Embodying Cape Town

Engaging the City through its Built Edges and Contact Zones

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Avery, Todd, and my parents

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This book is unified by three principle concerns: a city, the human body, and the material world. By relying on the theoretical framework of embodiment, city and body are brought together in ways that illustrate they do not function as autonomous objects. When it is treated as a paradigm, embodiment changes the way we approach and manage the relationship between ostensibly separate objects. It basically invites us to hold the body continuous with its world and to regard knowledge, emotion, creativity as forms of joint material action. Thomas Csordas, coaxed anthropologists, following his own work on contemporary Christian religious movements, to rethink a full range of "troublesome dualisms" by means of embodiment. Within his proposal is a challenge: "If embodiment is to attain the status of a paradigm, it should make possible the reinterpretation of data and problems already analyzed from other perspectives . . . " (1990: 23). This is precisely what is explored in different ways in each of the four chapters in this book. Each takes up the embodiment of built, urban form or material features of the urban world as a way to reinterpret specific dualisms that persist in interpretations of South African society and history.

Because embodiment is a fundamental challenge to the ways most of us have been trained to think and make scholarly sense of the world, it is neither simple to deploy nor limited to a particular discipline or domain of inquiry. Each chapter is thus its own stand-alone adventure in pushing at the limits of traditional theory to engage one city from the perspective of multiple cultural and disciplinary contact zones. This introduction will

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serve as brief background to some of the more foundational theoretical propositions engaged throughout the book, followed by synopses of the four chapters. I do not endeavor to exhaust the possibilities, merely to trouble the waters just enough to apply embodiment and new ways of thinking about the built environment to old questions and problems.

Early inspiration in the use of the body as an empirical and analytical tool in the social sciences came from vague, but groundbreaking insights by Marcel Mauss who proposed there is nothing natural to the ways humans perform ordinary bodily tasks such as walking and sleeping (1973). He also argued cultural objects can carry and circulate personhood in relations of reciprocity beyond the boundaries of the body (1999). But, precisely how coherent social worlds come into being through isolated bodily habits and the exchange of things and how we can systematically collapse subject and object, person and thing depended on subsequent generations of scholars to explore, critique, and document.

Anthropologist, Mary Douglas, for example, directly took up Mauss' project in her early comparative work on cultural boundary conditions. She established patterns to the ways particular groups exert control over cultural classification by means of the body or by means of a "purity rule" – a rule that correlates a continuum of social control with symbolic distance from the body's organic, physical functions (1996). In this way, the body operates as a non-arbitrary sign, a natural referential link between the social world and itself to produce and reflect a "microcosm of society" (1973: 101). The nature of classification, for her, depends on ongoing public performance of the "purity rule" by means of cultural expressions like religious ritual, the use of profanity, and style of dress. Concordance between "social and bodily expressions of control . . . [whereby] each symbolic mode enhances meaning in the other . . . " (1973: 97) is achieved through bodily practice and stylistic expression. She permits felt opposition between individual body and social world, but argues this tension has to be resolved by the individual acting on an unconscious drive to coordinate the two.

Pierre Bourdieu is more widely associated with the embodiment paradigm (Csordas 1990). He treats the body, not as a mechanism with fixed properties or directional drives, but as a locus whereby structure and practice literally collapse over time. The body is not endowed with an interior self that stands in opposition to exterior objects. Instead, these come together in schema, which develop or take shape through accretion. His use of habitus as an analytical concept moves scholarly attention away from mentalism, cognition, or the autonomous mind as the source of

signification by binding society and body through stable sensory modalities that take up already existing spatial arrangements and give them durable, practical continuity. In this way, social situations, rules, and structures enjoy no prior existence or force separate from practice; they have no social life independent of the ongoing bodily practices that make them material. The socially cultivated, but existentially distinct body opens onto already existing fields of practice, which are spatial, but not propositional in the sense of imposing their own meaning. Situations become morally, aesthetically persuasive, because of the structuring potential of the body to maintain regular, continuous schemes or dispositions. "In short, the habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history" (1977: 82). In this way, neither culture nor the body exists as a set of objective boundaries independent of the practices that make them real over time.

