Can the Archive Speak? Mapping Feminist and Queer Genealogies of Colour in The Netherlands

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Declaration of Authorship

I Chandra Frank hereby declare that this dissertation and the work presented herein is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: Date:

C.N. Frank   15 June 2020

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Abstract

This thesis examines the everyday experiences of people active within the Black, Migrant and Refugee (BMR) Movement (1980 – 2000s) in the Netherlands and the role of the archive therein. Based on sixteen months of multi-site archival research and interviews conducted with women active within the BMR Movement, I argue that practices and everyday manifestations of diasporic kinship, intimacy and queer forms of care inform and shape this intricate network of connections and exchanges. These articulations of belonging and creative interruptions trouble dominant ideas about race, sexuality and place in the wider Dutch context. The thesis includes an analysis of three significant BMR collectives, *Flamboyant, Sister Outsider* and *Strange Fruit,* to investigate everyday political experiences using the following themes: spatiality and belonging, transnational feminist exchange, intimacy and kinship, and queer of colour politics and cultural work. Subsequently, I provide two broader thematic contemplations on care and futurity addressing the ghosts, hauntings and queer aesthetics within the archive. By examining how archives are used, this project moves away from centring the archive as an end-goal for feminist and queer organising and emphasises the tensions in archival practice, memorialization, non-narrativity, and language that are embedded in the making of a BMR genealogy. Overall, I argue that the BMR movement does not constitute an 'alternative' or 'counter-archive', but rather disrupts what becomes legible as archive.

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Introduction: Can the Archive Speak?

This project is about the making of genealogies and asks why archives matter for feminist and queer research. Drawing from interviews and archival materials — letters, notes, ephemera and photographs — allows for an analysis of the Black Migrant and Refugee (BMR) movement (active between the late 1970s and early 2000s) in the Netherlands and its transnational connections with key thinkers in the diaspora. I trace everyday experiences and stories of women who were active, in whatever form or shape, in the BMR movement and weave together experiences of locality, kinship, political tensions, cultural interventions and transnational encounters. These everyday experiences are rooted within a postcolonial European context, which takes into account patterns of involuntary migration from the former Dutch colonies, labour migration, and women fleeing from war and conflict torn countries. The individual narratives of BMR women speak to the construction of racialised and gendered space in the Netherlands and chart their geographic presence across temporalities. My work pays specific attention to the dichotomy between the wilful denial of race and racism (Essed and Hoving, 2014; Wekker, 2016a), and the functioning of race as an "ordering mechanism" (Alejandro Martina and Schor, 2018). This project has three main objectives: 1) to account for the experiences of BMR women in feminist and queer transnational organising (in the 1980s and 1990s), 2) to foreground a multi-stranded analysis in the use of archives and address the power dynamics within existing institutional white feminist and queer collections, and 3) to develop new

approaches and methodologies that allow for these everyday experiences and archival materials to become part of a BMR genealogy. The research interrogates archival materials from the International Collection of the Women's Movement at Atria in Amsterdam, IHLIA (LGBT Heritage) in Amsterdam, and the Audre Lorde Papers at Spelman College Archives in Atlanta in the United States.

In this project, the archive is understood as a thematic, methodological tool and a question. Inspired by Gayatri Spivak's widely cited and critiqued essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988), I have adapted the theoretical sentiment to grapple with the complexity of BMR subject positionality within the Netherlands and the BMR movement's vulnerability to racialised institutions of memory. Spivak (1988, p. 90) asks, "Can the Subaltern speak? What must the elite do to watch out for the continuing construction of the subaltern?" I read Spivak's intervention as one that does not read the silence of the Subaltern as an absence. The question about whether the subaltern can speak, in this sense, does not just become about 'speaking', but about who is able to 'hear' the subaltern. My intention is not to offer a close reading of Spivak's work in the relationship to the movement, but to put the underlying currents on listening and hearing to work. The multi-layered use of the archive incorporates an analysis of fragmented and scattered stories and materials.

Fragments and Scatters: Developing a Framework

The approach to the archive and archival materials in this project is informed by feminist, queer and postcolonial studies. Following the so-called 'archival turn' in the 1990s, a wide range of scholarship on the archive emerged in the humanities and social sciences. The 'archival turn' was most notably picked up outside of the discipline of history, which shifted what was theorised and conceptualised as the 'archive' (Steedman, 2001). While this body of work is vast and expansive, there is a clear lack of interdisciplinary work tending to the racial taxonomies of archives, the materiality of archives, and reflexive accounts of conducting archival research. My exploration of the archive is in direct conversation with feminist and queer social movements who made and continue to make invaluable contributions to the field. However, the efforts of feminist and queer scholars are often focused on how white women are excluded within broader archival studies (Eichhorn 2013; Cifor and Wood, 2017). The archival practices of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) are yet to be understood to be fundamental to archival studies. Further, the indexing, cataloguing and descriptions of BIPOC materials within institutional archives continue to be reflective of anti-Black, colonial and imperial forms of documenting and coding. These conditions result in the frequent framing of BIPOC archives and collections as 'alternative' and 'counter' archives, which relegates them to the margins of the archive proper.

White feminist and queer community and institutional archives tend to situate themselves outside of colonial histories, which creates a historical schism and suggest that these histories are solely relevant for BIPOC collections. This thesis therefore draws on postcolonial and critical race studies scholars who point to the violence within the colonial archive and the multifaceted questions this raises for knowledge production (Peterson, 2002; Ndlovu, 2011). Scholars working with these archival complexities shifted the field through developing innovative methodological ways of conducting archival research allowing to "read against the grain" of violent historic documentation (Hartman, 1997; Stoler, 2002). In working with BMR archival materials and in using BMR stories, I aim to broaden the notion of the archive as a sole theoretical construct. Within feminist and queer studies, the multi-sensory and performative nature of archives is explored by situating the archive as an "archive of feeling" (Cvetkovich, 2003), short lived and ephemeral (Kumbier, 2014; Muñoz, 1996), and unruly and messy (Manalansan, 2014). These interventions address the 'liveness' of archives (Hall, 2001) and direct our focus to the materiality of archives (Fraser, 2012). This project engages with BMR archival materials and stories, while asking what is at stake in constructing an archive of the BMR movement.

The BMR archives are inherently fragmented and scattered because they do not exist as one collection. By this I mean that the BMR materials are held by multiple institutional archival collections and are not indexed as one distinct collection. I take into account that "archives cannot be kept satisfactory, nor can they be considered resolved, complete or immune from risk" (R. Kempadoo, 2016, p. 34). The intention of this thesis is thus not to

reconstruct a BMR archive or to resolve the tensions surrounding the incompleteness of the BMR collection. I argue that fragments and scatters are generative because they direct us toward other forms of reading and sensing the archive. While I would absolutely advocate for a separate BMR collection, I do not propose the institutional archive as the ultimate end-goal here. Rather, I follow the fragments and scatters in the BMR archive to give a different temporal account of the movement. I use text from documents and articles, draw on flyers and images, and make use of the debris in the archive. The BMR archive is at once abundant and empty. This is to say that the archival materials can simultaneously be read through the prism of presence and absence. I follow feminist theorist Anjali Arondekar in "thinking through how the absence and/or presence of archives secures historical futurity, and what proceeds from an unsettling of that attachment, from a movement away from the recursive historical dialectic of fulfilment and impoverishment" (Arondekar *et al.*, 2015, p. 216). In this regard, the archive becomes part of this temporal play instead of directing how the fragments and scatters of the movement construct a linear narrative. Disrupting the attachment to the outcome of archival research further allows us to tune into a micro-analysis of how the everyday and quotidian are held in the archival materials. Finally, working across multiple archival institutions and collections inevitably causes fragmentation and at the same time allows for new relationalities to emerge.

I specifically address how BMR stories and archival materials might be used and represented through devising a methodology informed by a practice of close 'listening', 'mapping' of BMR activity and 'orientation', to work with the fragmented and scattered

nature of the archive. In the framing of this methodology, I trace an affective relationality between archival materials and interviews that shifts our understanding of how we read and locate archives. Bringing together archival materials from predominantly the 1980s and 1990s and present-day interviews from women who were active in the movement, creates an interplay between 'speaking' and 'listening' for BMR stories. This project questions the methodologies that need to be employed in order to make sense of fragmented and scattered stories and materials of the BMR women. I draw on the framework of diaspora here, in the tradition of Black British scholarship (Hall, 1990; Brah, 1996), which situates 'diaspora' as hybrid and in a constant state of renewal (Hall, 1990). My use of fragments and scattering as a framework is thus not used in the traditional sense of 'scattered diasporas'. Rather, I use fragments and scattering as a generative tool of knowledge production to move against the need to offer coherent and linear narratives of the movement. In conversation with diaspora and trauma studies, I consider the use of non-narrativity in text (Cha, 2001; Cho, 2008) to be a valuable methodological approach to make sense of silences, inconsistencies and speculative elements within the archive. I argue that non-narrativity is a necessary insertion of a speculative element in working with archival collections. Non-narrativity is understood as a multi-method approach that disturbs organised linearity of reading and attention (Gunaratnam and Hamilton, 2017, p. 2). I adapt this approach through inserting different forms of narration that do not seek to become one story. The feminist mapping practice I employ, through drawing on archival materials and interviews, makes for a contribution to queer scholarship on chronopolitics (the politics of time) (Klinke, 2013). Notions of migration, becoming, kinship and care are inherently linked to

the politics of time. Moreover, the consistent refiguring of the relationship to archival materials is intertwined with contemporary political debates.

The Displaced

The sense of displacement that underlies this project operates on multiple levels. Working with archival materials that are fragmented and scattered produces a sense of displacement. Further, displacement is inherent to BMR women, who I situate within a larger framework of feminist and queer diaspora. Sexuality studies scholar of the medieval Carolyn Dinshaw (1999, p. 39) situates queer history as a, "history of displacement (of signs, of things, of people), of signifiers knocked loose and whose signifiers knock others loose". In a similar vein, I see the BMR movement as a history that displaces static western notions of belonging, kinship, and sexuality. This project shows that BMR feminism is also displaced by white feminist discourse, which resulted in lacunae when it pertains to the role of race, sexuality and colonialism in gender studies in the Netherlands (Wekker, 2016a). Working with a sense of displacement in the research process also troubles the function of the archive. The question: "Who's archiving and why, and for whom?" should be at the heart of a discussion on feminist memory work (Burin and Sowinski, 2014, p. 115). One way of grappling with these questions is through the inclusion of my archival research notes in this project, where I reflect on what it means to be asking questions of the archive. Further, some of the BMR women interviewed for this project are also actively thinking about where their materials are or might be kept. These conversations are also fuelled by younger

generations who over the years have taken an active interest in the movement. This brings an intergenerational component to the project, which also opens up debates about modes of political organisation and solidarity. At the core of this intergenerational discussion are questions of access to funding and space, and questions of structural organisation. This project also pays particular attention to how solidarity politics were framed within BMR collectives and organisations. For instance, several archival and interview materials grapple with the organising tool "political blackness", which is the subject of contested debate in present-day feminist and queer circles. These contemporary discussions do not just speak to socio-political conditions of organising, but also address the earlier posed question on the politics of archiving.

