White Noise

A Critical Translation Of A Language Gap

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Abstract

This thesis takes as its starting point the Dutch society in which a certain denial of its own coloniality and its current ramifications exist. This particular environment has produced a systemic gap in the Dutch language surrounding (notions of) whiteness, while at the same time maintaining whiteness as normative. This thesis addresses the gap present in Dutch language with regards to whiteness, and focuses specifically on institutional language and how normative whiteness is addressed implicitly, explicitly or not at all, and to what extent this perpetuates whiteness as the norm. Building on existing work on the Dutch cultural archive, institutional whiteness and the politics of language and silence, this thesis offers an ethnographic analysis of policy documents from Hogeschool Rotterdam and the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam which shows how institutional whiteness is reproduced. This analysis is juxtaposed with testimonials and a case study into a student-based initiative that can be considered an effort to bridge this language gap. Additionally, all findings are interspersed with auto-ethnographic expositions examining the writer's own whiteness, both in general as in relation to the research subject.

Relevant theoretical traditions: feminist postcolonial theory, feminist new materialisms, antiracist discourse, feminist translation, feminist ethnography, affect theory, etymology, institutional ethnography, auto-ethnography

Keywords: semiotics, naming, gaps, phenomena, language, past, present, future, haunting

Hypernyms: onto-epistemological frameworks, normative hegemony, institutional critique, whiteness, institutional whiteness, whiteness in language, anti-racist, translation, (Dutch) self-representation

Hyponyms: articulation, realisation, materialisation, representation, self-reflective

To my mom and sister, who are the strongest people I know.

Thank you to M and F, for being by my side, emotionally and intellectually, always.

Thank you to L, for enabling me, and all the comfort you give me.

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Introduction

"The vitality of language lies in its ability to limn the actual, imagined and possible lives of its speakers, readers, writers. Although its poise is sometimes in displacing experience it is not a substitute for it. It arcs toward the place where meaning may lie."

Toni Morrison

Being in the Gender Studies master is, in many ways, like being in a bubble. Moving through, in and outside of that bubble sometimes requires specific modes of translation. In communication, we translate between teacher and student, among ourselves and through linking and merging our bubbles with the ones of the people close to us. Sometimes we need to explain ourselves more, sometimes a few words are enough. A challenge arises in how many languages populate these bubbles, and another in which language is used most. For most, English, the normative language, is not a native one. This holds true for teachers, other staff and students. In this specific dynamic, translation does not necessarily form an issue. However, when it comes to specific terminology, my Dutch friends and me find ourselves speaking English and Dutch simultaneously. In part, this is because we are used to speaking the language of Gender Studies in English. When we speak Dutch, English seeps through - especially in terminology, jargon and specific phrasings. Sometimes, though, we speak English throughout our Dutch because our native language is lacking. In this writing, I want to take time to review a specific lack in Dutch language, a silence, or as I have come to call it: a gap. That is, a gap both in literal words and translations, as well as the historic weight and an imaginary to discuss them. This gap involves the notion of *whiteness*[1].

[1] I do not capitalise 'white' or 'whiteness', nor do I capitalise 'people of colour', 'black' or 'blackness' or related identity markers. I acknowledge the many varying reasons to either capitalise or use lowercase using these terms, but herein follow my main sources Gloria Wekker (*White Innocence*) and Sara Ahmed (*On Being Included*).

It is no surprise to find this gap here, in the Netherlands. In its current form, as I will argue in this thesis, the gap originates from both Dutch coloniality and its history and current implications of pillarisation. Both these factors have lead to a culture where language surrounding whiteness is either minimal or non-existent. Nevertheless, many activists, writers, scholars and theorists (I will return to them at a later point) have been (indirectly) addressing it when discussing either Dutch colonialism, or symptoms of it, such as Black Pete. A contributing factor to these works is that anti-racist activism in the Netherlands has seen a renewal. In *White Innocence*, Gloria Wekker states that "after a short moment in the early 1980s, now a second anti–racist movement is underway, which started with the protest against Black Pete, led by Quincy Gario and Kno'ledge Cesare in the fall of 2011" (181). However, as Wekker attests to in *Witte Onschuld* considering the Dutch reception of *White Innocence*, the "denial of race remains a core underpinning of the structural, symbolic and interpersonal order of the Netherlands" (235, my translation). I see this denial of race as a critical manifestation of the gap in thinking and talking about (Dutch) whiteness in the Netherlands.

I have decided to look for this gap in a place I know well - the Willem de Kooning Academy[2] in Rotterdam (and to a greater extent, the Hogeschool Rotterdam, of which the WdKA is a part). As a former student of the WdKA, and after completing my MA internship at the academy, too, I am both an insider as well as an outsider, and able to lean on my experience there and use my positionality in an effort to look at this language gap in an institutional setting. The institutional angle to this research is interesting to me in the sense that institutions (and by extension institutional language) are a reflection of the national cultural archive (*White Innocence*). This is because the notion of the cultural archive encompasses hegemonic structures of knowledge, which includes both institutions and language. As I am (or have been) part of these institutions, I recognise the importance to question and visualise their workings. In that sense, I am not necessarily trying to create or pose solutions to the issue of this gap, rather I am visualising and contextualising it -putting it into words-, as well as illuminating current efforts to close it in the broadest sense.

In discussing this gap, as the above Toni Morrison quote suggests, I will consider the limits of language as well as its necessity and its possibilities. The particular possibilities

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[2] I will also refer to the Willem de Kooning Academy and the Hogeschool Rotterdam respectively as WdKA/the academy and HRO/the hogeschool from this point on.

of the *lack of language* are key to me. Locating my research at an art academy, I rely on the counter hegemonic, alternative knowledges and imaginative power art can offer. In a 2016 conversation with authors Ta-Nehisi Coates and Sonia Sanchez in relation to the intersection of art and social justice, Toni Morrison reminded the audience that art is dangerous. Hence, in an effort to address the silences and limitations of language surrounding whiteness in the Netherlands, I find the academy to be a starting point, as well as a potential location of social justice. In addition to this, I have sought to reflectively consider my own whiteness, both as moving into, out of and through this institution, in holding the Dutch nationality and in writing about whiteness and the lack of language surrounding it. These writings have become a red thread throughout this research, and are my personal way of addressing the white noise, the lack of signal, the absence of content, the deafening silence.

Theoretical framework

The Dutch cultural archive

A foundational underpinning of this writing on the lack of imaginary and language concerning whiteness in the Netherlands is Gloria Wekker's *White Innocence*. In this work, Wekker deconstructs the white Dutch self and its grand narratives. She makes use of the idea of the *cultural archive*, a concept originally put forth by Edward Said, and links it to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, in order to point at a historically accumulating hegemonic socio-cultural, -political as well as -economic hegemonic narrative deeply rooted in Dutch coloniality. This narrative produces specific structures of reference, attitudes, feelings and knowing that shape life in the Netherlands, as well as the white Dutch self, today. The Dutch cultural archive comes with an violent, affective innocence that "has managed to convince itself that nearly four hundred years of colonialism have, miraculously, not left any traces of racism, either in culture, history, language, representations of the self and the other, or in institutions" (*White Innocence* 166). Thus, this thesis takes the current paradoxical mode of being the Netherlands is in as its starting point, described by Wekker as "(…) the passion, forcefulness, and even aggression that race, in its intersections with gender, sexuality and class, elicits among the white population, while at the same time the reactions of denial, disavowal and elusiveness reign supreme" (*White Innocence* 1). Wekker elaborates on how the white Dutch self awareness and self-representation are steeped in notions of innocence and tolerance (the meaning of which lies far from the happiness it connotes in the Dutch context), and how, as a result of five centuries of imperialist, colonialist projects, white Dutchness, or Dutch whiteness, has inevitably suffered particular consequences. The consequence I am focusing on here, is the silence surrounding whiteness.

The Dutch cultural archive in a European context

I follow Wekker in foregrounding that race is a fundamental organising grammar in Dutch society (*White Innocence 20*). This organising principle translates into notions of belonging through violent modes of in- and exclusion[3]. Melissa F. Weiner explains:

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[3] For expansive writing on this matter in the Dutch context, I refer to Philomena Essed's 1991 *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory* as well as Leana van Boven's 2019 master thesis *Spatial Injustice In Rotterdam: Past And Present Practices Of Racial Violence Inflicted Upon Certain Racialized Bodies Through The Built Environment.*

> (…) the social process of "racialization" (…) assigns groups to different categories reflecting perceptions of inferiority and superiority based on perceived biological and/or cultural differences. This system of power relations and structurally embedded meanings are then maintained by social policies and practices that enforce racial boundaries ("The Demography of Race and Ethnicity in the Netherlands" 576).