In order for individual bodies to coordinate movement, gesture, and communicative action among each other, individual perceptions must somehow be shared or mutually intelligible. How is this possible when they are located in existentially distinct bodies or invisible, private interiorities? The question of how bodily techniques, styles, dispositions, and intentions can coordinate with each other to participate in fields of practice as if they are shared was also left out of Mauss' early works. Phenomenologists took up these questions by focusing in common on the sharable, public features of perception. Maurice Merleau-Ponty is credited most with bringing a philosophy of consciousness into the embodiment paradigm (Csordas 1990). For him the body is, from the start, part of a cultural world, but not in the sense of generating a representational, cognitive map of it. In other words, body and culture occur together at the level of perception, which is an opening onto a world by means of bodies with shared spatial, sensory properties rather than a means of representing to itself what is already there.

Perception, for Merleau-Ponty, depends on movement or motility, on a constant orientation to a world that must remain incomplete if bodies are to take possession of it. This means the body makes objective space possible at the site of experience, but only because it is not itself an object *in* space; it is preobjective. "Bodily space can be distinguished from external space and envelop its parts instead of spreading them out, because it is the darkness needed in the theatre to show up the performance, the background of somnolence or reserve of vague power against which the

gesture and its aim stand out, the zone of not being *in front of which* precise beings, figures, and points can come to light" (1970: 243–44). Bodily space is a sensory background, a set of non-propositional, physical coordinates, that makes situational foreground possible. What becomes sharable or accessible to others is movement and affect—the fact that individual bodily orientations to the world are publicly available to each other. But, how do individuals know they share intent and understanding in common?

Harold Garfinkel, who popularized the combined theory and documentory method of ethnomethodology, drew specific attention to these same questions, but he did so by asking what and how we come to *know* the world, take it for granted? He also considered the ordinary role of context and the indexical sign in gesture and speech as proof of the site-specific nature of shared knowledge (1984). The index is a linguistic sign that takes context as it is signified, and, because it is publicly available to other participants in the same situation, it is a key mechanism by which individual action becomes joint action. This means social knowledge, the act of knowing, *is* situational. A social agent makes social structures available within shared situations by building up publicly expressed knowledge about them over time, but these do not factor directly in intent. Intent cannot be abstracted from the flow of situated action unless it is deliberately reflected on after the fact. Garfinkel uses phenomenologist, Alfred Schutz's proposition that common understandings and relationships to objects are unconsciously assumed by agents and become typified by routine practice, which means already existing fields of practice are merely potential situations, treated *as if* they are shared (Schutz 1972). Intent is not objective and does not therefore determine paths of action.

Bourdieu, however, objects to Garfinkel's treatment of context as a typification because this allows situations to have prior, objective properties independent of bodily practice. The strength of ethnomethodology is nonetheless that it draws our attention to the necessity of context in the making of joint or social action. This further eliminates intent as an objective quality of mind; situations are not cognitively coded through plans that exist a part from communicative action. Plans, motives, and intent only become available to social agents upon reflection. In most situations a person in fact assumes, or takes for granted, the reality of a situation without knowing his/her intentional relationships to outcomes or properties of objects. According to Schutz, the degree to which assumptions are reinforced by other's actions and emotional responses informs the likelihood of them becoming common, ordinary features of background knowledge (1972). A shared, common,

social world may not exist in the form of objective plan or code, but it does exist in the paramount reality of taken-for-granted situations. It is the communicative and discursive tools available through shared objects and natural speech patterns, that partially enable both making a common stock of knowledge and repair of confusion. This leaves the person open to change, open to adjusting to the contingency of social worlds, open to repairing misrecognitions by others all the while assuming basic intentions and the paramount realities of situations are shared. In this way, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, and social linguistics combine critiques of the cognitive model of culture, which would have us believing social practice follows from knowing the rules.

These theorists differ, and sometimes disagree, but drawn together they bring attention to relationships among embodiment, context, and meaning and, more importantly, point to ways of thinking that either challenge pervasive dualisms or challenge pervasive features of dualism. An additional domain of critique opened by embodiment is the limit of humanism as a legacy in the social sciences. This entails a model of the human as an autonomous, intentional agent; as the contained, existential ground of meaning, creativity, and signification. Humanism, however, fundamentally implies an ethical commitment to a human-centered, human-made world counterbalanced by a critical conviction that if humans make their worlds badly, they can unmake or change them. For some critical social theorists, particularly Marxists, this position has been liberatory, so it needs to be critically engaged rather than discarded.