The thesis draws on a substantial archive of materials and stories of BMR women who have already died, often prematurely. I therefore recognise the need to think through the modes of displacement that occur as a result of the Dutch racist climate. In dealing with survival and death within BMR archives I ask: What are other ways to know an archive? How might we imagine other ways of knowing? These questions inevitably bring about the limitations and challenges of the archive. While the limits of knowing occur within any archival research project, here I am particularly interested in how race informs the institutional organization of white feminist archives and how this pertains to the survival of materials. This project therefore explores how the 'liveability' of archival materials inherently speak to the idea of different modes of survival for BMR histories. In doing so, I follow queer theorist José Muñoz (2009, p. 148) who states, "the work of queer critique is often read outside official

documentation", which further exemplifies the need to trouble how the archive produces knowledge. Following Muñoz, we then also need to displace scholarly disciplines and knowledge production that is fixed and placed. Displacement offers an important analytical dimension to this project that enriches the reading of the movement.

The Transnational

In order to make sense of the movement of kinship networks (people, ideas, concepts) that shaped the BMR movement (and that they produced), this project engages the transnational through multiple angles. I situate this project as transnational feminist, queer and diasporic. The histories of colonialism and labour migration inevitably cultivated the construction of transnational feminist circuits in the Netherlands. Transnational feminism is used as a mode of analysis and offers a framework to ask questions about what is configured as 'transnational' within the BMR movement. Scholars such as Grewal and Kaplan (2001) most notably pointed to the ubiquitous nature of the transnational. Transnational feminism, in this thesis, is used beyond its descriptive purpose of signaling modes of exchange between Dutch based BMR collectives and their transnational counterparts. Rather, this project explores how the transnational is configured in the constellation of the BMR movement and how this informed the way that collectives organised.

Taking on a transnational feminist approach means developing a commitment to unpicking what such praxis may look like for this project. Scholars Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar (2010, p. 3) address how transnational feminist practice needs to be "critically aware of its own historical, geographical, and political locations, even as it is invested in alliances that are created and sustained through deeply dialogic and critically self-reflexive processes of knowledge production and dissemination". This thesis therefore does not only reflect on feminist practice within the context of the BMR movement in the 1980s and 1990s, but gives specific attention to how the critical awareness of our own and shared locations become part of a reflexive research praxis.

The experiences of the BMR women interviewed for this project all hold narratives of migration in which the Netherlands figures as a shared political site. Yet, transnational feminist studies allows us to see and understand BMR as 'geographical subjects', (Bacchetta, El-Tayeb and Haritaworn, 2015, p. 770). This project puts transnational feminism in conversation with a queer of colour critique, which has increasingly paid attention to queer diaspora. I specifically highlight how queer diaspora is configured in Europe. In doing so, I disrupt what Hall (2001) called the "internalist" narrative of European identity, in which Europe is situated as a homogenous site that cannot be influenced by external influences. In using transnational as an analytical frame, this thesis explores both the possibilities and limitations of the transnational. In this regard, I also pay attention to who or what is left out within the construction of transnational feminist discourse and praxis. What this project

shows is that the transnational is not fixed and requires a close reading of overlapping histories of displacement.

The Unruly

The BMR movement is best understood as a broad women's movement addressing structural inequalities in education, policy, culture and politics. Within the movement fall numerous smaller groups, informed by ethnicity, sexuality, language and culture. There is no neat categorisation of these collectives and their focus. Most of the BMR collectives worked interdependently and many of my interlocuters were part of several BMR initiatives. The archives of the BMR movement, as stated earlier, reflect both the overlap and the refusal to be neatly ordered and categorised. I seek to make space for unexpected connections and inconsistencies that arise between the interviews and the archival materials. For instance, I create dialogue between archival texts, interview materials and photographs that are seemingly unrelated. Or I point to the limitations of what I derive from archival materials by bringing in interview excerpts that address these materials. In doing so, this project engages deliberately with experimental and multi-sensory forms of knowledge production. To work with an unruly archive, used here to refer to the unpredictable nature of an archive that is not archived as one collection, means that there is always an engagement with the unexpected. The unexpected encounter of materials, scribbles in the margins of documents or unforeseen traces merging with the documents such a strand of hair or a coffee stain, are valuable to archive research. This means that a certain type of flexibility had to be applied

to working with the materials. The deliberate focus on materiality allows for a multi-sensory exploration of touch, sight, and sound, which informs our affective relationship to the materials (Lee, 2016). Further, the unruly nature of archives also requires a consideration of the extra-textual nature of the archive. Performance studies scholar Rizvana Bradley (2014, p. 129) conceptualises "the haptic as a visceral register of experience and vital zone of experimentation". To make the extra-textual nature of the project as whole more palpable, I have chosen to include three intermezzos (Gathering, Slippage and Pathways) to blur the idea of how text and language function within the thesis. To push back on the idea that fragmented archives have to be narrated in linear fashion or have to correspond with the interview materials, I have deliberately centred the frictions I encountered as a methodological question: How can fragmented and scattered histories of BMR women become generative sites for feminist thought? To push back on narrativity here does not mean there is no reflection on how larger narratives relate to each other when understanding the socio-political and economic conditions of BMR women. Rather non-narrativity is embraced as a potential for non-linear storytelling. In this sense, this project cautions against the use of so-called canonical narratives (see Bruner, 1987; 1991). The idea of the 'canonical narrative' is that there is an individual and cultural expectation of how narratives are shaped and *should* be told (Bruner, 1987, p. 694). In other words, what expectations are placed on the narrative by both the researcher and reader? Having said that, I cannot deny the natural urge to make stories "fit" within a wider project as both a genealogy and alternative geography through a feminist and queer mapping practice. The unruly is thus

embraced as a necessary analytical tool to experiment with how the archival and interview materials are used.

Analytical Approach and Rationale

This research is interdisciplinary in that it draws from a variety of academic disciplines, and approaches to situate the BMR movement. To attend to the specific histories of empire, displacement and migration that underlie the movement, I draw on feminist and queer diasporic scholarship. Interdisciplinarity provides for a more holistic reading of the geopolitical situatedness of BMR women and the transnational connections forged by the movement. Moreover, the very flow of people, ideas and concepts that inform the movement shape the analytical framing of this project. I think here of the travelling of terminology such as 'political blackness' or 'intersectionality' to the Netherlands. Or how the London-based Afro-Caribbean poet Dorothea Smartt used to send Anne Krul, active in the BMR movement, a snail mail care package with news snippets, poems and other cultural news, or the book launch of anti-apartheid activist Ellen Kuzwayo in Amsterdam. In this sense, this thesis brings together the *movement* of the BMR movement. BMR women turned to Black British and Black American scholarship to make sense of their positionality in The Netherlands. I therefore engage with invaluable contributions from Black British scholars (Brah, 1996; Evans *et al.*, 2011; Parmar and Minh-ha, 1990; Mirza and Gunaratnam, 2014) to offer theoretical grounding and to place my research in this transnational feminist and diasporic context. I also draw on Black North American feminist scholarship which

inspired the political consciousness raising of the BMR movement (Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981; Anzaldúa, 1987; Lorde, 1988; Crenshaw, 1989). Considering the lack of critical feminist and queer scholarship that attends to histories of empire and colonialism in the Netherlands, these bodies of scholarship continue to shape my analysis. I should note, however, that I am mindful of readily applying Black North American scholarship to the Dutch context. I am particularly attentive to the essentialism and generalizing that can occur here. The archival materials and interviews with BMR women attest to the variety of ways that the movement translated Black North American feminist concepts. What is particularly important is that these translation processes were shaped by anti-colonial politics. I further draw on queer studies to expand the meaning of BMR narratives through engaging with themes of gender, sexuality and futurity. While most queer scholarship is situated within a North American context, queer studies and especially queer of colour critique (Ferguson, 2004; Muñoz, 1996; 2009) has demonstrated an important commitment to a critical reading practice that de-stabilises what is understood as the racialised norm. While queer of colour scholarship is still emerging in Europe there is a small body of scholarship that calls for the need to develop an analysis situated within a European diasporic framework (El-Tayeb, 2011; Bacchetta, El-Tayeb and Haritaworn, 2015). This thesis thus also makes a larger contribution to the broadening of queer of colour scholarship in Europe.

Research Aims, Questions and Methods

This project is framed through multiple key questions. The BMR movement is an imperative site through which to investigate Dutch racialised spatiality, belonging, feminist and queer kinship models and cultural production. My research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the contributions made by the BMR movement, and to explore what is at stake in situating BMR women as knowledge producers. In so doing, I place specific emphasis on the thematic role of care and futurity in engaging with BMR stories and archives. I ask reflexive questions in and of the interviews and materials I draw on. At the same time, the conversations and materials push me to deepen and challenge my understanding of the use of stories. Drawing on interviews and a wide range of archival materials blurs what becomes constituted as an archive in this project. I deliberately work with multiple modalities of the archive, shifting from the 'institutional' to the 'performative' and 'ephemeral' to the 'embodied'. These modes inevitably overlap. Given this scope and my research aims, the questions this project addresses are:

- What does archival material of the everyday experiences and practices of BMR women tell us about the geographic, social and political diasporic landscape they operated in?
- How did the BMR movement constitute a transnational circuit of exchange and what kinds of knowledge did they produce?

- What are other ways of 'knowing' the archive when the BMR histories we encounter are affected by racial structures of the archive?

In order to answer these questions, I interviewed eight women who were part of the BMR movement in addition to using archival images, ephemera and selected texts from relevant magazines published between the 1980–1990s. The interviews are all semi-structured and focused primarily on locating specific experiences within the 1980s. In conducting my interviews, I spoke with women who had been active within the BMR movement in different capacities. Our conversations lasted between two and four hours. Taking the large scope of the movement into account in combination with the unique migratory constellation of the movement, there is a danger that this project does not address the specificity of the Dutch experience, for instance can the project address both the Surinamese-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch experience within the BMR movement? In addition, within the BMR movement, women all identified differently, for example some women identified with a feminist and/ or lesbian politics, while others solely identified with a broader women's movement. I acknowledge that this project does not represent the multifaceted nature of the BMR movement adequately. I only spoke to eight women while the movement as a whole is comprised of a myriad of women who are still active within education, culture, politics and policy work. Three of the analytical chapters focus specifically on BMR collectives. I deliberately made this choice to create a synergy between everyday experiences of BMR women and the collective organising politics. Further, the collectives discussed in this project also offer a compelling comparative approach as they all had distinct ways of

operating. In Chapter Two, a detailed overview is provided of the structure of the interviews, the participants, and my archival research across institutions.

My overall research design takes inspiration from a subversive approach to the waterways and infrastructures that are at the heart of the Amsterdam city centre. I grew up in Amsterdam and the canals and the waterways of the city have long been part of my spatial awareness. I worked on canal boats, in canal houses turned museums, commuted to and from Atria via the canals. As a curator, I am also invested in exploring how the visual afterlives of slavery and colonialism resonate in the constructing of a BMR genealogy. In this project, which is largely situated in Amsterdam, I want to re-imagine this colonial infrastructure and use this metaphoric framework of waterways to tune into the convergent currents and streams underlying the movement. In the early stages of my research, I used a software device called *IThoughtsX*, to map all the different connections that emerged out of my archival research. The unfinished visual resembled an intricate network of overlapping lines, which further reminded me of the waterway structures. The use of waterways as a methodological framework further underlines the multiple modalities of movement that shape this thesis. The use of water and the relationship of the movement to water runs throughout this thesis.