Even though the history of the Netherlands is a multiracial story of immigration and heterogeneity in many ways, Weiner, summarising Philomena Essed and Sandra Trieneken's 2008 "Who Wants To Feel White" article, points out that "most Dutch attribute "Dutchness," and thus membership in the national community, to white Christian Europeans born in The Netherlands" ("The Demography of Race and Ethnicity in the Netherlands" 576). These sentiments of national belonging, and consequent practices of othering, can be linked to a greater, European Orientalist discourse. This discourse constructs the white European imperialist self as the pinnacle of modernity by placing it in opposition to an uncivilised, backward and oftentimes Muslim Other[4]. Essed en Trienekens elaborate on these European issues surrounding unification and belonging, and connect this to the role language plays in the ramifications of these processes of identification in the Netherlands:

> The panic over 'alien' cultures infiltrating the Netherlands has roots in Orientalism and cultural racism (Pieterse 2002). But this can also be seen as a form of 'glocal panic' (De Cauter 2003): narrow-minded local reactions to the consequences of globalization and mass migration. The obsession with difference finds fertile ground in the European unification of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, which has placed the concepts of national and European culture, citizenship and belonging squarely on the political agenda (Wiener 1998). Who belongs and who does not? At the heart of dominant notions of being Dutch and European are the perceived necessity of modernity, progress, and the superiority of western civilization (Said 1978; Patterson 1997). (…) This does not imply that 'European' is a homogenous category. One political trans-

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[4] I do not intend to pose Europe as a monolithic, proper subject here. Instead, I acknowledge how the binary logic of the Orientalist discourse is complicated by the (political) position of the Balkan. For further writing on the Orientalist discourse with regards to Europe and the Balkan, I refer to *Imagining the Balkan* by Maria Todorova (2009) and "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia" by Milica Bakić-Hayden (1995).

> lation is the distinction between 'real' Europeans - members of the European Union - and 'aspiring to be' Europeans, or, on local levels, 'real' Dutch and 'not quite' Dutch. (…) This distinction is also firmly rooted in Dutch language ("Who Wants To Feel White" 56).

Essed and Trienekens go on to point out that Dutch terminology has played a large part in the "international language of racial and ethnic distinctions" because of the addition of the words Apartheid and allochtoon/autochtoon ("Who Wants To Feel White" 57). Etymologically, I locate this sort of terminology, especially terminology such as allochtoon/autochtoon, in the Dutch imperialist history as well as the culture of pillarisation. I will return to this at a later point.

Language and silences

As Wekker explains throughout *White Innocence*, Dutch paradoxes of colonialism and race surface in many ways. Language is an important component of the imperialist cultural archive. But before going into the workings of the Dutch cultural archive, I want to take time to go into the complexity of language more, as well as elaborate on the approach I briefly touched upon in the introduction. I look at language in the sense of *wording as worlding*, explained by Helen Palmer and Vicky Hunter (2018). Their stance can be considered a feminist materialist one, which means they reconfigure (humanist or human-centred) notions of subjectivity and objectivity and dislocate the human from their superior, individualist, cultural-political subject position as a knowledge producing entity. *In Teaching With Feminist Materialisms*, Peta Hinton and Pat Treusch explain what this entails, ontologically, in relation to language:

> In their proposals to move beyond the framework of a "humanist ontology" in feminist research and thinking, feminist materialisms unsettle the foundations through which such (humanist) ontologies are inscribed. In the process, they are becoming more and more of a leverage point for engaging with "the materiality of language itself – its material force and its entanglements in bodies and matter." The text, or language, in this sense, is not animated by (human) (…) reading practices alone. Rather, the process of formulating "what matters" in the text is a co-productive engagement of bodies, spaces, and wor[l]ds (6).

Looking at language in this way opens up space to consider words as worlds, always 'under construction' (or in construction), always in an ever-changing relationship with who utters them and who does not, who writes them down, what they are written down for,

what they are supposed to convey, what bodies and environments they travel through, who and what is affected by them. In that sense, wording can be worlding. The notion of worlding entails turning 'being in the world' into a 'doing', which consequently allows for a possibility and change in seemingly rigid structures and systems, and reminds us that temporalities are temporary:

> Worlding is a particular blending of the material and the semiotic that removes the boundaries between subject and environment, or perhaps between persona and topos. Worlding affords the opportunity for the cessation of habitual temporalities and modes of being (Palmer and Hunter).

Furthermore, feminist materialisms go against the ontological (binary) separation of subject/object, as well as language/culture or world/representation. In this way, a totalising linguistic representationalism is questioned. Put simply, this is an acknowledgement of how language cannot be a full representation of life, or anything, for that matter, and of how subjects and objects are never set positionalities, but always re-forming and in progress. On this matter of representation and signification, Karen Barad offers an alternative ontology in *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Realism and Social Constructivism without Contradiction*, one that:

> (…) does not entail some fixed notion of being that is prior to signification (as the classical realist assumes), but neither is being completely inaccessible to language (as in transcendental idealism) nor completely of language (as in linguistic monism) (176; emphasis in original).

I locate my thesis in the multiplicity of language, in line with Barad's description, as not offering all-encompassing solutions, being very powerful and holding space for possibility as well as change (not necessarily in a contradicting nor complementary sense). I follow Palmer and Hunter in that worlding is an embodied and enacted process, and that we need to "word the world better". In that sense, I recognise language - or naming - can be a step towards change through for example naming, acknowledgement, recognition, declaration, affirmation, admitting, reflection and confirmation. Nevertheless, going back to the colonial, imperialist archive, it is important to realise that both the existence as well as the *non-existence* of (specific) language can be seen as a form of epistemic violence. Avery Gordon reminds us of this in *Ghostly Matters*, and stresses the need to:

> (…) detect how conditions in the past banished certain individuals, things, or ideas, how circumstances rendered them marginal, excluded, or repressed. (…) the lost is only apparently absent because the forced "disappearance" of as-

> pects of the social continues to shadow all that remains. Because the past always haunts the present, sociology must imaginatively engage those apparitions, those ghosts that tie present subjects to past histories (x).

In that regard I am particularly interested in engaging with institutional (non-)language, not necessarily from a linguistic approach, but in looking at systematic power-relations considering exclusion and repression, as well as looking at linguistic erasure, denial and exclusion (I will go into specific language in my analysis). Thus, in no way do I see the language gap surrounding whiteness as anything remotely accidental or 'innocent', but fully in line with Wekker's notions of aggressive ignorance, the active workings of the Dutch cultural archive and how white innocence is by no means innocent. Silence, in that sense, is always political, and haunts us.

The Dutch colonial context and pillarisation

Wekker's ethnography of the white Dutch self representation shows that, alongside the broader historical context of the silencing, disavowal and utter uncomfortableness with Dutch colonial history, the context of Dutch pillarisation also plays a role. Originating in the 1800's, this particular organisational practice fully separated Dutch life by religion or life philosophy; either a Catholic, a Protestant, a socialist or a Humanist pillar as a way for people of different religious convictions to live peacefully together (*White Innocence* 20). Weiner and Antonio Carmona Báez point out that this system was an effort to manage the different immigrant identities making their home in the Netherlands during the 'Golden Age' (*Smash the Pillars* x). These groups would go on to have their own bubbles, with their own churches, schools, newspapers, radio programs and television, and with their own political parties. In many ways, parts of the structures built then, now remain. Weiner and Carmona Báez stress that essentialist ideologies lie at the base of the system (*Smash the Pillars* x). Considering the possibility of social justice in the system of pillarisation, they point out:

> Implying homogeneity within each pillar, this system justifies and perpetuates religious, economic, and cultural differences between multiple groups within Dutch society and inhibits collaborative justice-seeking organisation for equal rights between and across the multiple groups that make up the Netherlands. (…) Although public support of this model has eroded since the 1980s (Lijphart 1990), coinciding with neoliberalism, it remains the dominant ideological construct for Dutch political organization and mobilization. There is no place in the current pilloried Dutch system for racial equality and justice. The complexities

> of pillarization are inextricably linked to the contemporary white Dutch denial of racism in their nation, which also contributes to their resistance to decolonial protests around race (*Smash the Pillars* xi).

On top of that, Wekker reminds us that:

> (…) the pillarisation model, important as it is in streamlining the relationships between the government and specific ethnic minority groups, is preceded by and builds on a deeper structure, that is, the cultural archive in which long-standing ideas about and practices with regard to race are always already assigning differential meanings to different people (*White Innocence* 58).

The context of pillarisation translates into a (current day) presupposed conviviality between different groups in Dutch society, which in turn allows for a disavowal of notions of race and racism, let alone whiteness. At the same time, this shows a subsequent discomfort with differences between these groups, as well as a response of distancing and creating mechanisms of containment and compromise. I find myself returning to the idea of living in a bubble. Pillarisation, as an organisational strategy and technology of separation and containment, maintains and reproduces the same bubbles, over and over. The fact that the general consensus is that the Dutch (political) system is a secularist one (we have 'officially' done away with pillarisation, and have achieved a separation of church and state) obscures the remnants of it in Dutch society, as well as its ramifications for the difficulty or impossibility to talk about whiteness, let alone whiteness in an institutional context. I will go into this more in the next section.

