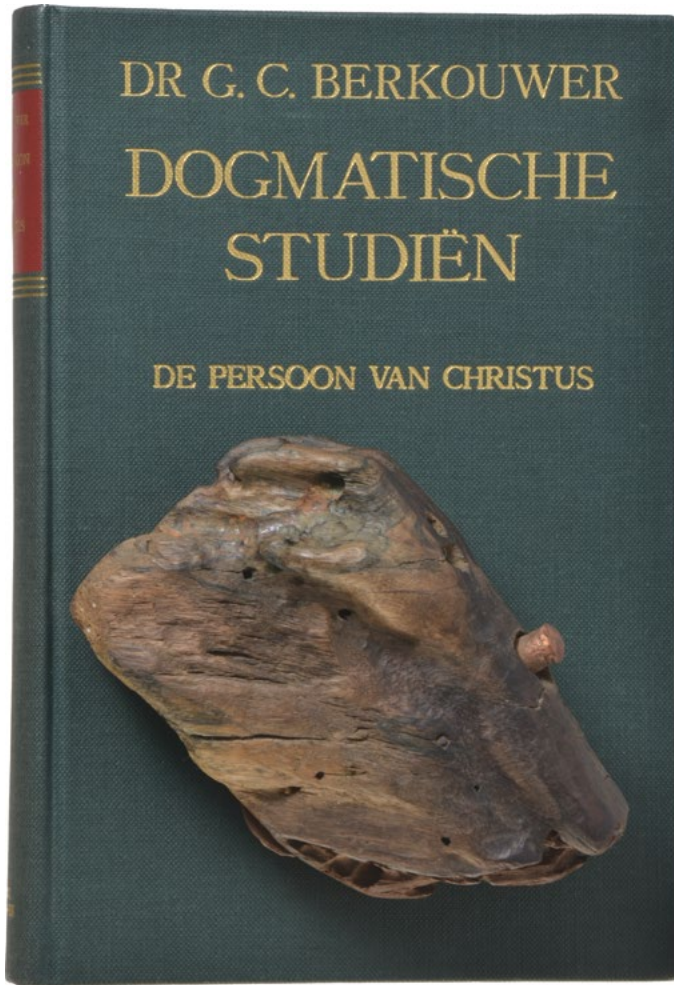
45. *Berkouwer: De algemene openbaring*
(General revelation)



Book object

Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

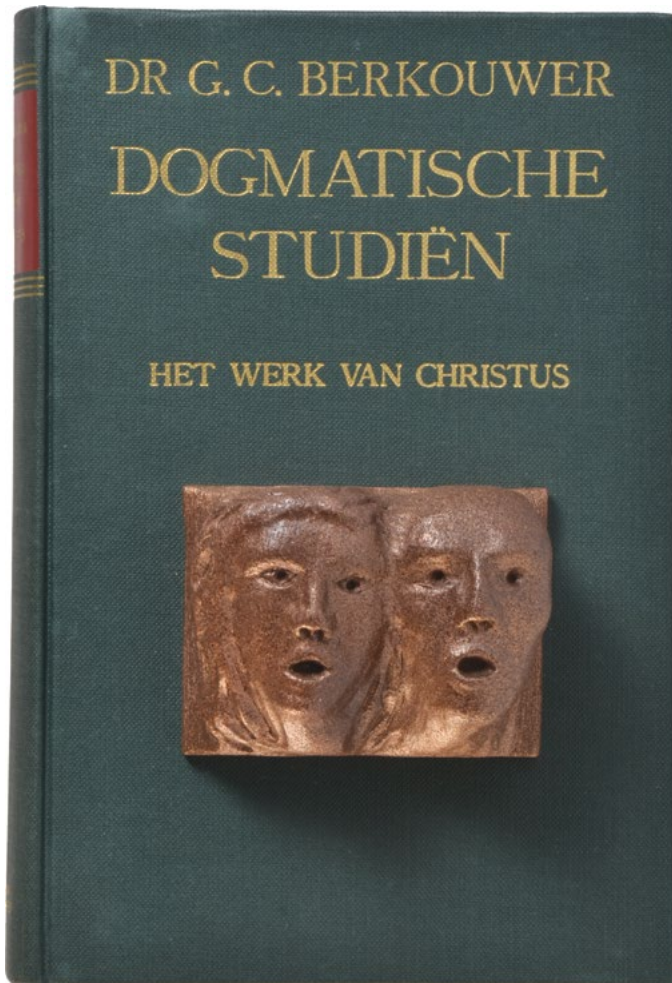
46. *Berkouwer: De persoon van Christus*
(*The person of Christ*)



Book object

Carved from Stinkwood (*Ocotea bullata*) with protruding yellow copper rod. Found on the beach at Kenton-on-Sea in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, presumably broken off a ship.