Introducing the BMR Movement

In 2019, the burka ban came into effect in the Netherlands; Geert Wilders revived his plan to hold a contest for cartoons caricaturing the Prophet Muhammed; the City of Amsterdam explored the possibility to make an official apology for the history of slavery; Ahmed Mendes Moreira encountered racial hate speech on the soccer field; right wing populist Thierry Baudet proclaimed women need to stop having abortions and help build a masculinist nationalist society; and Black Petes in the annual parade had 'sooty' faces instead of blackface. These are just a few of the headlines that shape the contemporary Dutch political landscape. They are not unique events, but rather index the Dutch racial climate in the Netherlands. In a similar vein, Black studies scholar Hazel Carby (2019, p. 143) argues:

> Race is not a material object, a thing: it has to do not with what people are but with how they are classified. It is a practice or series of practices, a technology that calculates and assigns differences to peoples and communities and then institutionalizes these differences. It is a verb not a noun.

Engaging with race as a technology that is a series of practices that exist across temporalities makes this project particularly relevant. The BMR movement, in terms of its knowledge production and solidarity politics, offers important insight into how race and gendered racism operates within the Netherlands. Without looking to the past with a

romanticised lens, I argue that we do not only have something to gain from the BMR movement but that the work deriving from this time period remains on-going. There are various beginnings to the BMR movement, which I will unpack throughout this project. In my brief introduction here, I will specifically address the politics of naming and language to offer context to how the movement came to organise under the banner of 'BMR'. Existing scholarship on the BMR movement studies the movement through five different prisms (Botman, Jouwe and Wekker, 2001). The authors offer a comprehensive overview of the contributions of BMR women within policy, politics, academia and arts and culture. I have chosen to focus specifically on the 1980s–1990s because this is when the height of BMR organising took place. However, I do not suggest that this marked the start of feminist or anti-racist organising in the Netherlands. For instance, recent scholarship by Mitchell Esajas (2018) demonstrates that in the early twentieth century, Surinamese communist organisers traversed between Suriname, the U.S. and the Netherlands. Further, not all Surinamese migrants came to the Netherlands post-independence in 1975. In fact, there are families who came to the Netherlands as early as the 1950s. This project offers a contribution to the many and wide-ranging existing stories about political organising amongst migrant communities in the Netherlands.

Politics of Naming

The very name of the movement, 'Black', 'Migrant' and 'Refugee', brings up a tension, even during the height of its use. Using the term BMR is conflicting for several reasons. Perhaps

the most obvious and straightforward one is that the use of the term in the present day feels out-dated. After all, who in the Netherlands falls neatly within these proposed categories? And were BMR women even able to fully mobilise these categories in self-organisation? I ask these questions not to seek for conclusive answers, but to explore the complexities that come with political self-organisation. In the early stages of the movement, women predominantly organised under the framework of political blackness. The term likely travelled from the U.K. to the Netherlands and was understood to be particularly apt to speak to post-colonial migrants. During a women's studies gathering at the Winter University in Nijmegen in 1983, a group of about twenty BMR women had gathered to mobilise against the lack of the inclusion of Black women's issues. Julia da Lima spoke out on behalf of what they named the Black women's group after the opening statements:

> The presence of black women is being denied, at least not seen and not heard. By black women, I mean women from former and current Dutch colonies, and all the women who are seen by white people as foreign, *allochtoon*, non-western, and third world etc. (translation mine) (Carrilho and Vega, 1984, n.p.)

A common narrative amongst BMR women present is that Da Lima, of Moluccan descent, had just returned from London where she had been inspired by the use of political blackness. Da Lima stated it was dangerous to create a hierarchy and division between 'foreign' and 'Black'. Generally, it was understood that "Black" women came from the

former Dutch colonies, including women of Non-African Black descent. The term "migrant" was introduced in response to waves of labour migration from Turkey and Morocco, and later the term "refugee" was employed to account for the presence of women who had fled war or conflict torn areas such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Iran, Kurdistan, and Somalia.[1] In the Black British context, "the British 'black' subject emerged as a signifier of the entangled racialised colonial histories of 'black' settlers of African, Asian and Caribbean descent, affirming a politics of solidarity against a racism centred around colour" (Brah, 1996, p. 13). The use of political blackness, different to its use in the U.K., hardly gained traction amongst men of colour (Botman, Jouwe and Wekker, 2001, p. 18). What is important to note and somewhat similar to the U.K. (see Swaby, 2014) is that Surinamese and Caribbean women of African descent generally did not identify as 'Black'. The introduction of this framework thus raised larger questions of identity formation and colonial/migrant histories. The overall BMR banner is therefore linked to a specific moment in time and place in the Netherlands, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter One.

What further complicates the use of 'BMR' is that many collectives organised around the premise of political blackness and simply used 'Black' as a marker. This is also noticeable in the coding of archival materials. The use of 'women of colour' was not common in the

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[1] *Stichting Zwaluw, Intercultureel en multicultureel Platform van Vrouwelijke Vluchtelingen Organisaties in Nederland* (PVON) (Foundation Zwaluw, Intercultural and multicultural Platform of Women's Refugee Organisations in the Netherlands) (translation mine) was founded in 1995 and one of the main self-led organisations for refugee women.

Netherlands and I would say only gained more traction amongst younger generations in the last ten years. Within contemporary activist circles, it is more common to use Black and Non-Black People of Colour, thereby understanding 'Black' to connote people of 'African descent'. These terms are translated in Dutch too, even though the English terminology is more frequently used. I follow the language of the archival materials and self-naming of collectives, e.g. when 'Black' is used to describe the collective *Sister Outsider*. However, I do so in acknowledgment that Black is used in the political sense and address the tensions therein. Further, I use 'women of colour' and 'queers of colour' when referencing bodies of scholarship that use this terminology to acknowledge a broader politics of coalition. I do not use the term 'brown' because this term is not employed in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the politics of naming bring forth several geopolitical considerations. For one, I recognise that the use of 'POC' is a North American construct which typically only refers to or includes to those racialised as other in the Global North. Bacchetta, El-Tayeb and Haritaworn (2015, p. 769) point out that these terms do not just reinforce U.S. centrism, but they also "erase differences within and across gender and sexually non-conforming, racialized and colonized collectives across the Global North and the South". This is imperative to consider in scholarship and researching deriving from Europe that seeks to undo dominant frameworks from the U.S. Nevertheless, I follow Bacchetta, El-Tayeb and Haritaworn (2015) in using terminology such as 'queer of colour' with this in mind to analyse the interventions of feminists and queers of colour in the Netherlands. The BMR movement, for one, paid specific attention to what was then called Third World politics and feminism, and firmly situated their analysis of difference within

a European diasporic framework. Overall, this project shows that some of these tensions in the politics of naming cannot easily be resolved, but that they do call for being attentive to the specifics of processes of racialisation and migration in Europe.

Who are BMR Women?

Due to the wide scope of BMR organising, I use personal narratives and archival materials to make sense of relevant themes related to BMR organisations. Therefore, this project oscillates between individual and collective stories. The stories of the women who I interviewed provide a wide scope of insights into everyday experiences within the BMR movement. While this project centres the experiences of women, multiple collectives included men or political organising with men. This is understood to be a key difference with the white feminist movement who excluded men from any political organising. Historically, in the Netherlands there has been more focus on BMR women, and an analysis on the role of men within the movement has not been conducted. To give a sense of the scope of the BMR movement, I will provide a brief overview of the variety of collectives and their intra-organising practices. The BMR movement was known to organise alongside ethnic and cultural lines as well as forming broader coalition movements (Botman, Jouwe and Wekker, 2001). For instance, the BMR collective and documentation centre *Flamboyant* (discussed in Chapter Three) organised for all BMR women but collaborated to include women who organised alongside ethnic lines, such as HTKB, the Turkish women's organisation. *Flamboyant* also housed the Pakistani collective JAAG, the multicultural film collective Tres Oemas, and the Moroccan Women's Movement. Collectives such as *Sister*

Outsider, specifically focused on Black lesbians (discussed in Chapter Four) and were in turn known to organise in *Flamboyant*. The Amsterdam Black Women's radio produced radio shows on BMR related matters. However, not all the activity happened in Amsterdam. The Surinamese women's magazine Ashanti was based in the Hague and the *Zwarte Vrouwenkrant Arnhem* (Black Women's paper) was based in Arnhem. The Surinamese organisation LOSON was active in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague and Utrecht. *Strange Fruit* (discussed in Chapter Five) was set up by queers of colour, based in Amsterdam but frequently travelled to Germany and even South Africa for their queer cultural work. While I predominantly focus on BMR women, the men within gay and later queer organisations were fundamental to the overall movement. Several women interviewed for this project, in addition to the archival materials, attest to this importance. Further, the women I interviewed were often part of (and sometimes still are) more than one collective at a time. Their stories appear in more depth throughout this project. For now, a brief introduction,

Cisca Pattiphilohy, born in Indonesia and one of the eldest participants in this project, is amongst the first archivists and information specialists for BMR women who played a significant role within the *Flamboyant* organisation.

Tieneke Sumter was active in multiple BMR organisations such as *Sister Outsider, SUHO* and *Flamboyant*, and moved back to Suriname during the late 1980s and now resides in Amsterdam again where she continues her activist work.

Kamala Kempadoo, one of the early members of *Flamboyant,* came to Amsterdam by way of Guyana and the U.K., studied at the University of Amsterdam and is now a university professor in Canada.

Anne Krul, a participant of the Winter University in Nijmegen, was Black queer organiser for *Strange Fruit,* and contributed significantly to developing adequate structures of care for teenage BMR girls and women.

Gloria Wekker worked as a civil servant on anti-racist policy, was a founder of *Sister Outsider*, who left during the BMR movement to conduct postgraduate studies in the United States. Wekker has politically and academically shaped the understanding of race, gender and sexuality in the Netherlands and Caribbean and is currently an emeritus professor.

Ernestine Comvalius was active within LOSON and later SAWO, both organisations that focused on the struggle of Surinamese people, and which were particularly committed to the Surinamese women's union in Utrecht, which published the magazine *Sisa*. Comvalius has a long history in theatre and is the first director of the Bijlmer Parktheater in Amsterdam.

Ida Does, life-long friend of Ernestine Comvalius, was also part of LOSOM and SAWO in Utrecht and The Hague, and she works as a teacher, educator, journalist and documentary filmmaker.

Troetje Loewenthal is an academic and writer who wrote the pivotal piece *De Witte Toren* (the white tower) on whiteness in gender studies; She was an early member of *Flamboyant* and now lives in Curaçao.

Structure of the Thesis

The BMR movement is discussed through making use of case studies in the form of specific organisations or collectives, which are then related to broader themes that have emerged out of the archival and interview materials. I choose to structure the thesis around three collectives: *Flamboyant, Sister Outsider* and *Strange Fruit.* This decision was influenced by a few considerations. Several interviewees spoke about their work and the general importance of the different collectives they were part of. Further, I was able to trace archival materials related to each of the collectives, which grew my understanding in the research project. Finally, I felt that the structure of the collective allowed me to bring into focus the micro and macro politics of the BMR movement. Through these collectives, I was able to gage the everyday experiences of women while simultaneously understanding how they framed their collective work. The structure of the thesis offers a balance between an analytical reading of three BMR collectives and provides two thematic chapters on care and

futurity respectively. In addition to the intermezzos between chapters, this thesis also includes close consideration of flyers, collages and photographs, which are not just used to exemplify who was active in the movement but contributes to another way of reading the archive through offering a visual analysis of queer diasporic aesthetics (Gopinath, 2018). Overall, this structure offers an important interaction between different parts and people within the movement.