Institutional whiteness

Works of institutional critique and critical archive work in relation to institutional language, institutional racism and institutional whiteness are part of the bubble my thesis is in. This means that I have scavenged through institutional documents looking for words, or sometimes a lack of words, in finding places where the gap shows up. In thinking about institutional whiteness, I lean heavily upon Sara Ahmed's *On Being Included* as well as "A Phenomenology of Whiteness". I specifically pose this thesis as a work of institutional critique located in the larger context of critical readings of policy documents, mission statements, vision statements, interviews and a case study, focussing specifically on diversity, inclusivity and representation. Furthermore, I juxtapose my reading of these materials with Ahmed's notion of institutional whiteness (*On Being Included*). This means that I look at whiteness as a systemic, hegemonic and normative power. The

structural, normative power of whiteness invisibilises its very own dominance, but, traces of it show up within institutional paperwork. To uncover these traces, I will to look at data from both the Willem de Kooning and the HRO, and try to identify gaps between what is said and left unsaid, what is taken for granted, what or who is missing and what is at stake, in particular in documents on diversity and inclusivity (I will elaborate on my exact methods in the following section on methodology). As Gloria Wekker discusses in *White Innocence*, hardly any (reflective) work has been done on the matter of diversity and inclusivity in the academies or in higher education in the Netherlands (25). My Gender Studies MA internship supervisor Teana Boston-Mammah is one of the few who are writing on this topic. With a background in sociology, she has worked as a sociology teacher, policy advisor and researcher, is a board member of various nonprofits and currently teaches for the Cultural Diversity practice at the WdKA. In my internship with her, I participated in setting up a research project on educational ethnography in art schools in the Netherlands; a vastly underdeveloped field in the Netherlands. This specific type of ethnography deconstructs the educational institution, which in turn allows for greater transparency of institutional workings as well as criticism. Boston-Mammah's 2017 research paper "The Entrance Gap", which tackles admission procedures[5] at the WdKA, serves as a base for this project since, among other things, it interrogates notions of neutrality and 'normal' in these procedures. Consequently, it addresses whiteness as 'the unmarked marker' in the art academy as an institution (6) and illustrates how whiteness invisibilises itself as the norm. Boston-Mammah also points at the difficulty to do this work here in conversation with, for example, British and American terminology, when she explains that "translating these theorems into the Dutch context results in a constant struggle to formulate the words with which to talk about ethnicity, culture and nationality using the Dutch language" (6). In an effort to demarcate whiteness, I look at it as something that *does something*, something that influences and changes things. I herein follow Ahmed's description of whiteness as "an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space, and what they 'can do'" ("A Phenomenology of Whiteness" 1). I also follow Ruth Frankenberg in looking at whiteness as a set of historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced locations that are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination (*White Women, Race Matters*). Taking care not to reify whiteness nor the institution as ontological entities or positionalities, Ahmed summarises:

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[5] In the context of diversity and inclusivity in the academies and higher education, and specifically art education, the matter of admission procedures (as well as deconstructing and critiquing them) is completely new terrain.

> The institutionalization of whiteness involves work: the institution comes to have the form of a body as an effect of this work. It is important that we do not reify institutions by presuming they are simply given and that they decide what we do. rather, institutions become given, as an effect of decisions made over time, which shapes the surface of institutional spaces. Recruitment functions as a technology for the reproduction of whiteness (*On Being Included* 39).

This links back to Wekker's notions of habits and the cultural archive, which are also made up of specific repeated, continuous acts. Ahmed adds:

> It is important to remember that whiteness is not reducible to white skin or even to something we can have or be, even if we pass through whiteness. When we talk about (…) "white space", we talk about the repetition of the passing by of some bodies and not others. And yet nonwhite bodies do inhabit white spaces; we know this. Such bodies are made invisible when spaces appear white, at the same time as they become hyper visible when they do not pass, which means they "stand out" and "stand apart" (*On Being Included* 42).

I will return to the notions of visibility and hyper visibility at a later point. To conclude, this writing on a language gap, thinking about the institutional space as well as institutional language, is situated in the larger debate of diversity and inclusivity (and whiteness) within the cultural field, and more specifically art schools or art academies in the Netherlands. With this, I want to take the space that has opened up and make more space for talking and writing about whiteness in the Dutch context and talking and writing about whiteness in the Dutch educational and institutional context.

Relevant definitions[6]

I would like to put forth a working definition of two core terms we will oftentimes see in the institutional documents: diversity and inclusivity. In doing so, I will lean on the 2016 "Let's Do Diversity" report by Wekker et al., which serves as an important example of articulations of diversity and inclusivity as active doings. The term 'diversity'

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[6] These definitions have been adapted from my internship research report.
Groen, Eline. "Internship Research Component" 8 May 2019. Teana Boston-Mammah. Willem de Kooning Academy, Utrecht University, student paper. Unpublished.

touches upon the composition of a particular group with regards to differences and similarities. These differences and/or similarities may have to do with race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, age, class, abledness and/or other identity markers. 'Inclusivity' refers to the way this diversity is treated; is there space for these differences and similarities throughout an organisational structure, or is there a clear, dominant norm? I would also like to call attention to the difference between 'inclusivity' as a systemic and large-scale doing and 'inclusiveness/inclusion' as a small-scale and individualised doing. institutional documents can help cosmetically solve issues around diversity and inclusivity in the cultural field, as do declarations of intent such as the European Diversity Charter[7]. A future 'vision', 'mission' or 'agenda', as well as public statements, year reviews and quality agreements tend to remain vague, lack clear definitions and most importantly lack active goals, objectives and commitment, and thus accountability. Within these papers, reports and records, a notion of diversity and inclusivity as doings, as put forth in "Let's Do Diversity" is yet to be achieved.

[7] Now signed by over 10.000 companies (both public and private), including the HRO, this European network offers a simple format for a declaration of intent where companies can fill in their own goals.

Methodology

An ethnography of words[8]

This thesis is a case study and close reading of policy documents (a description of the material will follow) from the Hogeschool Rotterdam and Willem de Kooning Academy, as well as interviews with several staff members from the academy. My core research methodology will be critical (institutional) ethnography. This ethnography, however, will not be directly of people or places. Instead, I rely on a method put forth by Sara Ahmed; one that she calls an "ethnography of words", or text (*On Being Included* 12). This method entails a 'following around' of words, concepts and themes. Specifically, she puts this methodology to use within institutional texts and contexts, as will I. Ahmed explains:

> "(…) such an approach still considers texts as actions, in that they 'do things', but suggests that 'texts' are not 'finished' as forms of action, as what they 'do' depends on how they are 'taken up'. To track what texts do, we need to follow them around" ("The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism" 1).

In short, I will be collecting and looking into textual data and analyse it ethnographically, using core questions such as *what language is used, what is said and left unsaid, what is taken for granted, what or who is missing, what is at stake, what is assumed and what is left out?* In an effort to locate the gap, I will specifically reflect on notions of diversity and inclusivity in juxtaposition with institutional whiteness, as exemplified by the following research question:

How do the Willem de Kooning Academy and the Hogeschool Rotterdam define diversity and inclusivity, and how is this juxtaposed with the concept of institutional whiteness?

Further sub-questions are:
How does the concept of institutional Whiteness show up in policy documents? How does it operate? What language is used? What is said and left unsaid, what is taken for granted, what or who is missing, what is at stake, what is assumed and what is left out?

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[8] This section has been adapted from my internship research report. See 6.

Ethnography, phenomenology and translation

Writing as both an in- and outsider of the institutions I am questioning, my work can be considered a postcolonial project in the sense that it works from and through the white Western hegemonic institution and language (Spivak, 1988). As a political project, this writing is decolonial, in the sense that it works to visualise, deconstruct and disrupt that same white Western hegemonic institution and language. In short, I am doing a critical ethnography of a language gap. Rebecca Solnit summarises the vast amount of (feminist) work at the base of thinking and writing and speaking about gaps and silences: movements of "civil rights and racial justice, including Native American and Latino and Asian as well as Black constituencies, gay and lesbian rights, disability rights, and environmental and anti-colonial and anticapitalist critiques (…) changed the foundations of our conversations" ("Rebecca Solnit on Silence, Pornography and Feminist Literature"). I am not looking for marginalised or subaltern voices, or voices that generally cannot be heard within Dutch language. I am looking for traces where language shows its normativities, its hegemonic side. Where certain words are said that *really* meaning something entirely different, or when some words are purposefully not used at all. This is where I expect mannerisms in the Dutch language to show up, such as the tendency to adopt Anglicisms and the tendency to literally translate or appropriate terminology. I am interested in how these mannerisms help to prevent or even halt critical reflection. Some words might be euphemistic, some terms might be missing just to avoid using specific words, but there remains a gap where some things are not spoken of at all, since there are no words for them. All of these gaps I am interested in, but specifically this last one. The aforementioned ethnography of words allows for the locating of these gaps, accounting for them, in a way. I refer back to Gordon's notion of haunting:

> The purpose of an alternative diagnostics is to link the politics of accounting, in all its intricate political-economic, institutional, and affective dimensions, to a potent imagination of what has been done and what is to be done otherwise. (…) How do we reckon with what modern history has rendered ghostly? How do we develop a critical language to describe and analyze the affective, historical, and mnemonic structures of such hauntings? (18)

Relating this to the Dutch context, I follow Wekker in proposing to first of all focus on producing a visualisation of the problem, of what we are dealing with (*White Innocence*). Ahmed points at this too, in discussing a phenomenological approach to look at institutions and language. This approach considers the institution as a formation, generating knowledge "not only of what institutions are like but of how they can reproduce themselves, how they become like and keep coming alike" (*On Being Included* 175). In that

sense I offer a translation, firstly of a clarifying and visualising nature in denominating the language gap, and secondly a critical translation of these denominations into more active doings, by means of highlighting efforts that can be considered closing the gap (in a broad sense). Finally, I am fusing memory and auto-ethnography in an effort to put my own situated whiteness into words. I pose an intersectional, tangible way of thinking myself through whiteness and colonial history in the Netherlands. It matters to tell stories of my own whiteness, especially from multiple (intersectional and historical) angles, because this goes against the unspoken character of white identity. Self-interrogation disrupts the reproduction and perpetuation of this specific form of silent complacency. It matters to explore my own whiteness in written form, literally putting it in words as well as placing it in the context of addressing my situatedness with regards to the subject of this writing, since my life is not isolated from its contents. Looking at whiteness as a phenomenological issue, following Sara Ahmed, means addressing how whiteness is lived as a background to experience. It entails "considering what whiteness does without assuming whiteness as an ontological given, but as that which has been received, or become given, over time ("A Phenomenology of Whiteness" 150).