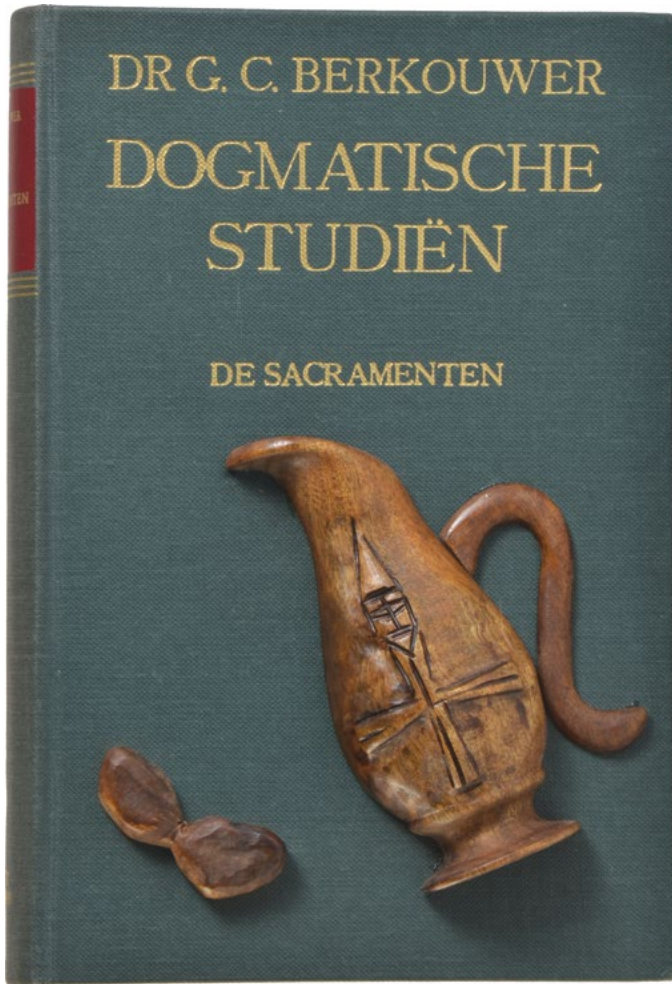
47. *Berkouwer: Het werk van Christus*
(*The work of Christ*)



Book object

Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

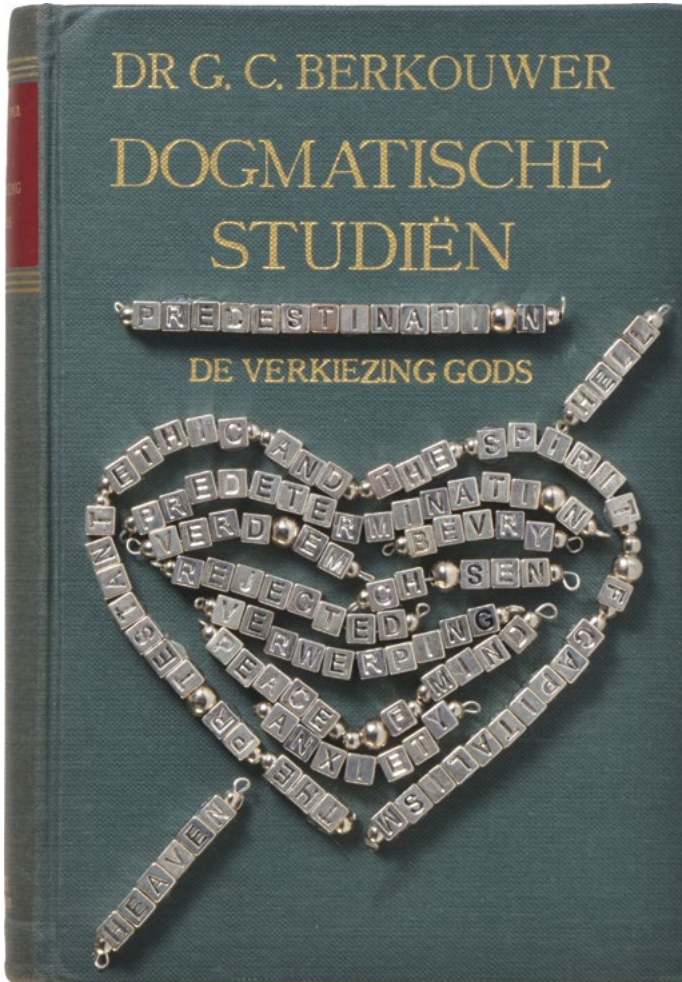
48. *Berkouwer: De sacramenten (The sacraments)*



Book objects

Carved from Stinkwood (*Ocotea bullata*) and Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*).