Chapter One engages with a set of key literatures and themes that inform my research topic. I explore the role of race in the Netherlands, a transnational feminist framework, queer and feminist approaches to the archive, and the politics of narration. In writing, thinking and discussing the stories coming out of the BMR movement, I have wrestled with how these stories are best told. This matter of telling stories differently informs my methods and methodological approach discussed in Chapter Two. I decided to discuss methods and methodology in two parts to allow for a closer reading of how the research is conducted. The project then engages with the BMR movement through offering three empirical case-studies and two thematic chapters. In Chapter Three, I analyse the *Flamboyant* organisation through focusing on the notion of spatiality, belonging and the making of archives. I offer insight into the significant role the centre played and how the archival landscape shifted. Chapter Four takes on the Black lesbian collective *Sister Outsider* and their transnational exchange with Audre Lorde. I provide a detailed account of working across archival collections and the role of kinship within transnational configurations. Chapter Five engages with the queer of colour collective *Strange Fruit* and

modes of cultural production. I analyse these modes of cultural production through the lens of queer diasporic visual aesthetics. Finally, I work with two broader themes of care (Chapter Six) and futurity (Chapter Seven) to think through how these overarching themes engage with BMR stories and archival materials. Chapter Six engages with the notion of haunting and the presence of ghosts in the archival research and interview materials, and demonstrates why a radical praxis of care is needed. In Chapter Seven, I contemplate the importance of the notion of futurity for the BMR movement and pay specific attention to what becomes legible as archive.

The overall approach in this thesis is based on an exploration of archival materials and BMR stories to provide insight into how a genealogy of the BMR movement might be constructed. The thesis is characterised by a transnational reading of kinship, intimacy and movement building, in which different perspectives come to the fore. Through oscillating between a macro- and micro- analysis of archival and interview materials, this thesis proposes other ways of reading and thinking through the BMR movement. The methodological framework shows a commitment to place and brings forth temporal and geographic re-arrangements of BMR women and their stories.

Chapter One. Locating the BMR Movement

In 2016, I took a group of U.S. students to the Atria archives after a lecture I had given on the BMR movement. One of the archivists took us upstairs where the materials are held. We were surrounded by grey boxes in a climate-controlled room. Some of the archival materials had been selected for display and were in special drawers. The students and I looked at materials that had been confiscated during the Second World War, but were later found in Russia and brought back to Amsterdam. Moving towards the end of the room, we arrived at a section of the holdings that had a red capital letter "A" marking each box. Upon asking, we were informed that these boxes were identified as being special; they hold the original materials of Aletta Jacobs (1854 – 1929), who was the first woman doctor in the Netherlands and a women's rights activist. In case of an emergency such as a fire, the letter "A" is there to remind staff to save these boxes first. One of the students asked whether or not the collection of the BMR movement would be saved in case of an emergency, in other words, if the BMR materials had been identified as "special enough to save first" and the archivist told us no, they would not.

Introduction

The opening fragment of my research note above brings together various inquiries that underlie this project. What does it mean for BMR materials to be part of a historically white institution? What does this tell us about the politics of feminist memory making and knowledge production about race in the Netherlands? In order to address this question, I engage with noteworthy scholarship on Dutch racism, coloniality and culture (Essed, 1991; Jordan, 2014; Essed and Hoving, 2014; Wekker, 2016a) to think through the use and construction of the BMR archive. Archives are not neutral (see Gerson, 2001) and are therefore susceptible to power dynamics that inform and enforce the practice of privileging the history of white women over the histories of Black women and women of colour. The wider implications of the precarious nature of BMR materials, which are largely not digitalised, is related to the construction of a BMR genealogy. This thesis does this work, through assembling a genealogy of what is left behind, which includes materials, memories and bodies. I am invested in unpicking the function of the archive in both holding and telling the stories that come out of the BMR movement. This is as much a thesis about the conditions of feminist and queer political organising as it is about the role of the archive therein. I therefore ask: what does the engagement with the BMR archives tell us about the history of the movement and the place it holds within feminist and critical race discourse in the Netherlands and transnationally? Throughout the project, I use the archive as a theoretical tool to problematise the sets of knowledge it produces. In so doing, I frame the archive as both a material and performative site (Taylor, 2003), shaped by entangled,

unstable, and evasive dynamics, which require a rethinking of what becomes legible as archive. I draw on queer (Muñoz, 1996; Dinshaw, 1999; Halberstam, 2005; Muñoz, 2009), feminist (Eichhorn, 2013) and postcolonial (Said, 1993; Wekker, 2016a) approaches to the archive to illustrate the tensions within archival knowledge production. Ultimately, this thesis makes these tensions productive by staging encounters between being in and out of flux with the archive.

My initial quest into the notion of 'archive' started at a white feminist institutional archive, seated at a table surrounded by boxes, a notepad and a pencil. However, I realised that indeed we would not be saved here. Performance studies scholar Diana Taylor (2003, p. 36) asks: "What is at risk politically in thinking about embodied knowledge and performance as ephemeral as that which disappears? Whose memories 'disappear' if only archival knowledge is valorized and granted permanence?" These questions highlight the tensions that undergird any project engaged in archival research relying on archival materials. I deliberately move away from the archive as a 'place' of arrival for feminist and queer genealogies of colour. Instead, I tune into the practices that configure the quotidian such as kinship, intimacy, and care, which are embodied, fleeting and ephemeral forms of knowing and knowledge production. My preoccupations are thus elsewhere: I attend to the politics of memory, non-narrativity (Cha, 2001; Cho, 2008) and processes of haunting (Gordon, 2008) in this endeavour. Ultimately, this shifts not just the relationship, but also the expectation of what the archive offers.

In this chapter, I engage with a larger set of debates that inform how I construct a BMR genealogy within a Dutch diasporic framework. In understanding and locating what such a genealogy offers this project, I follow the American studies scholar Lisa Lowe's (2005, p.3) conceptualisation of genealogy:

> By genealogy, I mean that my analysis does not accept given categories and concepts as fixed and constant, but rather takes as its work the inquiry into how these categories became established as a given, and with what effects. Genealogical method questions the apparent closure of our understanding of historical progress and attempts to contribute to what Michel Foucault has discussed as a historical ontology of ourselves, or a history of the present.

Following Lowe (2005), I understand the construction of a BMR genealogy as offered in this thesis to be comprised of inquiring how categories, concepts, movements and everyday practices are established. In reference to writing feminist genealogies, Maria Tamboukou (2003, p. 4) states, "Genealogy seeks the surfaces of events, focussing on micropractices, tracing minor shifts, demonstrating discontinuities and recurrences". In charting the BMR movement and their subsequent journeys across temporalities, I underscore the importance of questioning how categories and concepts become ingrained and subverted within the public imagination and in the production of knowledge. In this chapter, I map the larger critical debates and literatures that inform how we might read and understand the ways in which the BMR movement advances our understanding of race, gender, and feminist and

queer politics in the Netherlands. The chapter addresses the overarching theoretical discussions by: 1) situating race in the Netherlands; 2) analysing circuits of transnational feminist and queer exchange; 3) investigating how feminist and queer theory offers generative approaches to the archive; 4) engaging the politics of narration (how, when and why stories are told), in other words, thinking about how narration is part of an emerging feminist reading practice that demonstrates the need to go beyond the confines of the archive. Within this wider framework, I analyse the everyday political experiences of the BMR movement that bring together contemplations on spatiality, belonging, intimacy, kinship, circuits of diasporic exchange, visual diasporic practice and cultural work.

Race in the Netherlands

On 22 January 2017, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte issued a letter to "all Dutch people" on the website of Rutte's political party VVD[2], which was widely picked up by the media. The following paragraph aptly addresses the multifaceted registers through which racism operates in the Netherlands:

> We feel a growing discomfort when people abuse our freedom to ruin things here, when in fact they came to our country because of that freedom. People who refuse to adapt, disrespect our customs, and reject our values. Who harass

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[2] VVD (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democractie*) is the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, which is a conservative-liberal political party in the Netherlands.

gay men, jeer at women in short skirts, or accuse ordinary Dutch people of being

racists. I understand very well that people might think: if you so fundamentally

reject our country, I prefer that you leave. I feel the same way. Act normally, or

leave. We should never consider this behavior normal in our country. The

solution is not to paint people with the same brush or insult or expel whole

groups. That's not how we build society together, right? The solution is first and

foremost a question of mindset. We must continue to make crystal clear what

is normal and what is not normal in this country. We will have to actively defend

our values. (Martina and Schor, 2018, p. 150)

This fragment provides insight into how discourses of morality, freedom, and liveability

have come to define the political landscape in the Netherlands.[3] The Dutch are known to

pride themselves on being a liberal, tolerant, progressive and multicultural nation. Wekker

(2016, p. 1) aptly addresses how the white Dutch sense of self is bound up with the deep

rooted conviction that the Netherlands "always has been color-blind and antiracist, a place

of extraordinary hospitality and tolerance toward the racialised/ethnicized other". Rutte's

open letter situates "normality" as a national currency, which is embedded in Dutch norms

and values. In their analysis of this letter, cultural critic and postcolonial studies scholars

Martina and Schor (2018, p. 151), contend that it holds an "explicit indictment of black and

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[3] The research project 'Geographies of Freedom', initiated and developed by Egbert Alejandro Martina and
Miguel Peres dos Santos, provides excellent insight into how 'freedom' is ingrained in Dutch architecture,
geography and in the law. See: https://geographiesoffreedom.wordpress.com/

Muslim dissent, construed as deviant, outside of the boundaries of the norm and, therefore, outside of the community of the 'we'". What does this tell us about how race and Dutchness are construed? In which ways can we understand the ongoing implications of race within the context of the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and contemporary European politics? Rutte's open letter claims the white subjecthood of "we" vis-à-vis those who are deemed unruly, wayward, and fugitive within the racial hegemonic constructions of the Dutch nation state. In the following section, I delve into the complexities and paradoxes of understanding race in the Netherlands.