A key problem recognized by feminists, in particular, and arising from the premise of humanism is how, on the one hand, does the body *become* material, and how, on the other, do bodily interior and material exterior come together to make new meaning if *human* is a prior, objective, and fundamental measure of the correct way to make the world? If we make our worlds materially, do we not also make ourselves, or make the conditions of making? This was, of course, Marx and Engels' position on human as species being: "As individuals express their life, so they are" (*The German Ideology* in Tucker, ed. 1978: 150). But, just what is the role of the non-human, material world in shaping the bodily, anatomical instrument of making? This became a new question and route of critique among materialist feminists, particularly Donna Haraway, who approached *human* as continuous with technology and thus a hybrid phenomenon (1991).

In the years since Csordas put out his challenge to anthropologists to reanalyze existing data through the paradigm of embodiment (1990), scholars inside and outside the discipline have begun to expand the

paradigm with regard to materialism and humanism by focusing on Mauss' other assertion that animate and inanimate worlds interpenetrate in systems of exchange to create the moral vitality of personhood (1990). A feature of this expanded line of inquiry is how can we use embodiment to think differently about the interconnection of subjective self and objective material body?

In order to draw the built world of the city, in particular, into a close, theoretical, and transitive relationship with the body, spatiality has to be understood in terms of the material properties of meaning and the meaningful properties of material. I regard cities as historically interconnected, durable paths that reflect always-incomplete material solutions to bodily problems, but also as paths that create new problems and solutions, and thus new forms of embodiment. Following the work of Elaine Scarry, I take the material traces left by past actions as clues to bodily sentience rather than to *human* as an objective, prior condition (1985). For her the fact of pain is a limit to objectivity, it takes no object as its external referent, so it is a subjective and a permanent ethical dilemma. To be human is to experience pain as both an ethical and material problem. New subjectivities, new ways of being human and bodily come into being as a result of the use of technology to reduce bodily pain. Georg Simmel, who was alive at the turn of twentieth century, experienced a transition to modern metropolitan ways of being, and argued from his experiences, that cities change the way we think and feel about each other, because they change the very bodily and mental apparatus by which we make social connections possible (1969). While I disagree with his reliance on mentalism, or his treatment of intellect and emotion as separate spheres, I agree with his anti-positivism, that the outside world of the city and the inside world of the metropolitan agent are not separate. Simmel and Scarry both, perhaps, unwittingly opened critical paths to challenge humanism without simply rejecting it.

The built environment and its affiliated technologies, by the same token, are not politically neutral. Because technology mediates and modifies the senses and thus embodiment, it further modifies meaningful and social relationships to the built environment. It is by means of cities that particular asymmetries and mechanisms of power take on durable form, but depend in the end on the ways humans mobilize it and put it to use. Therefore, in keeping with the works of Marx, Scarry, and, to a lesser degree Simmel, I am not seeking a break from humanism, or an embrace of an ethically neutralized, post-human world of things as networked agents. I am rather seeking engagement with some of the theoretical limits

and challenges that come from treating human and non-human as fully separate. Anthropology, as a discipline, is uniquely suited to exploring the ways *human* becomes meaningful and thus material in relation to historical context or cultural situation.

To maintain the critique of dualism presented by embodiment, we must further ensure city, like *human*, is also not understood or imagined as a discrete object. Whether ancient or modern, a city is a particular boundary condition, a material force field of practice, characterized by social stratification broadly, the functional segmentation of space and institutional specialization, as well as density and intensified bodily contact with strangers. Though these combine to present urban dwellers some shared technological, social, or sociomaterial problems, they also introduce practical possibilities that remain local, contingent, and non-propositional. In other words, a city as a set of boundary conditions is like a body that is conditioned to unfold through accretion until it encounters limits of its own making.

It has traditionally been geographers, sociologists, and urban planners, who most inform our understandings of the history and culture of cities, but these generally rely on positing cities as objective, structuring conditions, external forces, or ecologies in their own right. Embodiment has not been a widely endorsed feature of their interpretive frameworks, and technology, quite often, is posited as oppositional to nature. Anthropologists have only recently begun to challenge conventional, positivist approaches to the study and measure of cities (Hannerz, 1980, Low, ed., 1999), and while they deepen our understandings of urban place memory, and the impact of urbanization on traditional life, they remain slow to take up embodiment as an interpretive paradigm.