49. *Berkouwer: De verkiezing Gods (Divine election)*

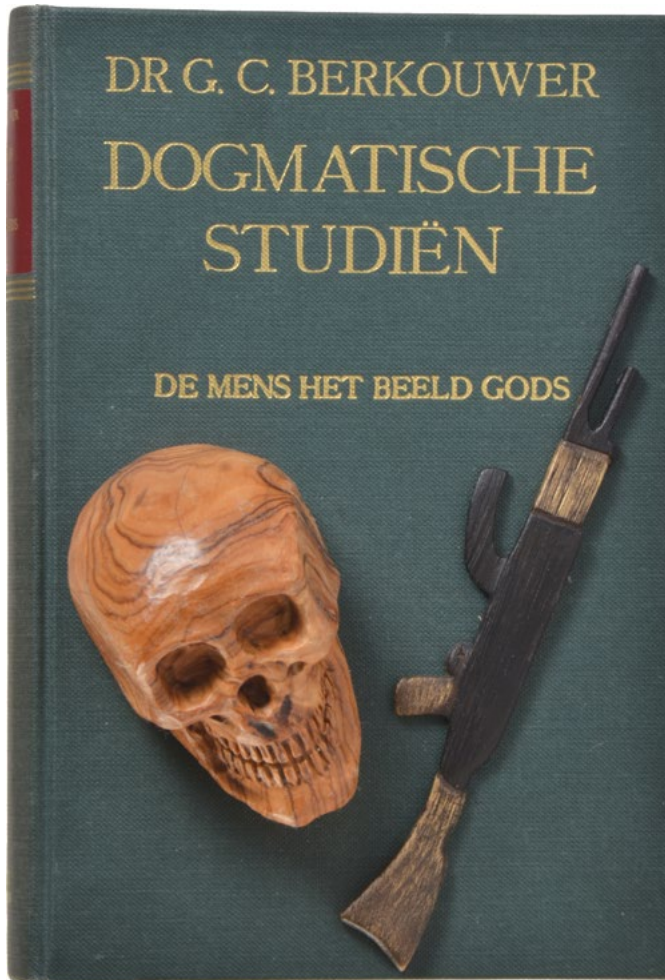


Book objects

Metal alphabet beads.

See the section on Max Weber's *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism* on pages 12-13.

50. *Berkouwer: De mens het beeld Gods*
(*Man: The image of God*)

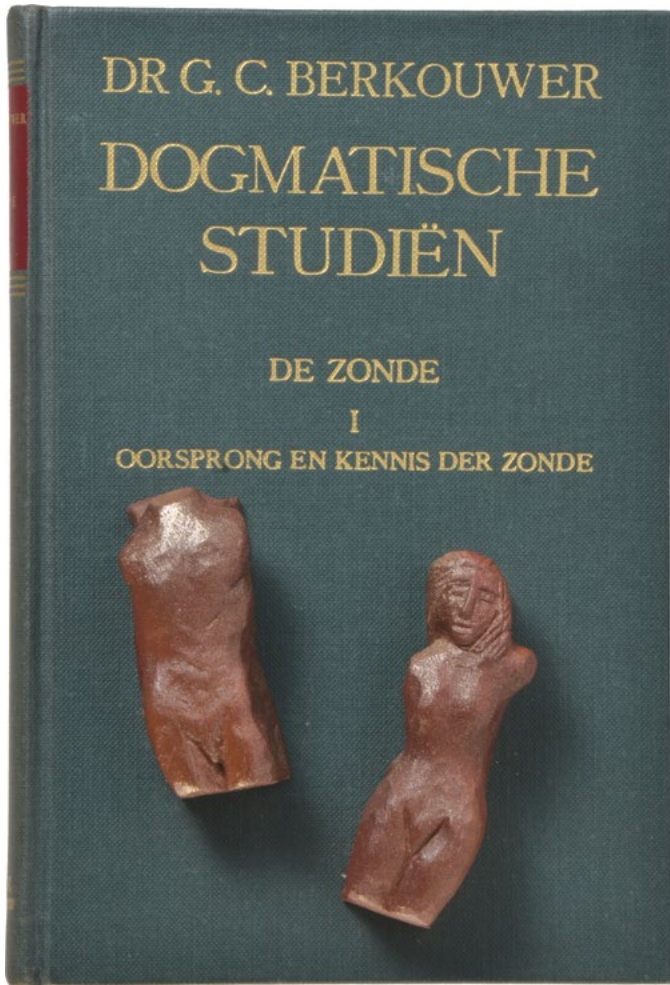


Book objects

Skull carved from Wild Olive (*Olea europaea africana*).