Dutch Racism

To understand the emergence of the BMR movement and the knowledge production coming forth out of their anti-racist, feminist and queer organising, I attend to how processes such as racism, colonialism, migration, and islamophobia play out in the Netherlands and in Europe. The experiences of BMR women index the complex and layered ongoing legacies of racism. I am thus invested in theorising and analysing racism by foregrounding the everyday experiences of BMR women with Dutch racism. While I will offer a close reading of race in the Dutch context, the absence of a critical race discourse is not limited to the Netherlands. Queer of colour studies scholar Fatima El-Tayeb (2011, p. xvii) poignantly states, "race, at times, seems to exist anywhere but in Europe". It is therefore important to take into account that the specifics of Dutch culture and racism do not negate the overall colour-blindness and deep-rooted "racelessness" that is ingrained in

continental Europe's collective imagination (p. xvii). Further, the imbrications between race and xenophobic discourses should be taken into account here. El-Tayeb (2011, p. xv) points out that "popular discourses on migration, especially when framed in negative terms, largely target "visible minorities"". In this sense, the overall dominant rhetoric on migration effects Europeans of colour regardless of their histories and citizenship.[4] Philomena Essed and Sandra Trienekens (2008, p. 56) exemplify that the history of negative attention and the framing of migrants shifted from Moluccan to Surinamese people in the 1970s and 1980s and subsequently shifted to Moroccan and Turkish people from the end of the 1980s onward and now also includes people fleeing from Eastern European countries and countries to the South of the Netherlands. Within these broader historical discourses on racism, xenophobia and anti-blackness it becomes apparent that the "Other" is situated outside of the European imagination and therefore outside of Europeanness.

In Dutch public discourse, the use of *ras* (race) is still far from common in daily use. It is generally understood that the use of the word "race" ceased to exist after World War II and was used solely to refer to vegetables and plant species (Botman, Jouwe and Wekker, 2001; Wekker, 2016a). From experience, I know that saying "race", calling out racism, or addressing the importance of race can shift the temperature in the room. However, this is not a phenomenon unique to the Dutch. I use the framework of Dutch racism to look at the manifestations of racism in the Netherlands rather than to claim specificity. Not

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[4] Black Europe scholars Kwame Nimako and Stephen Small (2009) specifically address these questions with regard to the African Diaspora and ask what the implications of theorizing Black Europe and the African Diaspora are for conversations on citizenship, nativism and xenophobia.

surprisingly, scholarship on the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and coloniality continues to be scarce in the Netherlands. Historically academic institutions have repressed scholarship on race in the Netherlands, resulting in a small group of scholars who have been committed to breaking the silence within critical race studies and feminist scholarship (e.g. Essed and Hoving, 2014; Wekker, 2016a; Weiner and Báez, 2018). This leaves us with a deep lacuna in knowledge production on race and its imbrications, the institutionalisation of silence and denial of the histories of slavery and colonialism, and an overall failure to take seriously the neoliberal and colonial structures that underlie Dutch academia. Dutch post-colonial scholars such as Jones (2018, p. 161) subsequently argue for the need for "activist" interventions in order to renew "Dutch knowledge regimes on colonialism". While I underscore the value of taking scholar-activists seriously, and in general see the need to redefine traditional forms of knowledge production, I note a glaring chasm in how contemporary Dutch scholarship actually incorporates the knowledge production work of the BMR movement. As noted in the introduction, *Caleidoscopische Visies* (2001) remains the sole publication on the BMR movement, and scholarship produced on the movement in gender studies is marginal.

The contributions of the movement are often understood through the narrow lens of critique. In other words, we do not have a comprehensive understanding of how the BMR movement produced, theorised and practiced feminist and queer thought. My analysis thus firmly situates the BMR movement as a body of knowledge and considers its members as serious knowledge producers. A broad range of women active within the movement played

a critical role in the formation of knowledge production on race, gender, sexuality, coloniality and migration, both within and outside of academic institutions. I will exemplify the roles women played throughout the project by offering a close reading of the "situated knowledges" (Haraway, 1988) produced by the BMR movement. Multispecies feminist theorist Donna Haraway (1988, p. 581) offered the concept of "situated knowledges" building on the metaphor of vision to respond to the dominant discourse of "scientific and technological, late-industrial, militarized, racist, and male-dominated societies". Haraway argues that vision needs to be reclaimed from its means of objectification and disembodiment. In doing so, Haraway (1988, p. 583) argues: "Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see". In this sense, Haraway contends that situated knowledges come forth out of embodied, located, geographic and historically specific subjects. In this sense, the situated knowledges produced by the BMR movement disrupt dominant historical readings of processes of racialisation and colonialism. The persistent separation of colony and metropole within academia and the public perception is unsettled by the knowledges coming out of the BMR movement. Traditionally, the histories of the Dutch colonies are situated within a specialist discipline of history and are not made part of Dutch national history (Wekker, 2016a, p. 25). Through foregrounding the BMR movement as a site of knowledge production, I follow Wekker (2016a) in putting these confluent histories in conversation with each other. I understand that the presence of women from the former Dutch colonies is the very

embodiment of the well-known slogan coming out of a British anti-racist response to colonialism, "we are here because you were there".[5]

The consistent denial of racism and the fierce commitment to Dutch progress narratives have resulted in the critical need to develop frameworks that address how race is constructed in the Netherlands. Most notably, the concept of "Dutch Racism" as coined by Essed and Hoving (2014, p. 19), is rooted in the history of the former Dutch colonial empire. While the characteristics of Dutch racism are not unique to the Netherlands, the editors posit that they are "unmistakably recognizable as elements of the broader phenomenon called Dutch culture" (Essed and Hoving, 2014, p. 25). Three overarching key characteristics of Dutch racism are identified by Essed and Hoving (2014); 1) "the Dutch *sense of moral and cultural superiority*"; 2) "the Dutch anxious *claim of innocence*" and 3) "the strong *sense of Dutch entitlement*" (pp.24-25). These features combined show how white cultural hegemony is enforced in the Netherlands. The "*sense of moral and cultural superiority*" is most evident in Dutch self-presentation within the arena of education (Weiner, 2014), public discourse, history making projects and the commemoration of slavery (Balkenhol, 2016). For instance, the role of the Dutch in the Transatlantic slave trade is not only negated, but commonly referred to as a *zwarte bladzijde* (a black page) in history. Wekker's (2016) framing of "wilful ignorance" becomes important here as Dutch culture is premised on the violent maintenance of ignorance within society. These mis-representations of the

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[5] This phrase was commonly used in the U.K. and attributed to the writer, thinker and Director of the Institute of Race Relations, Ambalavaner Sivanandan.

Dutch become visible through a wide-spread "*moral righteousness and ideological repression*" (Essed and Hoving, 2014, p. 24). I will further unpack how these characteristics become expressed within Dutch culture, and in which ways these features are linked to constructions of freedom, humanity and tolerance.

VOC mentality

In 2006, former Prime-Minister Jan Peter Balkenende called for the return of the "VOC mentality" in Dutch parliament in response to criticism on the government's economic policies. Balkenende stated,

> I do not get why you are being so negative and annoying ... Let us be happy together. Let us be optimistic. Let us say: The Netherlands can do it once more! That VOC mentality! Looking beyond frontiers. Dynamic! ... Right?! (translation mine) (Balkenende, 2006).[6]

In the call for the return of the "VOC mentality", Balkenende is directly referring to the trading spirit of the East India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) (hereafter VOC), the first Dutch multinational company which traded on global exchange. Independent scholar Joseph D. Jordan (2014) situates Balkenende's proclamation as the, resurrection of the Dutch Golden Age, a glorified time period in which great Dutch wealth

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[6] See Balkenende's comments here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBN8xJby2b8

was accumulated through the VOC (p. 201).[7] This material wealth is most visible in the

canal infrastructures, canal mansions, harbours and city walls in cities affiliated with the

VOC.[8] Slavery played a prominent role for the VOC, predominantly focused on trade with

Asia and the West India Company (*West Indische Compagnie*) (hereafter WIC), responsible

for the trade with Africa and the Americas. Generally speaking, within the Dutch public

imagination, slavery was not a part of the VOC and the emphasis is historically placed on

the history of trade. Recent critical scholarship on the Dutch Atlantic engages with the

politics of commemoration (Cain, 2015) and the effects and ramifications of the Dutch

Atlantic slave trade and its long-lasting impact on the Dutch Republic (Fatah-Black and

Van Rossum, 2015). Upon critique of his statement, Balkenende stated that he was aware

of the connotation of the VOC with slavery, but noted that he was specifically speaking to

the Dutch trader's mentality in the 17th century. Balkenende thus separates the racial

capitalism that underlies the Dutch trading mentality, which was constituted through the

enslavement of Black people to uphold the pristine and noble image of trade. In this schism

produced by Balkenende, Jordan (2014, p. 205) recognises the enunciation of the nation as

"an appeal to the Dutch imagination whereby imaginary borders are erected around the

nation-space, to create a fantasy of unique, heroic entrepreneurship". This heroic

construction and fantasy imaginary illustrate how the Dutch nation uses self-presentation

as a deliberate tactic and strategy to uphold the myth of the Netherlands as a tolerant and

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[7] Other key Dutch merchant companies include the West India Company (*West Indische Compagnie*), the Society of Suriname (*Societeit van Suriname)*, Society of Berbice (*Societeit van Berbice*) and the Commercial Company of the city of Middelburg (*Middelburgsche Commercie Compagnie*).
[8] The canals, mansions and art are widely celebrated as products of the Golden Age. Recent initiatives such as the Black Heritage Amsterdam Tour and the collaborative research project *Mapping Slavery* disrupt these dominant glorified narratives of the Golden Age, by offering insight into Dutch slavery heritage.

progressive country. Evidently, the discussion on self-presentation in relationship to the history of slavery and colonialism in the Netherlands is much more comprehensive. However, my point here is to illustrate how the denial, misrepresentation and silence on the history of slavery come to constitute the racial climate in the Netherlands.

What becomes clear in the analysis of Balkenende's words is the sense of complete blamelessness. Balkenende's proclamation could be read as what Essed and Hoving (2014) call the second feature of Dutch racism, "the claim of innocence", which is rooted in a defensive response and the re-writing of history. In the resurrection of the VOC mentality, there is not only an appeal to a collective claim for innocence, but to also, through ownership, enact it. Through placing such emphasis on liberal and progressive values, the violence that underlies this innocence becomes obscured. Jordan (2014, p. 204) argues that "liberal democracies' oppressive means operate as much through spectacle, as they do through the mundane and everyday". Challenges or criticism toward these oppressive means are generally met with disavowal and the denial of racism, which Essed and Hoving (2014, p. 24) term "*smug ignorance*". Within this form of ignorance lies a rejection of the possibility of knowledge of colonialism and racism. A clear example of "smug ignorance" can be found in the nation's defence of the blackface figure Black Pete, who is part of the annual celebration of Sinterklaas.