The materialist dialectic, however, has been one of the most powerful conceptual tools to be deployed by anthropologist and sociologist alike in the effort to account for the shape, the feel, and the form of the urban material world by the social agents who produce it. Marx and Engels regarded the literal making of the world by the human, the first historical, sharable act. Under market conditions, humans are reduced in their abilities to make worlds in their own collective image. Bodily need or the collective body that does the actual making ceases to be the object of acts of production and social reproduction. Estrangement is the result. Knowledge becomes ideology, and technology becomes a privately owned means of the production and reproduction of its owner rather than the worker. Thus, their critique has been of private property and capitalism, rather than of industrial technology.

But, the concept of estrangement has led to the generation of new dualist, irreconcilable separations of economy and society—it is assumed these become disembedded under particular conditions. According to economic historian, Karl Polanyi, it is with the birth of the market form that society becomes subservient to economy and a market logic prevails in all relations of exchange. He famously writes: "the control of the economic system by the market is of overwhelming consequence to the whole organization of society: it means no less than the running of society as an adjunct to the market. Instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system" (1944/2001: 60). Urban historian Lewis Mumford treats technology and the body as similarly disembedded, so that urban history is traced to its apogee, the industrial city, which signifies a seemingly irreconcilable break between organic body and material ground resulting in the ultimate form of political alienation, totalitarianism (1964). The market form and its most dramatic expression, the industrial city is a problem that cannot be fixed by anything other than reclamation of the more human-centered past (Mumford 1961).

While scholars like Polanyi and Mumford isolate estrangement and disembedding as proof of a structural opposition between nature and culture, it presents anthropologists with a different sort of challenge—how to account for the ways culture remains part of a body that is continuous with its environment and both the object and instrument of its production. In other words, the challenge of what it means to be human remains a cultural question, to be answered ethnographically, rather than absolutely. But, this doesn't change the material facts of the body and systems of exchange, which are foundational to the making and unmaking of what it means to be human. Anthropologist Bill Mauer, for example, claims the disembedding of society and economy under conditions of capitalism, so prevalent among critical Marxists, is fed by a reliance on folk interpretations of money and society as superorganic forces (2006). I would argue technology inspires similar folk wisdom or fetishism—presumed an outside, inorganic force acting on or against humans. Cultural anthropologists who study the interactions of humans with modern technology have thus begun to challenge such views in earnest by closely investigating the ways meaning is changed at the sensory and anatomical level with technological modification (Martin 1994, Dumit 2004, Suchman 2007).

The fundamental strength of humanism is its guard against denying the facts of power, the experiences of estrangement and pain that come from persistent asymmetries in human/non-human relationships. But

anthropologists remind us we also cannot look to estrangement as an empirical means of purifying "human," resolving it into an irreducible object that can only be rescued by returning it to nature. Critiques from the humanities, however, have the tendency to treat all signification as purely arbitrary and human as itself a sign, or as suspended in webs of discourse. This leaves no room for political critique based on experience or collective change of the material conditions of making. Since the world is always already material and the body cannot be transcended as both a material and culturally situated phenomenon, these have to be included in historical accounts of the simultaneous making of human/non-human. Sociologist Bruno Latour has been one of the more influential theorists taking up the pervasive problem of dualism in the study of the sociomaterial mediations of technology, but his critiques keep us focused almost exclusively on formidable properties of the non-human world. He proposes a sort of "flattening" of the material and non/material, but generally argues anthropologists and critical social theorists endow humans with too much agency (2005).

This book, however, is not an effort to resolve these difficult theoretical and epistemological problems once and for all. My part in the challenge to dualism, as an anthropologist, is more importantly not to resolve the question of what it means to be human. It is, rather to keep the question alive, keep it historically and ethnographically relevant. Each chapter, here, treats localized challenges of dualism as a means of getting at the ways subjects make themselves and their material worlds' objective through practice. In this respect, it is local actors, agents, writers, and artists who do the challenging. On the advice of Latour, and countless anthropologists, I have followed the actors, or the "natives, no matter which metaphysical imbroglios they lead us into . . . " (2007: 62). But, Latour differs from anthropologists in his broader definition of actor: " . . . *any thing* that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor—or, if it has no figuration yet, an actant" (2007: 71). I agree that a non-human *thing* can modify the course of human action, it has a form of agency. Non-human things, however, are incorporated into, deployed by human actors in concrete situations and, while the non-human things *act* as mediators that can "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (2007: 39), they can only do so because human actors take them into social action, make them in ways that are continuous with the cultural realities of which they are a part.