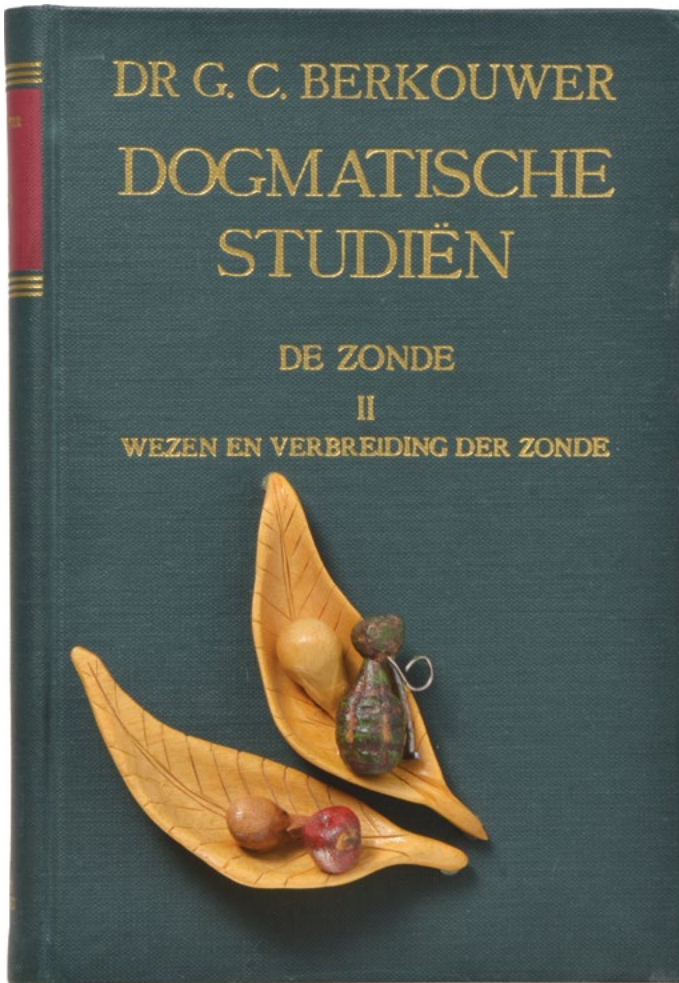
Other object carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*).

51. *Berkouwer: De zonde I (Sin)*



Book objects

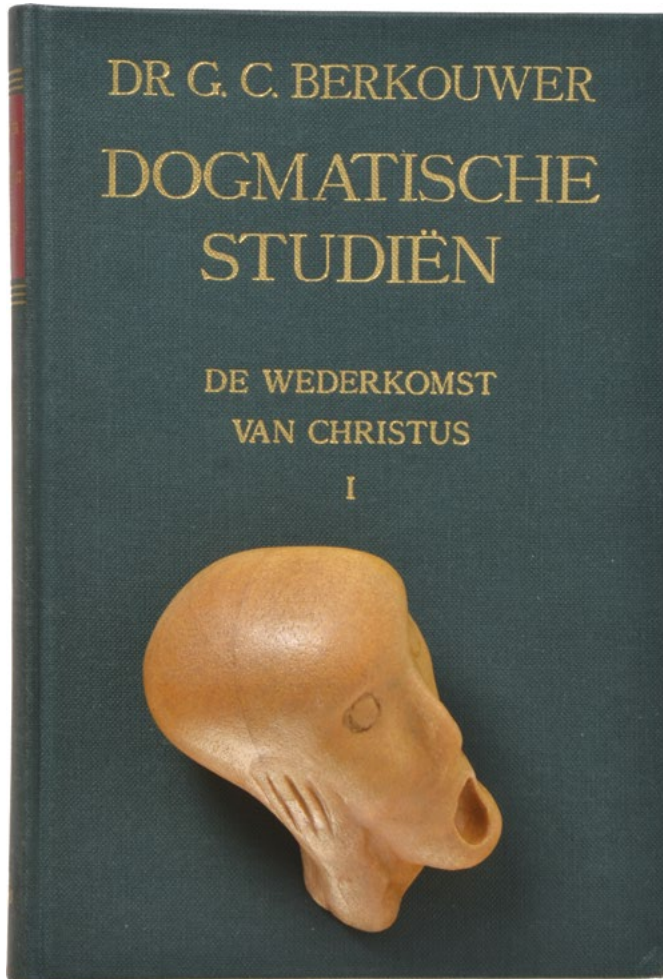
Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.