Black Pete

I will provide a brief overview of the festivities and history of Black Pete to unpack what this figure represents in larger conversations on Dutch culture. The figure of Black Pete as we currently know it, is in part due to an 1850's children's book by Jan Schenkman called *Sint Nicolaas and zijn Knecht* (Saint Nicholas and His Servant). This publication, which draws on several older stories and tradition introduces the blackface helper to Sint Nicolaas coming through the chimney. In a second edition of the book (1855), the figure is represented as a Moor or Black enslaved person (see Faber, 2006). During the current festivities of Sinterklaas, white men and women dress up as Black Pete, who is featured with "pitch-black skin, ruby-red exaggerated lips and wooly dark hair" (Smith 2014, p. 219) to accompany the white bishop Sinterklaas or Saint Nicolas. Sinterklaas is depicted as an old white man on a horse, supposedly from Spain even though he is said to hail from Turkey originally (Van Der Pijl and Goulordava, 2014). The celebrations span several weeks and officially begin with the Sinterklaas *intocht* on 5 December. For this event, Sinterklaas arrives by boot in a selected city of the Netherlands surrounded by dozens of figures in Blackface, who continue to celebrate and share gifts; the event is also known as *pakjesavond*. In the weeks leading up to December 5, children put their shoes under the chimney at night, they're often accompanied by a carrot for Sinterklaas' horse. The children anticipate gifts to be delivered by Black Pete, who allegedly comes down the chimney, which is the dominant reasoning for the figure's blackness. Wekker (2016, p. 140) points to the contrast "between the wise old white bishop Sinterklaas, with his huge white beard, and his childlike, silly black servants". The figure of Black Pete is portrayed to be foolish

and it is "still quite common for Pete to have an unabashedly quasi-Surinamese accent, and sometimes nowadays, as fancy takes people, a Moroccan accent" (Wekker, 2016a, p. 140). The overall sense is that the blackface character has nothing to do with racism, as the holiday Sinterklaas is an innocent children's festivity. Smith (2014, p. 226) reminds us of how until very recently, Black Pete was "also a scary and threatening personage, a stern disciplinarian who was to keep children in line with the threat of carrying bad children back to Spain in one of Sinterklaas' toy bags". From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, the figure tells us an important story of the embedded fears and subjugation of Black people, and is directly related to the nation's anxious and frantic protection of the figure. The figure of Black Pete over the past year has been subject to change, from colourful to brown to Petes with a few traces of soot, however, this change has been premised on the fact that Black Pete causes pain to Black people and therefore needs to change. What is completely missed in this benevolent reading of Black Pete is that the figure dehumanises Black people.

In using Black Pete as example, we can see a larger phenomenon at work, which is related to the fear of the disappearance of Dutch culture and the presence of visible minorities and Muslims. The Dutch see this as the result of having coddled migrants too much, which has led to assimilation instead of integration (Ghorashi, 2014). Essed and Hoving (2014, p. 25) identify the final feature of Dutch racism as the *"strong sense of entitlement"*, which is ultimately about the protection of the freedom of expression under any circumstance. Further, this *"strong sense of entitlement"*, is linked to the white Dutch demand for

gratitude from minorities, which is ingrained in public discourse and everyday life. In lieu of demonstrating gratitude, there is an emotional and punitive display of resentment that takes place. Overall, Dutch mechanisms of control rely on minorities keeping silent. The persistence of the manifestation of entitlement can be found in the claim to the right to offend, by for example, advocating for the "need for religious intolerance in order to protect a Dutch country to be proud of" (Essed and Hoving, 2014, p. 25). This religious intolerance is directly related to the widespread islamophobia in the Netherlands, and widely picked up by right wing political parties and the media. Diversity and integration scholar Halleh Ghorashi (2014) provides more insight into the trope of the "ungrateful migrant" by pointing to the overall sentiment that migrants took advantage of Dutch hospitality. Overall, what the concept of Dutch racism demonstrates is how within Dutch culture, the migrant becomes fixed as inherently ungrateful and therefore perpetually deviant of the white Dutch norms. The nostalgic colonial call for a VOC mentality, the denial of Black Pete as racist and the rise of islamophobia produce specific anti-black and anti-migrant sentiments, which are obscured by the freedom of expression and the right to offend as an expression of tolerance. Having set out the main characteristics of Dutch racism, I will now address how we might read BMR experiences within this context.

The Politics of Belonging

The category of 'experience' was pertinent for BMR collectives and collective organising strategies. Archival materials such as BMR magazines show how experience was used to

share proficiencies and to forge solidarity. Until the 1980s, the Dutch state policy emphasised the return of migrants or so-called guest workers to their countries of origin. However, labour migration became more permanent, which meant that migrants from the former colonies as well as labour migrants were subject to renewed Dutch state policies. The effects of these policies and the Dutch state violence that undergirded these policies informed the need to develop BMR feminism. In analysing BMR experiences in this thesis, I acknowledge that all experience is lived and therefore requires critical analysis of knowledge that is produced from 'experience'. The work of Black feminist sociologist Gail Lewis (1996) on the multivocality of Black women's experiences within social work is particularly poignant in developing a theoretical understanding of experience. Lewis (1996, p. 25) demonstrates the need to challenge essentialist notions of the category of experience to consider how one becomes a "historically constituted subject". In doing so, it is important to acknowledge that experience is constituted within a wider historical analysis in which race operates as a metalanguage. I follow Lewis (1996, p. 28) in asking "how and when the category of 'experience' is mobilized" and what it's use is for looking at political movements. Overall, my aim in engaging with the 'category of experience' as a theoretical framework is to think through the local, historical, transnational and geographical implications of knowledge produced by BMR women.

Within the BMR Movement, women started indexing their experiences with gendered racism through forming collectives, creating publications, radio shows, and making cultural productions. In 1991, Essed coined the term, "everyday racism", to offer a

theoretical framework to make sense of vernacular racialised experiences, which was met with deep disbelieve and rage by Dutch academia and the general public. In a review of two key texts by Essed (1990; 1991), Wekker (1994, p. 339) writes that the reception of the work shows how there is a "tendency of the dominant group to punish, ridicule, marginalise, and pathologize the messenger of the bad news of racism". Within the BMR movement, Essed's texts became foundational and provided a point of reference from which to make sense of everyday experiences of gendered racism that were typically negated. The term recognises racism as a structure with ideological dimensions and connects this with routine situations in everyday life. Essed (1991, p. 3) explains, "everyday racism is racism, but not all racism is everyday racism". The concept of "everyday racism" is situated in "systematic, recurrent, familiar practices" (p. 3). What this engagement with "everyday racism" demonstrates within the BMR movement is the need women had to make sense and locate their racialised and gendered experiences. Moreover, as Lewis (1996) so poignantly set out, the category of 'experience' became politicised because BMR women were strategizing how they could use their subsequent experiences to organise a broad range of ethnicities and communities. In this sense, there is an important political impetus to unpack and learn what BMR experiences told the movement about political mobilisation and the rise of feminist consciousness. Overall, BMR experiences also illustrate how the Dutch constituted themselves vis-à-vis the "Other", which further shapes our understanding of race in the Netherlands.

There is a popular saying in Dutch, *doe maar gewoon, dan doe je al gek genoeg* (just be normal then you are crazy enough), which perfectly encapsulates the emotional investment and control that is tied to the notion of belonging in the Netherlands. The politics of belonging play out on multiple levels. There is an identifiable emotional pull, which indeed manifests as control, to integration and to fitting into the nation. The earlier discussion on Dutch racism exemplifies how this control is exerted. Belonging, for the Dutch is also deeply tied to the imaginary of citizenship, which I will briefly unpack here for the purpose of thinking through how this shapes BMR experiences. Nira Yuval-Davis, Kalpana Kannabiran and Ulrike Vieten (2006, p. 2) argue that narratives on identity "are contested, fluid and constantly changing but are clustered around some hegemonic constructions of boundaries between 'self' and 'other' and between 'us' and 'them' and are closely related to political processes". We can recognise these hegemonic constructions in the earlier referenced letter by Prime Minister Rutte in which there is a clear demarcation of those who behave outside of the bounds of belonging and those who perform 'correctly'. This differentiation between 'us' and 'them' is also ingrained in the use of the terminology *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* in the Netherlands. Generally speaking, *allochtoon* is a marker to indicate (a person) who is not from *here* (i.e. being of colour) and *autochtoon* is used for those who are native (i.e. being white) to the Netherlands (see Wekker, 2016a). These words derive from Greek and are typically used within physical geography to refer to rock formations. The term *allochtoon* is understood to mean emerging from another soil and stands in opposition to the use of *autochtoon*, meaning the same and emerging from this soil. Martina and Schor (2018, p. 154) assert that "Bodies, which are always-already mediated

through race, are, then, territorialised through terms like *allochtoon* and its opposite *autochtoon* (native), and it is through geography by way of soil properties that racialised bodies are consigned to different physical and metaphorical spaces". The term *allochtoon*, widely used in policy, population management, politics, and everyday language, refers to those who are born abroad or a person for whom at least one parent was born abroad. A differentiation is made between first- and second-generation Dutch, as well as those who have a western 'migration background' and those who have a 'non-western migration background'. [9] Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Dutch Antillean migrants are typically understood to fall under the latter category. However, this posed complex questions on nationality for post-colonial migrants. Suriname and the Dutch Antilles had always been part of the Dutch Kingdom, and yet migrants from these countries were now to be understood as from "different soil". Wekker (2016a, p. 23) states that, "Both concepts, allochtoon and autochtoon, are constructed realities, which make it appear as if they are transparent, clearly distinguishable categories, while the cultural mixing and matching that has been going on cannot be acknowledged". However, commonly it is understood that those who are of colour are *allochtoon*, thereby setting a "racialization process in motion" (Wekker, 2016a, p. 23). Important to note is that the category of *allochtoon* is itself not fully fixed. Wekker (2016a, p. 23) sets out that Indos were able to move out of this category and Surinamese people are on their way out, however, Islamic people are now understood as

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[9] CBS (*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*) [Statistics Netherlands] provides context to the changing definition and differentiation between western and non-western migration backgrounds here: https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/faq/specifiek/wat-verstaat-het-cbs-onder-een-allochtoon-

the "ultimate other". At the end of 2016, the term *allochtoon* was officially replaced by "a person with a migration background", however, the usage of *allochtoon* is still ingrained in the Dutch collective imagination when it pertains to belonging. What this discussion on the terminology of *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* shows is how the notion of belonging is tied up with land, soil, territory and lineage. To be of Dutch soil, in this sense, is understood as being part of an unattainable puritan good, thus, if not part of this, one is forevermore an outsider. This becomes even clearer through the persistence of the term, even when second or third generation immigrants are born in the Netherlands they are not seen as "Dutch". I will now turn to the notion of the cultural archive to understand why and how these politics of belonging are constructed within the Dutch imagination.

The Cultural Archive

Having mapped out key debates and theoretical concepts that provide insight into the workings of race in the Netherlands, I want to briefly turn to the role of the cultural archive in the construction of these narratives. Wekker's (2016a, pp. 1–2) interrogation of "white innocence" comes forth out of the need "to write an ethnography of dominant white Dutch self-presentation". This work builds on earlier work about Dutch racism (Essed and Hoving, 2014) where scholars start to make sense of the aggression with which the Dutch vehemently deny their racism. Through the prism of "white innocence" (Wekker, 2016a), we start to understand how white Dutch people constitute their presence and relationship to the 'Other' and their subsequent histories in the Netherlands. Wekker (2016a) addresses

these paradoxes through excavating the "cultural archive", drawing on postcolonial theorist Edward Said (1993), as the primary site from which to unpack how four hundred years of colonial rule have shaped the prevalent notion of "white innocence". Wekker (2009, p. 4) argues, "layer upon layer of images have gotten deposited in that cultural archive, and we never have looked closely at them, at how those images and knowledges have formed us". Building further on the notion of the cultural archive, Said (1993, p. 52) sets out that the archive is made up of "a particular knowledge and structures of attitude and reference". The cultural archive thus presents us with a pattern, an assemblage of perspectives, texts, and ways of knowing that are deemed superior over others. As such, the cultural archive perhaps provides the meta-narrative through which we can understand the political conditions of our time. Overall, what the cultural archive, in this case of Dutch imperialism, tells us, is that the ways in which we understand race and race relations today, including its intersections with gender, sexuality and class, is informed by four hundred years of colonial rule that has shaped the place that race holds in the Netherlands. I draw on this theoretical concept here to situate the BMR movement in relation to the cultural archive and to demonstrate how the BMR movement and their archives punctuate and rupture this meta-narrative, not merely as critique, but as knowledge formation. Understanding how the cultural archive is shaped and what kinds of knowledges are part of this cultural archive requires a particular practice of reading.