Figuration, here, bears some explanation, as it is an interdisciplinary concept referring to the fact that we endow social forces, particularly when they are abstract and invisible with metaphoric flesh, form, material affordance. In this way they mediate our situated connections to the abstract world, but become knowable because they are made up of bodily material. A city, in this sense, can be an actant that takes many mediating and intermediating forms; it is uniquely fertile in its potential for figuration. Italo Calvino, in *Invisible Cities*, a novel, which unfolds through a series of conversations between Italian explorer Marco Polo and the Chinese emperor, Kublai Khan, poses the problem of how can we *know* cities as objective realities? Khan essentially relies on Polo's adventuresome mobility and evocative descriptions in order to know or grasp the breadth of his own empire. For Khan, knowing this vast empire is then mediated and figured through cities, which means knowing requires transferring his own sense of imperial agency into abstract boundaries that come back to him in urban figurative form. As an emperor, cities conjure density, elaborate architecture, and creativity—they are at once figured by Khan as sublime yet unbearable, technological weight. He must be strong enough to push back, must have sufficient capacity to mold and redirect weight into sublime openings via architectural mastery, but do so with political force and legitimacy. For Khan, a city, as a figure, is therefore a metaphorical bridge between exterior weight and interior resistance, between limit and transcendence.

But, Calvino claims for Polo: "Every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice" (1972: 86). For him, the memorable experience of diverse cities, as actants, entails a drawing together, through his own figurative imagining, a memory or a sense of place. Space and time are embodied, so it is impossible for him to claim to know any one city, as it actually exists, as an object that can be described and delivered up to Khan accurately. To Polo, all cities are prefigured or take Venice as the form and conduit of being known. Between experience, or a historical sense of place, and the imagination, or rather somewhere between memory and fantasy, the city as an actant inspires a rich range of figuration. Calvino is reminding us cities draw visible and invisible agency together by giving them embodied animacy and percipient flesh.

My own relationship to Cape Town, and thus the chapters presented here, resonates with Calvino's narrative structure. This book is a product of over twenty years of research and experience with one city. It comes from having crossed many thresholds, of blending deep hanging out and

focused investigation with fortuitous encounter and aimless wandering. I have lived in different parts of the city, engaged different groups and features of cultural, historical contact. I have therefore followed a diverse range of actors into figurative and non-human mediation with an urban material world. For many of these actors, the city is a context continuous with their bodies. For others, it is a painful limit.

The ethnographic data, which loosely informs several chapters, was predominantly gathered among so-called "coloureds", a group that in many respects considers Cape Town its own, but are not in some sort of tidy agreement about what that means. Ethnographic data was gathered between 1994 and 1997, an auspicious period for the city as the country was undergoing political transformation and liberation from apartheid. In subsequent years, my project became increasingly archival and the questions more historical. This has led me through a maze of material traces, boundary objects, and conceptual horizons in search of the ways body and city become simultaneous for a broader range of groups who have claimed Cape Town as their own throughout the centuries. This maze includes official archives, journals, fictional narratives, artifacts, extant built structures, the words and actions of public figures and activists, the solicited discourses of informants, and unsolicited conversations with familiars.

Perhaps because the city has changed so much in the years hence and because I remain, to this day, an outsider, it has come to feel like many cities at once. My long-term experiences as a participant observer and anthropologist also make it impossible to impose positive coherence on it. My chosen paradigm of embodiment further challenges the presumption a city can ever be known or mastered from a distance. Cape Town, by its own account, is uniquely cosmopolitan and has remained so despite concerted effort at different times to cleanse it of racialized "others" and narrate its history from the perspective of its purported masters. Despite the claims of some, it is impossible to define it, once and for all, as belonging to any one exclusive group. But, it has also been impossible for it to belong to everyone equally. It remains the outcome of struggles to rightfully possess it, to make it in ways that reflect legitimacy back to its makers, to fully benefit from its resources, and to turn it to productive, meaningful use. Groups, in fact, come in and out of being by establishing organic and technological connections to it. It is by following a range of actors and actants, that I have looked to a contact relationships and material connections to make sense of the fact that one city can enable such richly contested and diverse figuration.