Book objects

Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

53. *Berkouwer: De wederkomst van Christus I*
(*The return of Christ*)
-



Book object

Head carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*).

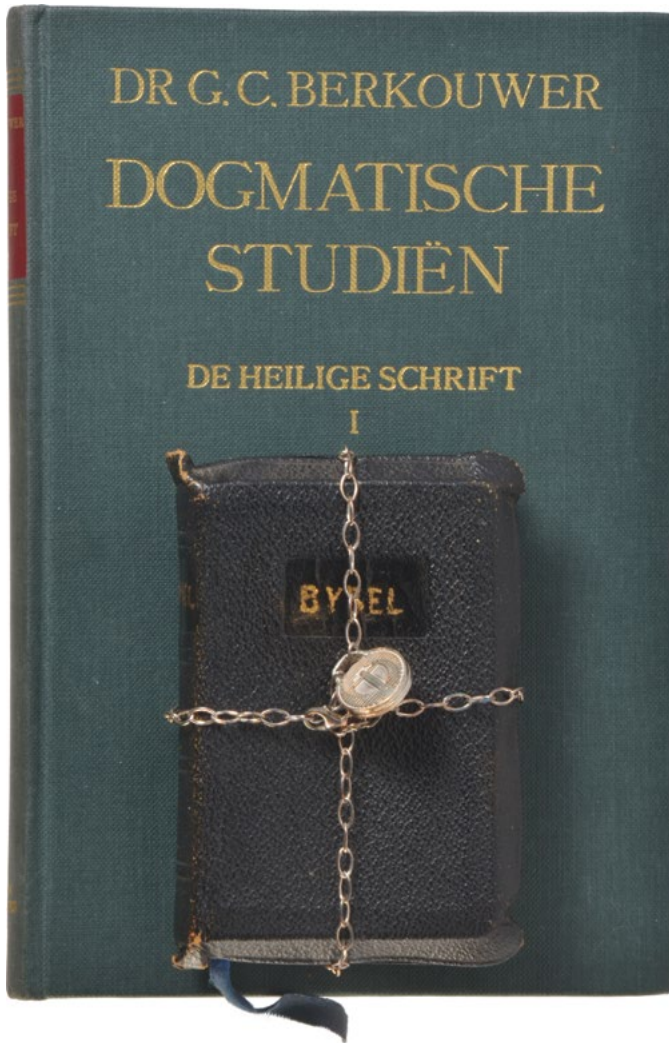
54. *Berkouwer: De wederkomst van Christus II*
(The return of Christ)



Book objects

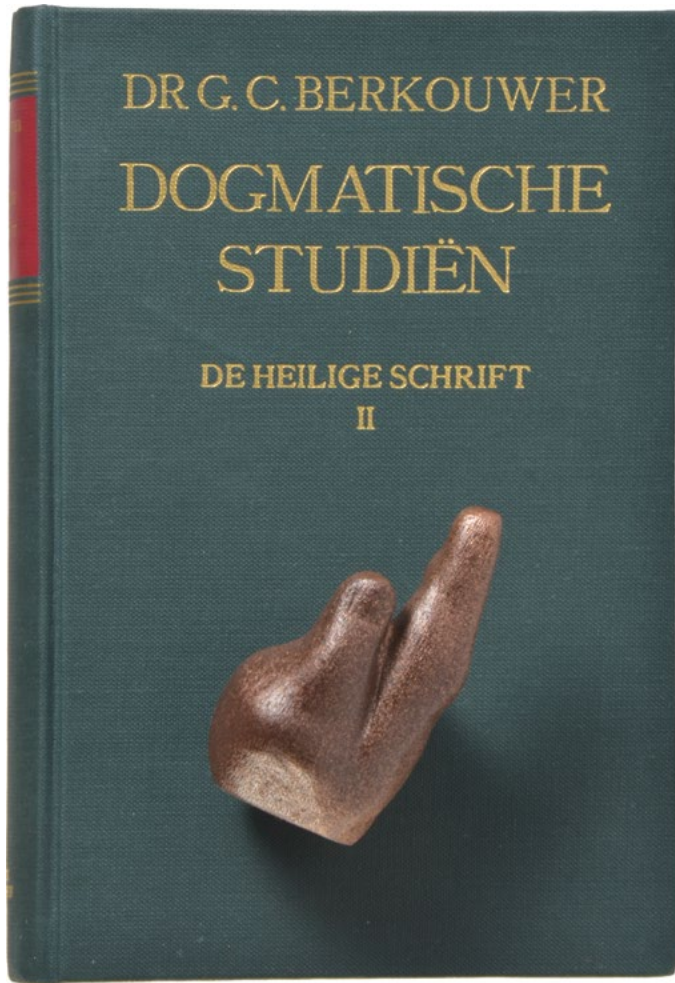
Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