Description of the material

I will now briefly describe the ethnographic materials. My starting point is an essay by Ron Bormans and Izaak Dekker, "Samen Leven in de Moderne Samenleving"[9]. This abstract essay is meant as a base for any and all policy at HRO. As far as HRO policy documents, I go into "Our Agenda", the strategic agenda plus educational vision; "Vision on Education", an elaborative vision statement; "Mission statement Diversity" and "Ons Werkplan", a work plan following the agenda and vision, that defines the 'werkplaats' or 'workplace' 'internationalisatie' or 'internationalisation', which produces 'diversity' and 'inclusion' policy making. All HRO policy documents either have different writers credited, or no writers credited whatsoever. These documents go from more abstract and illustrative policy to more specific and elaborate explanations, and are meant for all HRO staff (sometimes specifically 'concernstaf'), but can all be found online. With Borman's essay at its core, policy documents are a more specific reflection and manifestation of normativities (surrounding whiteness) operating in the HRO.
For the Willem de Kooning Academy, I will address the "Vision", a vision statement, "Mission", a mission statement, "Educational Culture", a list or descriptive statement

[9] As the essay is signed by Bormans only, I will refer to him only from this point on.

summarising core values, “International Classroom”, a statement on ‘internationalisation’ by WdKA and “Event #1: Towards a Diverse Academy” and “Thinkpiece #1”, a description and essay from the WdKA Ethics Committee on diversity at the WdKA. The WdKA digital interface, MyWdKA, published these pieces. No author was credited. As they are not the same as the HRO documents, a higher up WdKA policy making commission must have written these. The documents were published within the staff interface from MyWdKA under the banner of general communications and are not public. I was able to access them during my internship. The language in these documents is the result of the HRO policy trickling down to the WdKA. It shows a more specific application of the main HRO policy.

My small case study is the documentary screening of “Een Plek Aan Tafel”, which can be seen as a student based counter-hegemonic initiative. The screening was organised by Maud Berden (Piet Zwart Master of Education), in collaboration with Teana Boston-Mammah, which doubled as its premiere since it was finished over a year ago, but never shown. Originally, this documentary was commissioned by WdKA dean Jeroen Chabot. The documentary is an example of students taking the reins over their own stories and addressing and undermining the power relations at play in the making of the film.

Finally, I held informal as well as conversational interviews with three staff members of different positions and positionalities at the Willem de Kooning, on the topic of structural, hierarchical (power)relations at the WdKA in general, and in the policy documents. Considering the sensitivities of employees critiquing their workplace, the interviewees will remain anonymous and I will refer to them as interviewee A, B, or C.

Interlude

The neighbourhood kids

In an attempt to reflect on my own whiteness, I tried thinking of the moment I first realised I was white. In a typical deflecting pavlovian response, I looked for an Other-mirror. Hence, the first thing that came to mind were some of the neighbourhood kids I grew up with. I thought of my first childhood friend, G, the daughter of a Chinese family from Hong Kong, who lived two houses away and is one day older than me. Photos of us show scenes of us playing together when we were so little, I do not even remember them. When I was around five or six, a small hotel was temporarily transformed into a refugee housing centre, and an Iranian girl arrived, R, as well as a black boy (as he did not end up in my class, I never knew his name, nor where his family had fled from). They joined the first and second year in primary school at the village school for what could not even have been a year, before relocating. Not much later, another two houses away from my friend G, a boy, I, moved in. He told me his family had fled from Bosnia. Living on the same street, we, too, became friends until we outgrew the primary school years and changed schools.

Even at such a young age, I knew *something* was different about them - even before they had explained they were from another country or 'not from here'. I knew because people around me treated them differently from me and other classmates, for example. Teachers would always find fault with the black boy. My friend I was put a year below me, even though he was older, because he had to 'catch up'. In a small, countryside village, where everybody knows everybody, it is no wonder they all stood out. I stood out for the same reason, since my family moved there when I was about 1,5 years old, and I had not been part of the village for generations, like most inhabitants. But these memories also stand out because these kids did not look like me or my family, nor did they resemble 'the rest of the village' - which me and my family did. They stood out (to me) because their phenotype did not correspond with the distinctive whiteness of that specific village. Reflecting on this first range of memories, Essed and Trieneke's important words remind me: "taking the 'Other' to define one's 'Self' is more the continued practice of Orientalism than the critical scrutiny of one's own identity and how whiteness has affected daily lives" ("Who Wants To Feel White?" 65). After this, I have tried to remember in ways that would not use a form of Other-mirror to 'reflect'.

My mom

For as long as I can remember, my mom, my sister and me have an inside joke about adoption. Among other things, it reveals that at a really young age, my sister and me knew people were able to adopt children. We were also familiar with the racialised aspects of the adoption process. Even though we did not know any adopted children or families who had adopted, we were aware of the (conventional pattern/ white saviourist trope) of white people adopting non-white children. Switching this pattern around, we joked that we in fact had adopted our mom. Reflecting on it now, this curious form of disconnect stems from the fact that my mother - as our white neighbours would say - *has a little colour* ('een kleurtje hebben'). This well-known Dutch phrase might be one of the most commonly used expressions to implicitly demarcate normative whiteness form non-whiteness. My mother is noticeably tan, year-round. She has lush, dark reddish brown hair, unlike me and my sister. On holiday with my mother's Turkish colleague in Turkey, who has a lighter skin tone, I distinctly remember locals assumed my mother to be Turkish. Her skin colour, in the Dutch colonial context, could also lead one to think she might have an Indonesian background. Somewhat in line with this colonial history, we do not know where this specific strand of brown in the family comes from. My grandfather (on my mother's side) has the same darker skin tone. Just before his passing, in a rare, reflective conversation, he told me he used to get called racial slurs such as *bluey* ('blauwe'); a marine slur that referred to someone with a (Dutch-)Indonesian background. In comparison, my sister and me have very pale skin with red undertones, freckles, and respectively brown eyes and straight, blonde hair, and blue eyes and straight, reddish-blonde hair. Our inside joke hints at a very early stage in childhood where I partly disassociated with my mother because of our complexions. This dissociative element of our interrelationship was balanced or compensated by my likeness to both my father and my mother's mother. Growing into my own whiteness, I thus first identified with my father's blonde hair and blue eyes. In part, this was because strangers, acquaintances, neighbours, teachers or new friends, would, in a binary manner, suggest that if did not resemble one parent, I surely looked like the other. By chance (and genetics), this happened to be the case. Later on, more of a likeness with my grandmother became apparent, because

her facial features, red hair and freckles looked like mine. These early forms of (dis) identification have stuck with me in telling others about my mother. When I am about to show a photo, or simply in conversation, I preemptively mention how me and my mom "don't look alike" (even though our similar smiles give it away). As a reflection of responses I have gotten over the years, I try diffusing the situation by mimicking the standard 'is that your mom?!'. In the end, her proximity to me, or my proximity to her, never truly imbalanced my or others' perception of my own whiteness, since any 'irregularity' was in a way countered by my other family members' whiteness. Ahmed points to this analogy of whiteness as family resemblance: "the analogy works powerfully to produce a particular version of race and a particular version of family, predicated on 'likeness', where likeness becomes a matter of 'shared attributes'" ("A Phenomenology of Whiteness" 154). A feature that has, however, caused racially charged scepticism throughout my life are my hooded eyes. Numerous times, throughout the years, people have intrusively commented on them. Complete strangers have either 'curiously' asked about whether I had 'Chinese heritage', or just plainly told me I 'looked Chinese'. My own family used to joke about it, even though my grandmother (on my mother's side) has very similar eyes. The strangest example must have been when a teacher (I did not know), who was in conversation with a friend of mine while I was waiting at a distance, interrupted my friend's question just to ask me "are you Chinese?". I believe it is safe to assume this invasive inquisitiveness has its roots in the racist, essentialist notion that phenotypical features correspond to a racialised identity. The need people feel to comment must have something to do with preconceived notions of what eyes supposedly fit my type of whiteness (the skin tone, the freckles, the hair). Having grown up somewhat near an actual Chinese family, it is clear to me that this racial stereotype presupposes facial characteristics to be essentialist features that substitute for cultural heritage, ethnic background or even nationality.

Chapter one:

implicit illustrations of normative whiteness

A short disclaimer

Before going into these chapters, I would like to stress that I am not posing these categories of 'implicit', 'explicit' and 'silences' as monoliths. All three overlap, and are a part of the same language gap surrounding whiteness. For analytical purposes, I have chosen to gently distinguish between the three.

'Race' and 'ethnicity'

In this chapter, I will use passages and quotations from the documents that more quietly reinforce and perpetuate white innocence. I will also look at euphemisms - a common practice in these texts - and what is implied when specific terminology is used. Before going into this, a short introduction to terminology of identity markers such as race in the Netherlands is useful. I refer back to my previous discussion of the terms allochtonous/autochtonous, which are no longer officially in use. Since this term already presupposed whiteness or non-whiteness, in the sense that autochthonous denoted the white, Christian native Dutch identity, its replacement, 'person with a migration background' also euphemistically denotes non-white as opposed to white. Additionally, Essed and Trienekens explain:

> Today race is a legal category in European and Dutch law (anti-discrimination legislation) but it is not a formal policy category in Dutch political discourse. Public discourse is mostly about 'ethnicity', about 'national identity', or about (post)modern cultures in conflict with 'traditional' immigrant cultures, most notably concerning the religious difference of the Muslim faith. In this discourse, references to race are more implicit and often intertwined with notions of culture and ethnicity ("Who Wants To Feel White 55).