The cultural archive functions as a broader theoretical concept to analyse examples of Dutch representations of race within the media and politics as well as everyday

manifestations of racism and their affects. Wekker (2016a) draws on a wide range of case studies to demonstrate how Dutch white self-perception operates and is lodged within the cultural archive. Said (1993, p. 51) suggests reading the archive "not univocally but *contrapuntally*, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts". In other words, when we excavate and analyse how manifestations of race play out, we need to keep these competing histories in mind. In the Netherlands, the cultural archive shaped the colour-blind consensus through which difference is made visible and invisible at the same time. Citing Prins (2002), Wekker (2016a, p. 15–16) explains, "The implicit and infernal message, the double bind we get presented with all the time is: 'If you want to be equal to us, then don't talk about your differences; but if you are different from us, then you are not equal'". What then becomes most apparent about the idea of "innocence" is that it entails "not-knowing, but also not wanting to know" (p. 17). This persistence of "not-wanting to know" then also speaks to why BMR experiences are generally dismissed, both within white feminism but also within wider historical debates. Engaging with the work and knowledge production of the BMR movement provides another way to read and think with the gendered and racialised histories of slavery, colonialism, migration and sexuality in the Netherlands. The movement adopted a firm "translocal" stance through offering a theoretical and practical analysis and model for local organising and transnational collaboration. Having set out the wider implications of race in the Netherlands, I want to turn to what we have to gain by

situating the BMR movement as part of a transnational circulation of feminist and queer exchange.

Transnational Circuits of Feminist and Queer Exchange

I understand the BMR movement to be firmly situated within a broader circuit of transnational exchange. In theorising these transnational exchanges, I draw on transnational feminism and queer diaspora studies. My overall aim is to situate the BMR movement and their contributions through a broader trans local prism which does justice to the scope of BMR organising. In this analysis, I follow Brent Hayes Edwards' (2003, p. 7) understanding that "discourses of internationalism *travel*". It is through the travelling and exchange of ideas that these discourses become "translated, disseminated, reformulated, and debated in transnational contexts marked by difference" (Hayes Edwards, 2003, p. 7). I situate my analysis in conversation with scholarship on transnational feminism, which emerged specifically to make sense of asymmetric processes of globalisation within feminist and gender studies (Swarr and Nagar, 2010, p. 3). While this body of scholarship grew out of the U.S. and Canadian academy, the development of transnational feminisms continues to derive from what Swarr and Nagar (2010, p. 4) describe as: "the intellectual and political legacies of women of colour/third world/multicultural/international/global feminisms". The term transnational has been deployed in relationship to themes of migration, organising, sexual configurations, and cultural production. Consequently, the use of the term "transnational" is widespread and scholars have cautioned against the

overuse of the term (Grewal and Kaplan, 2001). Yet, this also makes transnational feminism highly self-reflexive as a discipline. Swarr and Nagar (2010, p. 12) argue that "transnational feminist studies is a necessarily unstable field that must contest its very definition in order to be useful". While this might read as a contradictory statement, it allows transnational feminism, as theory and praxis, to interrogate the very power relations it seeks to tackle. Transnational feminism, following Swarr and Nagar (2010), offers a set of understandings, tools and practices that can attend to the multiple transnational dimensions of the BMR movement. At the same time, we need to address the tensions that underlie transnational feminism and its relationship with Black and indigenous feminisms as well as queer theory, disability and transgender studies. In using transnational feminism as a theoretical framework and praxis, I therefore also take into account what (or who) might disappear in using such a framework. The BMR movement, due to its highly entangled feminist and queer knowledge production, demands a careful reading of how the transnational and diasporic travel. While these terms and bodies of thought overlap, they also carry very distinct meaning, which I further demonstrate in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

As set out in the introduction, this thesis does not aim to generalise BMR experiences, but seeks to understand how the specific entanglements of being situated as "Black", "migrant" and "refugee" subjects within a post-colonial nation state manifest a transnational existence. Transnational feminism is understood to create a workable balance to ground a feminist analysis in local praxis as well as understanding the local within a broader cross-national process (Alexander and Mohanty, 1997, p. xix). What does this workable balance

look like in the theorisation of the BMR movement? And what are alternative modes of analysis to understand and situate diasporic circuits of feminist and queer exchange? To think through who is and who is not accounted for in transnational feminism, we must acknowledge that equating the idea of 'globalisation' with 'transnational' or 'diasporic' is not without critique. Grewal and Kaplan (2001, p. 664) question: "is everyone and anything always already displaced and hence "transnational"? These questions are imperative because the "transnational" is not fixed. This is inherent to studying movements and the building of movements because they are unfixed; movements are always in *movement* themselves. In my theorisation of the transnational, I am most interested in how practices and everyday manifestations of diasporic kinship, intimacy, and feminist and queer forms of care inform and shape an intricate network of connections and exchange. To me, this is where transnational praxis is embodied and lived.

Home and Belonging

Questions on the politics of location, community, home and belonging shaped the collective organising strategies of the BMR movement. The experiences of BMR women are pertinent to gain a closer and more nuanced understanding how race operates in the Netherlands, and to think about how processes of racialisation unfold. The politics of belonging, home and locality have been broadly picked up within migration, diaspora and transnational studies. Diaspora is not a widely used term in the Netherlands and is still frequently evoked in relationship to a 'home country'. Black British Cultural Studies

scholars Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall most notably shifted the concept of diaspora away from a fixed origin or homeland framework. I follow Hall's (1990) well-known articulation of diaspora here as cultural identity, where the term refers not to an essential trait. Hall (1990, p. 235) notes that cultural identity is comprised of "...the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*". The BMR movement is best understood through foregrounding an analysis of 'difference', which requires as Hayes Edwards (2003, p. 13) suggests, that we "consider the status of that difference". In the discussion of the BMR collectives in this thesis, I pay specific attention to how difference is articulated through feminist and queer political lenses. My aim here is not to provide an exhaustive overview of diaspora studies, but to question what we might gain from applying this framework to the BMR movement to engage more deeply with what it means to belong and to 'make home' in the Netherlands.

In my discussion of Dutch racism thus far it becomes apparent that belonging in the Dutch nation is a highly contested subject matter. However, in thinking more critically about how notions of 'home' are configured for BMR women, I examine how the BMR movement constituted its own politics of belonging. According to Avtar Brah (1996, p. 4), home offers a "discourse of locality" and "connotes our networks of family, kin, friends, colleagues and various other 'significant others'". In relationship to narratives of migration and estrangement, Ahmed (1999, p. 330) situates home as "not a particular place that one simply inhabits, but more than once place: there are too many homes to allow place to secure the

roots or routes of one's destination". For the BMR movement, hailing from a range of diverse countries and regions, the notion of home conjures multiple imaginaries. These imaginaries of home, by no means static, are carefully interwoven with how BMR women made 'home' with each other in the Netherlands. I specifically address the politics of home and location in Chapter Three, where I engage with the Flamboyant collective. The accounts and stories of the BMR movement provided throughout this thesis push back against essentialist notions of belonging and open up a more complex, nuanced and dynamic understanding of what it might mean to have diasporic experiences.

Queer Diaspora

The use of queer and feminist bodies of scholarship to situate 'diaspora' shifts more linear, traditional and often male-centred readings of diaspora. I purposefully draw on queer and feminist scholarship here because the BMR movement demonstrates that there is an important overlap between these two bodies of thought. However, the use of the theoretical framework of 'queer diaspora' (Gopinath, 2005; 2018; Wesling, 2008) to analyse the experiences of the BMR movement is not without tension. In using this framework, there is a pre-conceived notion that the movement is read as queer. While, the BMR movement included gay and lesbian subjectivities, which I read as queer, I am not arguing that the movement was solely queer. Nevertheless, 'queer' offers us a way to disrupt situating the BMR movement solely through the prism of gender and ethnicity studies, and thereby provides a more comprehensive reading of the movement. In this sense, this thesis asks:

What does it mean to *queer* migration? In which ways is migration *queer*? Anthropologist Martin F. Manalansan (2006, p. 225) argues that a queer perspective on sexuality "can enrich gender and migration research by unravelling under-examined assumptions about kinship, marriage desires, and social roles". In this sense, 'queer' challenges static readings of migration and opens up new possibilities to understand kinship. I do not aim to resolve the tensions that underlie the use of queer or intend to negate what lesbian and gay studies has to offer, however, I will make these tensions productive by thinking through the potential and limitations of 'queer diaspora'.

The framework 'queer diaspora' offers innovative ways to conceptualise BMR practices, and subjectivities, and challenges linear understandings of coloniality, migration and nationalism. Moreover, this framework, as this thesis shows, offers a layered and comprehensive reading of transnational kinship, intimacy, and cultural work. Gender and sexuality studies scholar Gayatri Gopinath's (2005; 2018) work on 'queer diaspora' is predominantly focused on South Asia and its diaspora but holds resonance for other diasporic communities grappling with racism and colonial violence. Gopinath (2005, p. 4) argues that it is through the "queer diasporic body that these histories are brought to the present; it also through the queer diasporic body that their legacies are imaginatively contested and transformed". Within the Dutch imagination, queerness is not imagined to be part of the migratory histories of BMR women, which I will further unpack in Chapter Four on *Sister Outsider*. While this thesis does not directly engage with the nationalism of the home countries of BMR women, the accounts and stories of BMR women do speak to

how nationalism operates as part of their diasporic experience. Further, what the accounts and archival materials of BMR women demonstrate is the need to move away from heterosexual nationalist readings of diaspora. In this vein, Gopinath (2005, p. 11) argues, "A queer diasporic framework productively exploits the analogous relation between nation and diaspora on the one hand, and between heterosexuality and queerness on the other: in other words, queerness is to heterosexuality as the diaspora is to the nation". Using a queer diasporic framework to locate the experiences of the BMR movement disrupts as Gopinath (2005, p. 11) points out, "certain strands of Euro-American queer studies that centre white gay male subjectivity, while simultaneously fixing the queer, nonwhite racialized, and/or immigrant subject as insufficiently politicized and 'modern'". In this regard, the experiences of BMR women in relationship to queer and feminist organisation offer a rich tapestry of practices that shift what becomes legible as queer within a broader heteronormative, dominant framework.

The use of 'queer diaspora' offers a more complex understanding of where queer of colour theory resides. In other words, by situating the BMR movement through the lens of a queer diasporic framework, I purposefully also shift the attention of queer of colour critique and theory to the Netherlands and its colonial histories. Queer of colour critique, according to Ferguson (2018, p. 1), responds to the "social processes of migration, neoliberal state and economic formations, and the development of racial knowledges and subjectivities about sexual and gender minorities within the United States". While the majority of scholarship is developed on/from the U.S., work by Wekker (2006) on same-sex *mati* practices between

Afro-Surinamese working class women and Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley's (2008) on theorising queer theory from the Middle Passage, offer more nuanced readings on how 'queer' is configured across non-western geographies. In terms of the BMR movement, I situate literary salons, theatre productions, poetry, and dance performances as queer of colour thought. In doing so, I emphasise the need to tune into the 'everyday' expressions and gestures that shape queer of colour praxis and theory, which I further tease out in Chapter Four and Five.