55. *Berkouwer: De heilige schrift I (Holy scripture)*



Book objects

Miniature manipulated hymnbook bound by silver chain and manipulated locket.



Book object

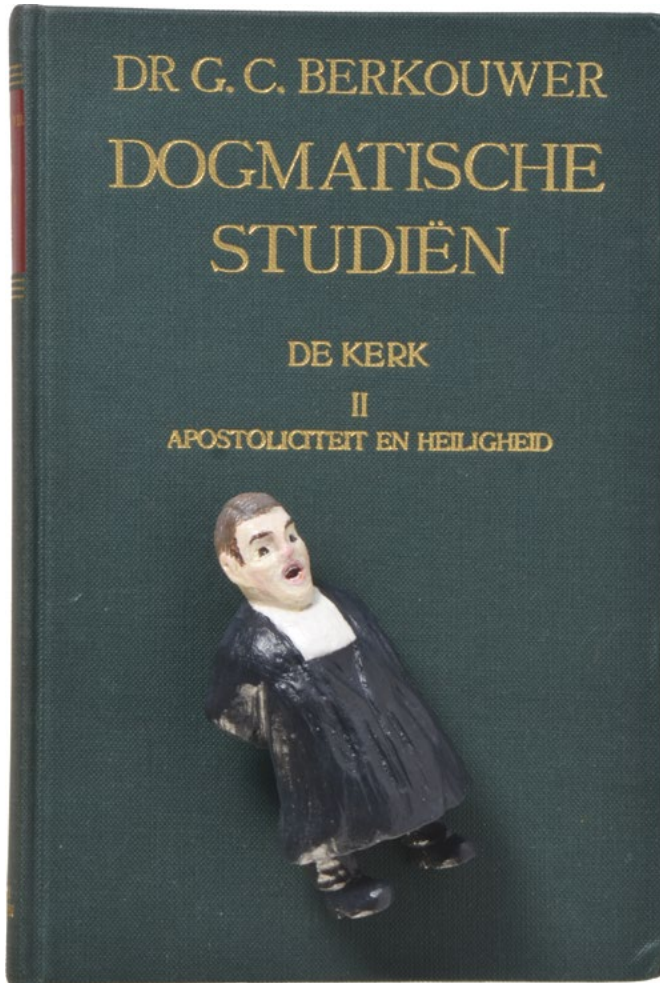
Hand carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.



Book objects

Carved from Stinkwood (*Ocotea bullata*) and Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*).