Since the word 'race' is so taboo, many other terms are used in its stead. The equation with or conflation of race with both culture and ethnicity (or 'roots') is made in almost all documents. At the same time, linking back to the culture of pillarisation, cultural and ethnic differences create complexities the context of social justice, Weiner elaborates:

> Many Dutch scholars and policy makers reject the applicability of the term "race," or the existence of racism, in their society (Essed and Nimako 2006; Grosfoguel and Mielants 2006; Hondius 2009; Mielants 2009; van der Valk 2002; van Dijk 1993). (…) Instead, policy makers and scholars alike prefer the

> term "ethnicity" which evokes notions of culture but fails to account for hierarchical power and value implications central to racial identities and racialization processes embedded in Dutch society (Cornell and Hartmann 2007; Essed and Nimako 2006; Essed and Trienekens 2008; Omi and Winant 1994) ("The Demography of Race and Ethnicity in the Netherlands" 575).

Oftentimes, the notion of ethnicity is attributed to the Other only, and white Dutchness as an ethnic position is obscured. Ron Borman's essay "Samen Leven in de Moderne Samenleving" (living together in the modern society), which is crucial in analysing these documents, is full of these attributions, such as 'ethnic roots' (20). As head of the executive board (College van Bestuur), Bormans is a key figure in determining the institution's core (strategic) course. His essay informs further course and policy development. Throughout his text, as well as the HRO Vision, daily and systemic violence, racism and discrimination are trivialised and euphemistically phrased, if acknowledged at all (more on this in the chapter on silences). We can see Bormans posing mechanisms of in- and exclusion as natural (33), and the HRO Vision using phrasing such as "prejudices and the mechanisms that result in unfair advantage" instead of systemic racism, systemic discrimination, institutional racism and institutional violence (4). In all documents, these 'bad' or 'unhappy words'[10] are always counterbalanced by notions of innocence and absolutely lack accountability. Words like 'unintentional', 'unintended', 'unconscious' and 'best intentions' come back over and over, most notably in Bormans' essay ("*oftentimes unintended*" 58, my translation), the HRO agenda ("*our educational system is unintentionally contributing to inequality in our society*" 3), the HRO diversity statement ("*unconsciously projecting preferences and expectations*", my translation) and the WdKA Ethics Committee think piece ("*unintended consequences and implicit biases*").

Finally, I see a complex pattern in how people at the margins are victim blamed, in relation to hegemonic notions of talent and assessment qualifications. While some texts make mention of these qualifications, the nature of them remains unquestioned. The same goes for the notion of talent and possibility. What does it mean not to acknowledge the normative underpinnings of these terms? And to what extent do these notions harm students? As Boston-Mammah points out, talent (and related concepts) is not a neutral concept that can be 'sought out' in students, but becomes uncritically interconnected to individualised inner ability and potential (12). These are

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[10] I refer to Sara Ahmed's words on affect with regards to specific 'happy' or 'unhappy' words (and bodies) in the chapter "The Language of Diversity" in *On Being Included*.

predetermined, socio-cultural notions of good and bad, that end up attributing goodness to a standardised, white, male norm (12) - an unattainable standard, particularly for BIPOC[11] students. Interviewee B attested to how these students are then blamed for 'their own shortcomings', as well as for their experiences of being in a space that maintains that norm[12]. Bormans, for example, briefly mentions students who are "not feeling seen". The specific usage of "feel" here implies the problem ultimately lies with The Other Who Feels Bad, which, through the previously mentioned logic, is their own fault. It evasively absolves critical reflection on the environment that produced the affect of 'feeling bad'.

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[11] Black people, indigenous people and people of colour.

[12] For an inside perspective of a student of colour with a Filipino background, I refer to Alona van Rosmalen's June 11 2019 Willem de Kooning bachelor thesis "Complaint, Body of Knowledge", which tackles being 'out of place' in the WdKA's hegemonic standards, locates institutional violence, and addresses white innocence and double consciousness.

Interlude

Secondary school

In the process of learning how to read and write throughout primary school, tests scores, reviews and 'levels' that were attached to me and my classmates became forms of identification. In my tiny class of ten to fifteen kids, an implicit sense of hierarchy was quietly instilled. 'High' and 'low' levels slowly but surely started to matter, which reached a critical point when we progressed to secondary school. My childhood friends and me fell out of touch, partly since our test scores would practically determine whether we would ever see each other again. Our religious primary village school would send us to the religious secondary school, just like public primary schools in the city would send students to the public secondary school there (one of many exemplifiers of Dutch secularism as well as remnants of pillarisation). Growing up in the south-western part of the Dutch bible belt, as well as going to religious schools, it was to be expected that the fact that my family was not religious would influence my sense of belonging. In hindsight, this never really proved to be much of an estranging factor for me, personally. People from different religions in my hometown and the surrounding villages seemed to disassociate much more with each other than with me. Alternatively, the fact that we moved to the village instead of having lived there for generations was much more alienating.

In my secondary school, different educational levels were housed in separate school buildings in 'the big city'. Even the road to school split up in a t-junction, dividing all students per level. My own family was divided in this way too, when I would turn my bike right and my sister would go left. Additionally, in my family, I was the first one who would 'turn right' in years, and in my specific level I was the first ever. This literal separation of educational levels also had a racial aspect to it. Listening to my sister's stories about her school, having had classes at 'the other building' a few times, and attending my sister's graduation, something becomes clear. It was more than obvious that black students and students of colour were highly overrepresented in the 'lower' educational levels, and severely underrepresented in 'higher' educational levels. Looking back at this period of time, this divide shows up in how you could count the non-white persons in my entire year on one hand, where my sister's classes were all mixed. In both schools, however, teachers were white. One could argue that this separation

of colour - or absence of it - contributed to a sense of (white) superiority[13]. A certain rivalry was present between the different schools and different buildings, and even within the schools, students separated themselves both intellectually and socially from students in 'higher' or 'lower' levels than themselves. These sentiments noticeably lessened during student protests in 2007, when students of different schools in the city actively met each other on the streets and marched together. On any other day, a sense of elitist superiority proliferated within my specific level of education. I was very much aware of hierarchically being in the 'highest of the highest' level, and grew to look down upon students from levels 'lower' than mine, either in my own building (sometimes in the same classes) or in general. 'Turning right', for the ones turning right, was *the right turn*. In a time in my life where I was looking for identification, this hierarchy became evident to me and offered me a sense of belonging, and I made myself at home. In this environment, subtle and not-so-subtle clues gave away a continuous in- and exclusion, either among students or in student-teacher relationships. There was always a 'better group' to belong to, where educationally, beta sciences (similar to STEM) would be preferred over alpha sciences (similar to HASS). Looking back, differences in whiteness surface here, based on class and abledment. Your specific level of maths would matter, or whether you would do Latin *and* ancient Greek, *just* Latin or Greek (and which one), to which clothes you wore and what accent you had. It was an environment where I learnt to form close friendships (some of which even transcended the disassociation within the religious communities, and some of which still last, years later), but which also taught me to harshly exclude through those same friend groups. What I later learned to recognise as normative whiteness, as well as historical amnesia and postcolonial melancholia, showed up in how we skipped certain chapters in history class (such as the ancient Egyptian civilisation), how others were romanticised and horrors glossed over (such as the 'Golden Age') and how certain chapters did not even exist[14].

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[13] I thank J for summarising insights on this.

[14] For more information on 'missing chapters', see the Black Archives' work on the "Tien Keer Meer Geschiedenis poster" at http://www.theblackarchives.nl/meergeschiedenis.html.

WdKA

After finishing secondary school, I swapped my quiet beachside village for the city of Rotterdam to study at the Willem de Kooning Academy. A lot can be said about my ability to choose a study with no certainty as to future employment. My studies, fashion design, required a certain amount of resources on top of the tuition, since we had to obtain our supplies and fabrics ourselves. I was privileged enough to have access to a savings account my parents created for me, which allowed me not to have to resort to student loans to pay for my studies. In addition, because of the student grant that was in effect at that time, I was able to afford living and studying in Rotterdam. Moving to the neighbourhood Nieuwe Westen, my environment changed drastically. I remember realising almost immediately *I was not a majority here*. It is telling that my thought process was so steeped in racial, hierarchical notions, which undoubtedly stems from my nearly all-white surroundings growing up. Nevertheless, I did feel at home, even if it was only because I made myself a new home there (in some ways a strange rhetoric steeped in colonialism). It felt like my new, majority-lacking environment was more real, in the sense that it felt good, better, or even normal not to only see myself (and my whiteness) reflected. In school, however, *I was still a majority* as a white person, and within the fashion department as a (cis-gendered) woman, too. It is important to note how easily the normative environment of the WdKA as a predominantly white (and male) space could exist alongside the rest of the city for me. In this naturalness of separating the two environments, even differentiating them, the systematic problem of the academy being (or having become) a white space shows up. Ahmed explains: "white bodies are comfortable as they inhabit spaces that extend their shape" (A Phenomenology of Whiteness 158). It was only until my second year at the Willem de Kooning that I really became aware of this. I took an elective where the teacher - a temporary substitute teacher, mind you - had been able to shape the course contents. This teacher, artist, womanist and cultural activist Patricia Kaersenhout, created an environment the Willem de Kooning had never seen before. Starting out, she told us she was the second black female teacher in the entire building. In a few weeks, she addressed whiteness as systemic violence, Dutch obscured historical narratives (with colonialism at its core), as well as Black Feminist art. If ever there has been

a truly pivotal, essential, eye-opening moment in my life that completely reconfigured my self awareness, this was it. Patricia managed to create a space where everyone's story could be heard, and this moment, which could have triggered great resistance, defensiveness and friction, turned into an opportunity to learn. For me, that moment never really subsided. In any case, it intensified during my final years at the WdKA, when fellow students shared their personal struggles (both in and outside of the academy), among other things through their participation in WdKA Makes A Difference, with me as well as a bigger audience. Their positionalities taught me about my own, and further materialised the urgency to seriously educate myself more. The large part BIPOC[15] played in these different forms of education, and still do, requires deep reflection and reveals that relationships of accountability and responsibility are still disproportionately leaning on the oppressed to educate the oppressor.