Chapter 1 is primarily built out of a critical rethinking of architectural theory and history, to address the ways Cape Town and the colonial incursions made by the British Empire, introduced new material paths for women. Englishness, in this regard was something that had to be made in Cape Town, and it is to architecture that I turn to understand the figural process of making. The built environment worked as a mediator in the imagining of colonial order, but it also informed the self-objectifications of empire builders. In this regard, the fictional and non-fictional published works of English women, both metropolitan and colonial offer a way to re-read the master narratives we attribute to British Empire building and architectural history.

The central question posed in this chapter is how and why did architecture become good to think with, good to experiment with particularly by women, who are overlooked as British Empire builders in the metropole as well as the Cape Colony? Cape Town was the capitol of the colony and had become a literal and imaginative symbol of imperial mastery, but the works of Florence Nightingale and Olive Schreiner illustrate a more performative and contingent relationship between Englishness and colonial space. Empire building is generally understood as the exclusive domain of autonomous agents, typically men, uniquely equipped with reason as an already existing force that contains and constrains the wilderness of landscapes, racialized others, and women. The standardized development of functionally segmented architecture in British colonies is often attributed to this force, read backwards as if the built world, in this form, reflected minds back to agents as mirrors of nature. In this way "others" have become, in architectural histories, objects arranged in space rather than agents making space. But, the writings of select nineteenth century British women illustrate architecture was good for everyone to think with, good for figuring imperial agency as a more problematic, experimental phenomenon.

The second chapter engages the dualism that is now posited between history and memory. The National Party or apartheid regime in the mid-twentieth century embarked on remaking Cape Town in the image of white national purity. This chapter takes up the perspective of those who were removed in the process of purification. "Forced removals" became a shared disruption in the mediations of the past, a way to mark spatial distinctions of inside and outside, here and there, order and disorder. It is to select members of this group I turn in asking the question how does the built environment of the city, where inside and outside are maintained, continue to shape embodied mediations of memory and memory work?

One of the goals of this chapter is to develop an embodied approach to memory in order to challenge the now common view that history and memory, remembering and forgetting exist in structured opposition.

It is through critical engagement with material remnants and mnemonics held in place by the District Six Museum and affiliated archives, recorded and archived interviews, sometimes by former residents with former residents, and memoirs that a sense of the center of the city can be recreated. The patterns assembled from these sources suggest embodied connections to the past can be invoked in the form of habit and place memory maintained in moral classifications that work in continuity with situated experience to stabilize the significance of places that have been lost. Though the built environment that anchored the past is gone for victims of forced removals and their families, its reconstruction as a locus, rather than memorial, provides insight into aspects of place that are sustained in both memory work and in lived experience.

The third chapter incorporates ethnographic work conducted between 1994 and 1997 to ask the question how do boundary objects or "immutable mobiles" (Latour 2012) facilitate both the personification of things and the redistribution of personhood? Latour endows such objects with the power to move in relation to each other, to facilitate networks of social agents. But this chapter will challenge Latour's position and treat boundary objects as continuous with the personhood of racialized subjects who begin to change their bodily integrity by changing their own networks and the ways such objects connect to institutional context, to epistemologies, and to each other.

The momentous national and local elections that took place during this transitional era, presented locals and the observing world with some surprising results. The election was considered a non-violent miracle, but, in the Western Cape, the majority voted to keep the National (apartheid) Party in power. The dominant demographic in the Western Cape are legally referred to as "coloured," so it seemed as though a racially oppressed group voluntarily voted as a bloc to keep its oppressors in power. "Coloured" intellectuals and activists in Cape Town found themselves having to account for these results and make sense of them while challenging the racialist foundations of the category itself. In the process of doing so they turned to the boundary objects implicated in dominant historical and scientific narratives about race and their own institutional frameworks as sites of material unmaking.

These various artifacts and boundary objects enabled intellectuals and cultural brokers to engage the material ground of their own objectifications, or the ways their own bodies had become objective through the institutionalized power of knowledge production in Cape Town. It was by debating