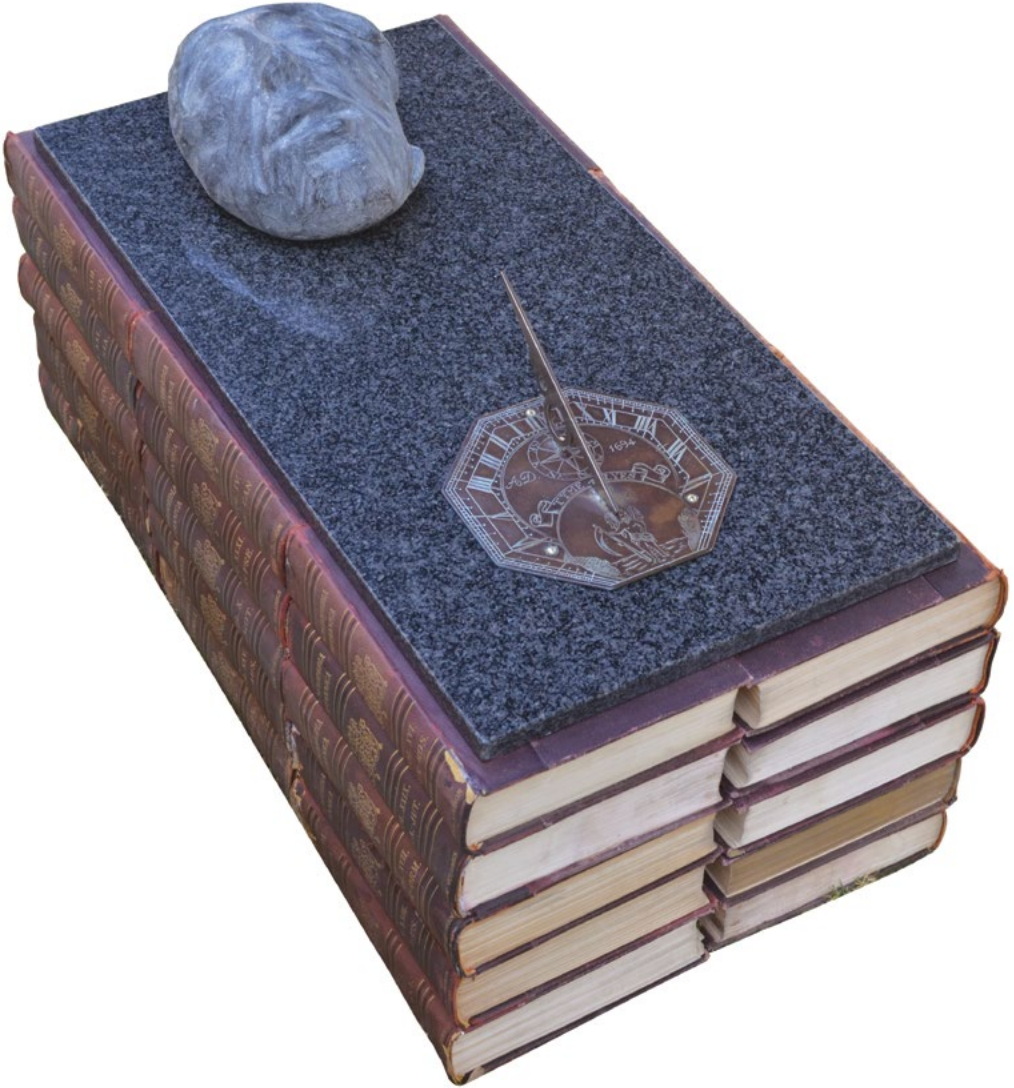
58. *Berkouwer: De kerk II (The church)*

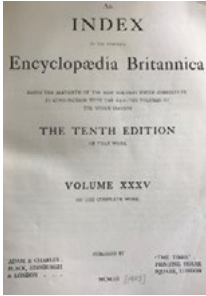


Book object

Carved from Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) and painted.

59. *The end of the book*





Encyclopaedia Britannica

The Tenth Edition.

Published by Adam & Charles Black, Edinburgh & London and 'The Times' Printing House Square, London.

MCMIII.

1903.

Death mask

Carved from rock found in the sea at Morgan Bay, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Sundial

Bronze sundial, manufactured in 1694. Obtained from a deceased estate.

Notes on 'The end of the book'

We have moved firmly into the era of paperless print: not only for online entertainment, social networks or news feeds, but also for books. Several companies – such as Amazon's *Kindle* and Barnes & Noble's *Nook* – are established providers of e-book readers. But even e-book readers are fast becoming old hat and giving way to the new multimedia platforms that are continuously entering our world. Instead of stagnant words, pictures, maps, or graphs on a page or screen, many mobile devices can now layer video throughout the text, add photographs, provide hyperlinks to associated materials, and engage social networks of readers. And that is not all; the recipients of these multimedia materials are able to add their own videos, photographs, and – mostly unverified – information to the mix. At any given time of the day, multimedia books on the World Wide Web are being crafted and then ported over to countless other mobile devices. In this way we are able to co-create entirely new realities. As users we can express our own free will and alter stories to fit our imaginations. Of course, people will still read in future, but not necessarily from the stagnant pages between the two covers of a conventional book. There will still be books around us. But for how long, is anybody's guess.

Nowhere is the potential demise of the physical book more apparent than in the case of encyclopaediae – reference works or compendia providing summaries of information from all branches of knowledge. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is

the oldest existing English-language example, first published in three volumes between 1768 and 1771. Its rising stature as a scholarly reference work helped it to recruit eminent contributors throughout the years and the publication grew to 32 volumes – 32 640 pages – by March 2010, when it was announced that printed editions of this work will no longer be published.¹¹⁶ They often persuaded already financially stressed households to tighten their belts even further by committing themselves to purchasing a set of these desirable reference works. Without doubt, in return the transactions left a rich treasure of information contained in the impressively gilt-edged volumes.