[15] Black people, indigenous people and people of colour

Chapter two:

explicit illustrations of normative whiteness

Bolder statements

The fact that the words 'white', 'race' and 'racism' are never mentioned (which is important and telling) might make one assume that these documents are full of euphemistic, soft and happy language. However, by no means do the writers of theses documents shy away from harsh statements and for example colonialist rhetoric. Before I go into the more explicit normative language that is present in the institutional writings, I want to once again call attention to the fact that most of the authors of these documents are uncredited, which, in different ways, absolves the institution of a certain accountability and keeps the statements 'floating in the air', if you will. None of the interviewees, regardless of their positionalities, had any knowledge on who wrote these documents either.

Modes of Othering

The more explicit parts of the documents give away a particular discomfort with 'the current situation' as they describe it - the issue of the 'diverse environment'. In relation to coming to terms with the fact that 'difference' exists, Bormans mentions how "we" should be "aware of our no longer self-explanatory bias" (22). This strange remark partly naturalises racism by determining bias as self-explanatory, which it never is in the first place. He goes on to point at a discomfort that arises when "we approach" diversity, which he characterises as elusive, "with a refinement - or are forced to do so", implying that the sheer existence of difference begs for its regulation and containment. This notion of containment violently surfaces again when Bormans leans upon an analogy referring to chains of the enslaved, and poses that the one who is 'chained by the system' should 'unchain themselves'. This violent colonial rhetoric entails victim blaming, and asks 'the oppressed' to do away with their oppression, instead of critically turning towards the oppressor[16]. He even suggests the oppressed *wants* to be oppressed, in the sense that they are comfortable with their oppression (62). Another colonialist trope arises when Bormans states that "more and more, we are discovering that other cultures are 'different', not just in appearance, but fundamentally" (48). I will not go into the problematics of using the word 'discover' in this context, but I would like to point out how difference is once again connoted with appearance.

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[16] For a more elaborate critique, I refer to Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider*, and specifically "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action".

The essentialist notion of the Other being fundamentally different from the Self is a colonial one (an Orientalist one too, in relation to Muslims) which Bormans makes use of one more time. Invoking the concept of tolerance as a true Dutch quality in opposition to "muslimsocieties", he finalises his continuous efforts to distance himself from what he determines is not "us" or "modernity" (which he does not define) (47). Nana Adusei-Poku, who was a - if not the - key figure in starting a culture of anti-racist critiques at the Willem de Kooning in 2015, elaborates upon this Orientalist trope and links it to Bormans' problematic invocation of Pim Fortuyn (who is not problematised but quoted throughout the essay):

> (…) the use of Pim Fortuyn is within itself a radical positioning in a context that claims to be intolerant towards "any kind of radicalization" and discrimination on the basis of i.e. religious beliefs. Whilst rejecting a centralized model of strict government within the school, the core question that the authors ask is how to create plurality within an institution or as a "superdiverse" and open institution on the basis of Norms. (…) "Individual freedom, rationality and autonomy" are at the core of the liberal value system, which Bormans and Dekker propose; values that find no further elaboration nor critical discussion. At the same time, these core values are equated with a "modern society", because in Dekker and Bormans view these values are under threat by Muslim Societies or Communities, that are "struggling with Modernity". It is difficult to read such explorations without seeing a pattern being reproduced (2).

Adusei-Poku points at how the essay does not critically discuss the norms and values it poses. It also lacks critical reflection on hegemonic Eurocentric ways of knowledge production, which I will elaborate on in the next chapter. Finally, I want to go into the rejection of the centralisation Adusei-Poku points at. Interviewee A confirmed that there is an anti-top down signal present (top down, nevertheless). However, this agency (and responsibility) seems to only be redistributed on paper. The interviewee pointed out that the top-down system that is in place has not actually changed to facilitate the type of agency it suggests. In reality, and much to the interviewees chagrin, initiatives are forced to remain 'at the bottom', without much (if any) support from 'the top'. On top of that, the HRO and WdKA culture does not open up space for critique. I was shocked to find this statement in the WdKA's Educational Culture document: "the academy is a fantastic working environment, and all staff members should feel honoured to be able to contribute to creating and maintaining a challenging academy culture." Interviewee A seconded this, explaining how they know many stories of criticism being subdued and repressed in this exact manner. To conclude, I think this shows how thick the institutional bubble can turn out to be, and how difficult it is to even address it, let alone critique it.

Interlude

Writing this thesis

As a white, cis-gendered, abled woman, a former student of the WdKA (and in extension, Hogeschool Rotterdam), a current Gender Studies Master student, as well as a former intern with someone employed at the WdKA, I write these words. In writing this thesis (partly about the academy) I have been informed by over four years of student experience within the WdKA and almost two years of related educational experience in the Gender Studies department. When it comes the the Gender Studies Master, I mostly relied on my knowledge on how power structures can operate, as well as specific (historical) vocabulary and wording around notions of 'diversity' and 'inclusivity'. As to my history with the WdKA, I am generally aware of the staff and student population from six to two years ago. My position as an intern allowed me to generally pinpoint changes with regard to that matter. This has meant that I have hardly noticed any changes in student population, nor the staff. In short, the WdKA has remained predominantly white, similar to when I studied there. I cannot say much about specific numbers on students' socio-economic and educational background since these numbers are part of internal documents (with regards to transparency, this speaks volumes), but I remember clearly the school has been (unofficially) looking to decrease the influx of 'lower level' secondary school students and increase 'higher level' students ("The Entrance Gap" 6). It is more than likely that, during my admission for WdKA, my 'high' educational background was taken into account. This background has undoubtedly also played a role in and allowed me to pursue the Gender Studies master I am a part of now, after having applied for the premaster with a hbo BA from the Willem de Kooning. My secondary school background, my BA from the WdKA and my master are of importance in my positionality at the WdKA now, since these positions traditionally hold connotations of either a white middle class or white upper class socio-economic background, and in some ways represent the WdKA's goals with regard to (the imagined) student population and alumni career paths. When it comes to working at the WdKA as a twenty-three-year-old woman, I have often found myself to be one of the youngest, if not the youngest person in the room. I have personally tried not to hold back in speaking up or joining conversations, and I have tried to remember that the knowledge I obtained through the Gender Studies master and

premaster holds value and that I had reason to speak on issues when I felt that way. However, I have experienced multiple situations where I was either ignored, second guessed, mistaken for a student, or where my existence in the space was questioned entirely. On one of my first days, a white middle-aged male passing staff member (one of many at the WdKA) came looking for someone in the office I was in (a closed office that is locked and does not allow students), and asked me if that person was present. They were not, and the room was empty. When he turned around to leave, he stopped and asked me "do you work here?" This is just one example where my presence was noticed (negatively) and questioned. With female colleagues, I was taken seriously to a much greater extent in ways that my input was valued, my expertise recognised and people were curious as to what I had to say.

I am not professionally addressed in or by the policy documents I analyse here, since I do not officially work for or study at the academy. However, I recognise my proximity to the academy, both as a middle class white person and alumnus. I do not feel necessarily focussed on by the policy documents in that capacity, let alone *acknowledged as a majority.* This is in line with how the documents re-establish this white middle class norm, and how notions of diversity and inclusivity go hand in hand with 'internationalisation' and are connoted with non-whiteness. Even though I have not always felt supported in my major at the WdKA, the academy in general has been - and still is now, two years later - a very comfortable and safe space for me. I have felt safe to (continuously) critique it when I studied there, even though those critiques were not appreciated, and I feel safe to do so now (this is not to say that the academy space is open to or supportive of critique). I would like to reiterate that I owe this in part to the (emotional) labour of the people who produced *Een Plek Aan Tafel* as well as Teana's presence and work at the academy, because her practice as a teacher and her paper *The Entrance Gap* have opened up space for (more) critique on institutional whiteness, including self-criticism from white students, teachers, and in my case, an alumnus.