When *Encyclopaedia Britannica* went completely digital in 2010, the curtain fell on one of the most important representations of the physical book in middle class homes in the English-speaking world. Printed versions of encyclopaediae might be dead, but the printed book as a *document of life* is far from dead. There are too many great things that a printed book does better than any other format. A book in your hand provides a final version from cover to cover; it renders art more beautifully than an electronic screen display; its pages can be leaved over backwards and forwards; it is a refuge from the growing tyranny of the screen; it can be carried along to ever more popular off-the-grid locations; and it can be shelved in your home patiently waiting to be taken up by other hands.

In addition, the printed book is still an important lifestyle item that signals cultural capital. This is not to say that books should be regarded as the prerogative of those who possess enough financial capital within a system of exchange. Books as cultural capital refer to the symbolic goods that society considers as valuable and worth seeking. This encompasses the value of works of fiction, from those with the power to challenge our thinking and open out new understandings of our world, to those whose main value is entertainment. From a more academic positioning, books are meant to carry knowledge and to provide the reader with opportunities to critically engage with this knowledge. Like any process of socialisation into a culture and into traditions, the interaction with knowledge contained in books takes time. In order to weigh up the arguments that constitute knowledge, the reader needs a reference point positioned in understandable language and a fixed medium. The reader needs to critically analyse the signs for encoding and decoding information and the printed book provides an objective means to achieve this.

116 Mackey in *The Fiscal Times* 2012.

EPILOGUE

The 59 installations represent a qualitative attempt to explore and to understand the meanings embedded in the historical development of our social life, our present-day actions, and the objects around us. We constantly participate in establishing our ever-changing social reality and part of this process involves reflecting on what brought us to where we are. To reconstruct everyday reality and reflect on how it has come about is not an objective or value-free exercise. That is why I emphasised in the prologue to this book, that my interpretations, understandings, and depictions of social reality are largely autobiographical. As indicated in the section 'Colonialism, imperialism and racism' the texts in the collection on which this project is based, are all from Europe. The voices of indigenous peoples are silent and their values, laws, and cosmologies largely disregarded. This silence and disregard are not deliberate: it is entirely to be ascribed to the nature of this project. This book documents an autobiographical account with texts that I came across during decades of engagement with Western and Central Europe. These texts were all authored and printed in Western and Central Europe. The *document of life* in your hand is based on how my personal life trajectory led me to the texts in this collection – texts that contain elements of the broad historical context of my lifeworld and thus reflect and shape the way I make sense of them. The installations are my creations – in the same way as the books in my installations are the creations of the respective authors or scriptors who originally put pen to paper. I do not engage with the actual content of the books. I simply aim to understand and illustrate my context and my social reality – the text and the bookworks are a reflection on myself and my roots.

Living as a sociologist in a highly segmented South Africa sensitises me to the ever-present danger of ethnocentrism – a major reason why people are divided and polarised. In a deeply divided society conceptions of superiority and inferiority are based on and shaped by race, social status, religion, and language. I was born a member of a specific race that regarded itself as more powerful than any other and that, for a large part of my life, exercised domination and control over other races. I was born into a mother tongue whose speakers exercised political power in an unequal social system where full participation was bestowed only on members of the white race. The church I was brought up and confirmed in openly declared its support for the unjust political domination by the racial and cultural minority into which I was born. Race, language and religion clearly determined large parts of my life.

An autobiographical attempt to reconstruct some of the main parameters for understanding who I am and where I came from, carries an important proviso – it is an intrinsically subjective exercise. Nonetheless, the books and the bones and the other things in this collection do not reflect only deeply personal experiences. They are artefacts of our history, our society and our natural world. They are also testimony to our common humanity: the fear and fallibility that walk hand-in-hand with our remarkable ability to create. Although the world in which we live continues to divide us in terms of racial classifications we are intrinsically the same – we are all of the human race. There is also no intrinsic difference between the speakers of different languages. Just as there is no intrinsic difference between and within the many different religions and other cosmologies. We are all human. And as a human being I am endowed with the abilities to reflect critically, to encounter dialectically, and to strive towards understanding through inquisitive praxis. These all guide my epistemological journey toward unwrapping and breaking open the meaning of my everyday lifeworld.

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BOOKS IN THE INSTALLATIONS

In order of appearance

1. Joanne a Jesu Maria of Navarre of Maneru. 1733. *Quadragesimala*. Vienna: George Lehmann. (p.67)
2. Anonymous. 1800. *Nouveau dictionnaire François-Allemand et Allemand-François a l'usage des deux nations* (2 Volumes). Strasbourg: Amand Koenig. (p.71)
3. De Wette WML (translator). 1839. *Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments*. Heidelberg: J.C.B Mohr. (p.71)
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Jonathan D. Jansen

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