Chapter three: silences

An introduction and small case study

I want to briefly contextualise and summarise once again in what ways I am looking at silence, which foregrounds the following readings. Silence can be not naming or not acknowledging. With regards to colonialism, it can be the erasure of colonial history, the reluctance to speak of colonial history, the refusal to talk about colonial history, the refusal to name colonial history and the ignoring of colonial history. Silence, as a language gap, is seemingly innocent, but is actually purposeful, systemic and active in many different ways (White Innocence). most importantly, I look at silence as denoting a dominant, normative subjectivity. On May 16th, 2019, Master of Education student Maud Berden organised a screening of the student-made (now alumni) documentary "Een Plek Aan Tafel", which translates to 'a seat at the table'. This project, supported by Teana Boston-Mammah, followed a group of WdKA students of different departments. Feeling unsafe inside and outside the academy, they found support in each other as they all shared a sense of being Othered. The documentary they produced can be considered a student effort breaking the silence about their experiences with institutional violence, addressing a number of issues regarding identity. Even though the project was initiated by Jeroen Chabot, dean of the WdKA, who asked the students to document their perspective on the lack of 'inclusiveness' (there it is again) in and outside of the academy, their work was never officially made public, premiered or screened in the WdKA or recognised in any other way. It is telling that another student organised its premiere, over a year after its completion. Three contributors were present at the screening, which brought together alumni (some of over four years) and students of all years. Up to fifty people were present, but strikingly only four teachers joined (plus Teana). What happened after the screening was noteworthy. In the documentary, which defiantly posed definitions of 'unspoken' terminology such as racism, the students firmly positioned themselves as pointing out an issue and refused to provide bitesized solutions for WdKA management (the title, however, hints at their core suggestion). In the discussion that commenced, the teachers fully took up space and immediately asked the three participants in the documentary that were present what they would suggest the WdKA do. This complete bypassing of the message of the film - which indeed partially landed on deaf ears - kept showing up in how students were burdened with full responsibility for the issues they addressed. Time and time again, student testimonials (as well as other participants') were undermined, for example by asking the students to join the participation council. In response, both an alumni (who was a part of the film) and a fourth year student exposed the performative workings of the system by noting how they had participated in councils every year, but that the council had been bureaucratic and not-inclusive of students, as bad as not working with acknowledging or even acknowledging students'

input. The HRO Workplan addresses the participation council (15), but its phrasing shows that students are only being included on the basis of invitation, and never included from the start. Specific teams or organisational organs formed to stay 'on message', such as this one, or like the Ethics Committee at WdKA, only have 'advisory authority'. In the end, there's no accountability for whoever is going to have to, or is supposed to, take that advice. To conclude, even though the institutional response to the screening can be considered underwhelming, I reiterate the importance of the labour and emotional labour these students did, also in relation to naming the unnamed and marking the unmarked - other participants expressed their gratitude to the representatives of the film for documenting their stories in such a strong way.

Bypassing systemic power structures[17]

Three core patterns I come across in the documents are the assumption of change and diversity, an us-them rhetoric, and seemingly addressing issues without questioning underlying structures at play. These patterns become apparent in how the WdKA and HRO environments are described. The HRO seems stuck in a self-fulfilling reasoning where things change, because things change. But things do not just change. Their notions of 'up-to-date', 'adaptive' and 'fast-changing world' do not lead them to do any critical self-evaluation and reflection with regards to systematic inequality, racism and discrimination in the institute and its disconnect with the city of Rotterdam. Boston-Mammah points at what she terms a 'demography discrepancy': "at the municipal level according to recent statistics, 60% of the school population are [black/minority ethnic] students whereas these students make up only 13% of the WdKA's student population (8). However, on the relationship between the city and the institution, Bormans writes that society reproduces itself in the hogeschool (19), and that the Hogeschool is very much part of the city, implying an intrinsic connection, because it "breathes and reflects the dynamic identity of the city" (48). In the same spirit, the Mission Statement Diversity declares "for our Hogeschool, rooted in the Rotterdam society, diversity is our daily reality". The Workplan expresses sentiments of expanding the diversity among staff members, and does not even mention student diversity (21). Finally, the HRO Agenda boldly states "our students are diverse in their cultural and socio-economic backgrounds" (3). In stark contrast, exposing the emptiness of the aforementioned claims, interviewee C states that "to enter the academy, it seems, is to step outside of the city."
The HRO's Vision on Education goes as far as stating that "these differences intro-

[17] Parts of this section have been adapted from my Internship Research Report. See 6.

duce other perspectives", which highlights a specific us/them dichotomy. Difference is literally Othered as an "other perspective". A silent "us" is present in this sentence, too. Knowing that the academy is not diverse, as well as this silent "us", reinstates whiteness as the norm and poses the Other as a tool for enrichment[18], an object to be used for own benefit, and specifically white benefit. I refer back to my previous discussion on how the notion of 'culture' (or other identity markers, in this case 'socio-economic background') becomes attached to the non-white Other. At first glance, there seems to be no racial marker here. However, as we saw before, the notion of 'cultural' in a Dutch context is complicated. Wekker explains that since the term race is hardly ever used, 'ethnicity' often marks differences based on origin, appearance, history, culture, language, and religion (*White Innocence* 22). A softer representation of ethnicity can thus be culture. Since Whiteness is the invisibilised norm, when culture is invoked here, non-whiteness is indicated and whiteness is re-established as the norm (*White Innocence* 23). With this notion of culture, the HRO hints at a racial marker of difference. It is then connected to a socioeconomic background, which indicates markers of class and prior education. These markers hold racial connotations too, seeing that lower-class and lower educational levels are generally and to a greater extent associated with non-whiteness. Moreover, Ahmed explains, "in so far as diversity is seen to be embodied by others, it then allows the whiteness of [institutions] to be concealed" ("Doing Diversity" 98). But is this diversity the documents presuppose actually this self-evident? And what or who does it involve? Furthermore, when diversity is loosely defined as "differences" that are "a given", and the nature of these differences is not elaborated upon, diversity results in an empty promise. Ahmed points at the usage of the term without taking responsibility for active efforts:

> For some academics, the turn to 'diversity' and away from 'equality' or 'equal opportunities' within organisations is seen to individuate difference and to concealstructural inequalities (…). Within research into Higher Education, the turn to diversity is also viewed critically. (…)The word 'diversity' (…) invokes difference but does not necessarily evoke commitment to action or redistributive justice (…)" ("The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism" 5).

In addition, I would add that a 'diverse' environment does not necessarily mean an equal or even inclusive environment. Still, 'inclusiveness'[19] and 'diversity' almost seem

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[18] For a more in depth theorising of this phenomenon, I refer to bell hooks' "Eating The Other".

[19] I want to note how the smaller, individualising term 'inclusiveness' is used, instead of the more powerful term 'inclusivity', which would hint at a systemic and significant intention.

to be used interchangeably in all documents. What the imagined pedagogical and didactic inclusiveness looks like, and for whom, is never explained.

The concealment of larger, systemic power structures that Ahmed talks of can also be found in Bormans' notion of 'superdiversity'. Adusei-Poku offers a reading of the workings of this notion:

> Superdiversity (…) is a way of talking about "Diversity" without addressing the core issues of White hegemony. In other words, the problem is that Superdiversity tries to address the multiplicity and complexity of Diversity, which is composed of a plethora of different socio-political and historical shifts, that are manifested in the hybridity of our various identities, without a critique of White Privilege and Hegemony. (…) A thorough engagement with the epistemological and ontological violence that are constantly reproduced through Eurocentric Hegemony remains unquestioned, which is why Superdiversity is another term to cloak the power structures that create systemic exclusion. (2)

That the white, Eurocentric hegemony is not addressed but rather *reinstated*, can be seen in how multiple documents omit discussing current structural inequalities. When Borman states "we have been looking for a normative starting point", he manages to avoid addressing the one already in place (33). The WdKA Ethics Committee does so too, in critically addressing admission criteria without questioning the eurocentrism at the base of them(2), as well as leaving large texts explaining the committee's workings untranslated (and thus in Dutch). This brings me to how language is taken up in the documents. In his essay, Bormans warns the hogeschool for "language fragmentation" - a melancholic term referring to some old time where "we" all had one language, which was The Right One, and it now needs to be protected and upheld as such, because of its importance in "the real world" (46). In this "real world", after all, Dutch is the main language. Even though Bormans underlines the in- and excluding properties of this language, he does not seem to address the excluding part. In this reasoning, the Dutch language itself is never questioned. "Dutch" just happens to be the dominant language. The ways in which the Dutch language excludes in its own, specific, historically situated way, is not addressed. This conceptualisation of normative Dutch language curiously returns in the WdKA's International Classroom statement, which halfway through turns its focus from international students and 'intercultural competencies' to the teaching and working language - how to speak and write, when and where. I will not go further into 'internationalisation' as policy, as linked to intercultural competency, but I do note the following: power relations, privilege and racism are not addressed in intercultural competency trainings, which makes internationalisation

as policy not sufficient to counter racism, question privilege and interrogate (institutional) whiteness. By posing the English language as an alternative to the standardised Dutch, Dutch is re-established as the norm. A final note I want to make is on the matter of binary language, as well as gendered language. All documents pertain to this language, and I want to stress that binaries such as "his or her" erase any and all that do not identify with either one of those categories or the binary in general. So, when gendered language is used, for some students, a community, environment or space inherently becomes unsafe.

Conclusion

A reexamination

As I have been in my own bubble, writing this work, I have come to realise that the writing is haunted by the very same gap it tries to illuminate. From its inception, something about the project has been off, or at the very least demands translation. I mean this quite literally, in the sense that this is a work of English language, and not written in Dutch. In many ways, it has been easier for me to do this work in a second language. Notably, the vast majority of literature on the matter is in English. But what is more interesting to me is the affect of (not) writing in Dutch. In the English literature I researched, many, many terms come up. Most link the notion of 'white' to another thing, creating particular nouns and gerunds that serve as specific translations themselves. I will accumulate some of them here:

> white rage, white amazement/shock, white victimhood, white guilt, white denial, white centrism, white discomfort, white comfort, white activism, white saviourism, white fragility, white ignorance, white tears, white silence

Some of these terms (as I have been calling them) have Dutch equivalents, most do not. If we use them, my Dutch speaking friends and me will most likely use the English term throughout our otherwise Dutch sentences. This work has therefore been a way of questioning what the affect is of using 'new words' and 'new terms'. When using English terminology such as 'white fragility', 'white tears' or 'white fear', these words stand at a comfortable distance. They make sense on their own, they have their own context - their own worlds. They might even conjure a sense of agreement, of understanding, of recognition. When (possibly forcibly) translated to Dutch, however, these words seem strange, out of place, and they get under your skin. They stand out, they feel *wrong*. Dutch versions of the terms are comfortably replaced by a more comfortable English equivalent, such as replacing 'witte mensen' or 'witten' with 'white people'. But what does it mean when these types of terms feel wrong? And what does it mean to use them anyway? These are questions that remain. As a decolonial project, this work conjures up bigger questions, such as to what extent *adding to language* can be a decolonisation of language. In any case, this work has been an effort to call things by their true names, as described by Rebecca Solnit in *Call Them By Their True Names*. She explains that this sort of work entails engaging with historical memory, accounts of indirect consequences, unanticipated cataclysms and victories, cumulative effects, and long timelines. (58) She summarises:

> Calling things by their true names cuts through the lies that excuse, buffer, muddle, disguise, avoid, or encourage inaction, indifference, obliviousness. It's

> not all there is to changing the world, but it's a key step. (…) Research, support and effective treatment, as well as possibly redefining the disease and what it means, can proceed from this first step. Once you name a disorder, you may be able to connect to the community afflicted with it, or build one. And sometimes what's diagnosed can be cured. Naming is the first step in the process of liberation. (1)

Her words are in line with what Nana Adusei-Poku encourages us to talk about, namely having a conversation that "goes to the core of the critique of prevailing colonial paradigms, to the heart of our individual historically formed identities and their relationships to each other, as well as aims to destroy White Hegemony" (3).

Diversity, inclusivity and institutional whiteness[20]

Remembering the many ways institutional whiteness came up in institutional documents, either implicitly, explicitly, somewhere in between, or through the (oftentimes violent) forgetting of some, or most, or the Self, I have tried to unravel the language gap on whiteness located specifically within institutional whiteness, and the ways that it perpetuates itself. In my search for the definitions of 'diversity' and 'inclusivity', I have found little answers. Both 'diversity' and 'inclusivity' are messily and inconsistently (or hardly at all) defined. This is the case in all documents. Diversity is loosely described through summing up identity markers, and inclusivity is framed through the small-scaled 'inclusiveness'. Set against the concept of institutional Whiteness, these attempts do nothing do address or even displace the White norm. Moreover, the elusiveness of this terminology actively perpetuates it. Institutional Whiteness shows up in the Strategic Agenda by assuming a lot of things. Among other things, diversity is assumed, accessibility is assumed and progress is assumed. Notably, innocence is assumed too. Along with a complete lack of transparent commitment to active (policy) changes, these assumptions conceal the institution's systemic issues and obscure its responsibilities. In general, the Hogeschool Rotterdam and the Willem de Kooning Academy use 'diversity' and 'inclusiveness' as buzzwords, and lean heavily on their connotations without going into detail. Without denoting the meaning the HRO and the academy attach to it, or which specific denotations are at play in

[20] Parts of this section have been adapted from my Internship Research Report. See 6.

the writings, terminology remains unaddressed, and open for the reader to interpret and norms remain safely in place. It is important to note that terminology such as 'diversity' and 'inclusivity' have histories within social justice movements, which are conveniently forgotten sometimes ("Doing Diversity" 96). In defining these two terms, space opens up for language to become (more) inclusive: naming is, to a certain extent, acknowledging. If an institution makes the effort to name and define everything and everyone they are talking about, their intentions can become clearer, and transparency and accountability will be greater. I do, however, want to remember Ahmed's concept of *non-performativity*. When we do not define terms such as 'diversity', they are used non-performatively, in the sense that they are a facade and do not entail action ("The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism" 2). Instead of taking specific action, naming the term is the only action the writer(s) take(s). In general, terminology can be commodified, appropriated and employed without actual acting and doing to back those words up, and naming something can remain the only action that is taken. In that sense, the material fundamentally lacks definition(s), elaboration and thus active commitment. This way, accountability and responsibility can never improve. Claims of diversity, inclusivity (or inclusion), equality (or equal opportunity) will have no meaning if they are not followed up with clear, transparent action and policy.

That said, I want to look forward. In the foreword to Gordon's *Ghostly Matters*, Janice Radway reminds us that "the attachment to epistemologies of blindness, and the investment in ontologies of disassociation remain the key problems of our time" (xix). In looking for better, clearer, transparent, active wor(l)dings, lots of work remains to be done. Gloria Wekker's call for the visualisation of our problems still remains. In that respect, it is necessary to keep on looking for gaps and hauntings and to name them and tell stories about them. Self-reflection, -situating and -positioning remains a core aspect of that, logically not in a self-congratulatory way and always in critical conversation. Further research needs to be done with regards to the language gap of talking about whiteness in other areas, as well as what this naming does and will do to the Dutch language and white Dutch subjectivity and self-representation, and what influence the cultural archive continues to have on the matter. Stories like my friend J's offer openings. She describes her own language as a Somali-Dutch[21] one that is "not fully one, not fully the other, an in-between language, a language sharing two homes, constantly balancing and adjusting, but never losing a touch of home, wherever that may be".

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[21] More progress can be made in the Netherlands in thinking through non-singular identity terms such as this one.

I am hopeful that solutions lie in the continuous struggle for better names, in the possibility of fluidity and in the tireless determination of the people practicing social justice to engage with hauntings and silences. As Rebecca Solnit aptly puts it:

The revolt against brutality begins with a revolt against the language that hides that brutality (Call Them By Their True Names 87).

Notes

[1] I do not capitalise 'white' or 'whiteness', nor do I capitalise 'people of colour', 'black' or 'blackness' or related identity markers. I acknowledge the many varying reasons to either capitalise or use lowercase using these terms, but herein follow my main sources Gloria Wekker (*White Innocence*) and Sara Ahmed *(On Being Included*).

[2] I will also refer to the Willem de Kooning Academy and the Hogeschool Rotterdam respectively as WdKA/the academy and HRO/the hogeschool from this point on.

[3] For expansive writing on this matter in the Dutch context, I refer to Philomena Essed's 1991 *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory* as well as Leana van Boven's 2019 master thesis *Spatial Injustice In Rotterdam: Past And Present Practices Of Racial Violence Inflicted Upon Certain Racialized Bodies Through The Built Environment.*

[4] I do not intend to pose Europe as a monolithic, proper subject here. Instead, I acknowledge how the binary logic of the Orientalist discourse is complicated by the (political) position of the Balkan. For further writing on the Orientalist discourse with regards to Europe and the Balkan, I refer to *Imagining the Balkan* by Maria Todorova (2009) and "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia" by Milica Bakić-Hayden (1995).

[5] In the context of diversity and inclusivity in the academies and higher education, and specifically art education, the matter of admission procedures (as well as deconstructing and critiquing them) is completely new terrain.

[6] These definitions have been adapted from my internship research report.
Groen, Eline. "Internship Research Component" 8 May 2019. Teana Boston-Mammah. Willem de Kooning Academy, Utrecht University, student paper. Unpublished.

[7] Now signed by over 10.000 companies (both public and private), including the HRO, this European network offers a simple format for a declaration of intent where companies can fill in their own goals.

[8] This section has been adapted from my internship research report. See 6.

[9] As the essay is signed by Bormans only, I will refer to him only from this point on.

[10] I refer to Sara Ahmed's words on affect with regards to specific 'happy' or 'unhappy' words (and bodies) in the chapter "The Language of Diversity" in *On Being Included*.

[11] Black people, indigenous people and people of colour.

[12] For an inside perspective of a student of colour with a Filipino background, I refer to Alona van Rosmalen's June 11 2019 Willem de Kooning bachelor thesis "Complaint, Body of Knowledge", which tackles being 'out of place' in the WdKA's hegemonic standards, locates institutional violence, and addresses white innocence and double consciousness.

[13] I thank J for summarising insights on this.

[14] For more information on 'missing chapters', see the Black Archives' work on the "Tien Keer Meer Geschiedenis poster" at http://www.theblackarchives.nl/meergeschiedenis.html.

[15] Black people, indigenous people and people of colour

[16] For a more elaborate critique, I refer to Audre Lorde's "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action".

[17] Parts of this section have been adapted from my Internship Research Report. See 6.

[18] For a more in depth theorising of this phenomenon, I refer to bell hooks' "Eating The Other".

[19] I want to note how the smaller, individualising term 'inclusiveness' is used, instead of the more powerful term 'inclusivity', which would hint at a systemic and significant intention.

[20] Parts of this section have been adapted from my Internship Research Report. See 6.

[21] More progress can be made in the Netherlands in thinking through non-singular identity terms such as this one.

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