Finally, I will briefly acknowledge the hierarchies of knowledge production that are at play in this theoretical discussion. Transnational feminist scholars are actively investigating hierarchies of knowledge production within their field (Alexander and Mohanty, 2010, p. 27). As mentioned earlier, much of transnational feminist praxis and discourse is pushed and shaped by women of colour and women from the so-called global south. Similarly, women within the BMR movement have actively contributed to transnational feminist organising and knowledge production but are not acknowledged for this work. Therefore, I will examine what implications the use of a transnational feminist praxis has for this project. This is both a theoretical and practical question, which will also return in the discussion of methods and methodologies in Chapter Two. Yet, it is important to note that by using a transnational feminist framework, I am (re)producing knowledge on a Black and women of colour feminist movement that to a large extent falls outside of the dominant institutional knowledge production structures. Alexander and Mohanty (2010, p. 29) ask: "who is knowledgeable and which knowledges and ways of knowing are legitimized and

which are discounted?" While both authors root this question in relationship to larger concerns about curriculum and pedagogy, I would argue that this question could also be applied to the use of archives in transnational feminist studies. In terms of thinking about what kinds of knowledges are legitimatised, the archives of movements such as the BMR movement play an important role because they are typically imagined outside of dominant transnational feminist dialogues. My inquiry into why the BMR archives matter to feminist research, and in which ways the use of these archives poses challenges for the telling of BMR stories, is directly related to the question of the conditions of knowledge production. I will therefore now turn to the role of the archive as theoretical thematic in this thesis.

The Role of Archives

In this section, I will specifically address the theoretical considerations of situating the archive as a thematic in this thesis. Using materials of the BMR movement and engaging with what is left behind to construct a genealogy of the movement requires a theoretical consideration of how the archive is understood for this project. Even more, as noted in the introduction, I situate the archive as both a material and performative site, which allows for a richer reading of what roles archives play in feminist and queer knowledge production. Across academic disciplines there is a vigorous engagement with the archive and scholarship on the use of archives is widespread. While I am particularly invested in the role of feminist and queer archives, I do draw from a range of disciplines that continue to engage the notion of 'archive', long after what is called the 'Archival Turn' in the humanities

and social sciences in the 1990s (see Eichhorn, 2013). This broadening of the use of 'archive' across academic disciplines demonstrates that the archive is an active site and not a passive storehouse (Schwartz and Cook, 2002). Further, there is an increasingly urgent need to consider the role of the digital for traditional archives (see Wernimont and Flanders, 2010), which shapes contemporary debates on the preservation of materials. While I do not directly engage with digital archives in this project, I do recognise the importance in producing scholarship that critically looks at the racial taxonomies that underly the multiplicity of the digital archive. The lack of funding to digitalise materials of the BMR movement is therefore also inherently a politically motivated discussion.

The theorising of archives must also extend to the workings of the archival institution. Although I am not a specialist in archival studies, I have learned a lot from conducting research within archival institutions, which I further address in Chapter Two. Archival scholars point out that the institutional archive adheres to its own set of theories, methodologies and practices (Schwartz and Cook, 2002, p. 2). However, obviously the institutional archive's workings are never neutral and always remain influenced by the politics of memory, collection, and preservation. Archive theory and practice has been challenged by feminist praxis that continues to address the lack of representation of women within the archive (Cifor and Wood, 2017). In the 1970s, there was a push by feminist movements from women who spoke out about the need to become part of archival collections, and as a result addressed the absence of research on women that had been present in archival collections (Cifor and Wood, 2017). In particular, when it comes to

working with feminist and queer archival materials of colour, we are forced to take into account how race operates within the institutional workings of the archive. The BMR movement recognised the lack and absence of documentation centres and libraries that held specialised collections relevant to BMR women, which resulted in setting up the Flamboyant documentation centre, which I further discuss in Chapter Three. Documentation and access to information was understood to be an important part of feminist movement building. As discussed earlier in this chapter, I use both feminist and queer scholarship to analyse the BMR movement. In this sense, I also situate the BMR materials as feminist and queer archives. The distinctions between "feminist" and "queer" archives are less evident in the BMR materials because of the organisational politics that underlie the collectives I analyse. Overall, I argue that archival studies benefit from feminist and queer of colour readings of the archive.

Living Archives

One of the main premises of this thesis is that BMR archives produce a particular kind of 'liveness'. In this sense, I actively engage with the notion of temporality across the project. In reference to the African and Asian Visual Artists' Archive, Hall (2001, p. 89) offers the notion of a 'living archive of the diaspora', in which 'living' signals "present, on-going, continuing, unfinished, open-ended". I concur that this 'liveness' is even further articulated in engaging with archival materials across temporalities. The archive, particularly for younger generations, becomes a site for connection and community. Within feminist

studies, Kate Eichhorn (2013, p. 4) states that the archive has been adopted as "theory, curatorial trope, poetic form, subject of inquiry, and site of research". The broadening of the archive allows making place for histories that have been marginalized, and therefore do not become part of dominant history making. I suggest that feminism and queerness open up different modes of relating to history and therefore to the archive. The BMR archive, which is by no means a uniform collection, could be described, to borrow Ahmed's (2017, p. 1) words, as the materials that document "living a feminist life". Situating the archives as "open-ended" and "unfinished" means that we can tune into the multiple registers and temporalities that are part of "living a feminist life". For the BMR movement this includes multiple localities and geographies.

Thinking through the non-static living nature of archives requires an engagement with temporality. Hayes Edwards (2003, p. 7) argues that undertaking a project that tunes into how diaspora travels, necessitates the need for "articulating an *archive*, in the sense not so much of a site or mode of preservation of a national, institutional, or individual past, but instead of a "generative system": in other words: a discursive system that governs the possibilities, forms, appearance, and regularity of particular statements, objects, and practices". Locating the BMR archives as a "generative system" allows us to adhere to the multiple temporalities and geographies that are part of the movement. Shifting through different modalities of time and space is inherent to archival research. Subsequently, Eichhorn (2013) argues that the archive allows us to be in history and time differently. Often the pull of archives is understood to be a recovery of the past. Yet, as Eichhorn (2013, p. 5)

argues, drawing on Jacques Derrida (1996) and Carolyn Steedman (2011), the archive is understood as a way to interact with the on-going presence of "legacies, epistemes and traumas pressing down on the present". In this sense, the archive offers much more than merely an engagement with the past; archives speak to the role of power in discerning how the past is produced and how it reaches us in the present. Scholarship within queer studies further exemplifies the complex relationship to archival knowledge production. The documentation of queer history does not speak for itself. Long histories of policing queer people and their actions have created a contentious relationship with the very idea of documentation. Documentation of queerness was not always safe. Queerness, described as a history of displacement (Dinshaw, 1999), provides insight into a "queer way of life" (Halberstam, 2005) and is directed towards "futurity and hope" (Muñoz, 1996), which informs the conceptualisation of what a queer archive is and can become. Conversely, queer theorist Halberstam (2005, p. 170) argues the archive is not merely a repository but also "a theory of cultural relevance, a construction of collective memory, and a complex record of queer activity". In other words, the archive does not simply hold feminist and queer stories, but it also activates them and makes visible the intricate networks that underlie queer activity. Thinking through queerness as a form of displacement brings about larger questions about what it means to document displacement.

Materiality, Evidence and Ephemera

In theorising feminist and queer archives and their use, I will further expand on the

interrelationship between materiality, evidence and ephemera. Here I draw on performance studies and queer scholarship, which moves away from the written archive to include performances and gestures. Performance studies scholar and queer theorist Muñoz (1996, p. 6) asserts, "Central to performance scholarship is queer impulse that intends to discuss an object whose ontology, in its inability to "count" as a proper "proof", is profoundly queer". This conceptual framework brings about questions around what counts as "proper 'proof'" of queerness. For the BMR movement, one might ask: What made the movement queer? How does this queerness become evident? Muñoz (1996) explains that being queer and documenting queerness was not always a possibility. This further becomes clear in considerations that the BMR movement had to make in the visibility of their queerness, and therefore the 'proof' or evidence of queerness. In this sense, Muñoz (1996, p. 6) states, "queerness has instead existed as innuendo, gossip, fleeting moments". This becomes clearer in my discussion of queer collectives in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, and in reference to the futurity of the archive in Chapter Seven. In the accounts of queer BMR women it is evident how queerness was articulated within intimate spaces such as at parties, gatherings, around kitchen tables and within literary circles. Muñoz (1996, p. 7) argues that the archives of queerness are "makeshift and randomly organized" because historically the need for scholarship on race, queerness, and feminism has been dismissed, which subsequently impacts the making of archives. The very idea of a queer archive, Muñoz (1996) then explains, brings about a tension between the continuous disavowal of minoritarian histories and the very role of the institutions in the structured neglect of these histories. This theorisation of the archive makes it imperative to understand the

relationship between queerness, documentation and evidence, both within and outside the bounds of the institutional archive. Further, what this critical discussion on evidence points to is the desperate need to move away from western and dominant readings of 'queerness' as in direct correlation to proving someone's sexuality as 'queer'. Although queerness manifests in a multitude of ways for queers of colour, it often becomes illegible for the white gay gaze. The stories and accounts of BMR women thus "grants entrance and access to those who have been locked out of official histories, and for that matter, 'material reality'" (Muñoz, 1996, p. 9). Since movements like the BMR movement cannot solely rely on this access on the basis of historical documentation, as there is a lack thereof, other forms of understanding materiality become important. Muñoz (1996, p. 10) links ephemera to "alternate models of textuality and narrativity like memory and performance, a kind of evidence of what has transpired but certainly not the thing itself". This reading of ephemera is placed in relation to the social experiences of queerness. In other words, ephemera, similar to memory or anecdotes, reflect how 'experiences' index queerness and thus constitute an archive themselves.

Having situated the importance to extend the theorising of archives beyond static notions of evidence and documentation, I will briefly address the importance of temporality here. These discussions on the imaginary and potential of queerness also extend to the future of queer archives. The archival materials that I used in this thesis take on a renewed meaning that is future-orientated. In other words, the engagement with the archive as thematic is not about excavating the past. Queerness, according to Muñoz (1996, p. 16) is "a temporal

arrangement in which the past is a field of possibility in which subjects can act in the present in the service of a new futurity". In this project, I situate the making of a BMR genealogy "in service of a new futurity" (p. 16). A queer approach to the archive allows us to see different events, gestures, performances and moments as an expression, or extension, of the queer archive. I am stimulated by these theoretical concepts as they offer a way to re-think the archive as the preferred end-goal for BMR histories. To centre the archive as a thematic in this project also means grappling with that which cannot be archived, as well as queer histories that are not able be documented or represented within the institutional archive.

Temporality and Archival Futures

While the notion of the archive is typically tied to a nostalgic notion of longevity, queer temporality upsets a future driven discourse through placing temporality within another context. To this extent, Halberstam (2005, p. 152) argues that queer temporalities disrupt seeing "longevity as the most desirable future". Within queer studies, the theorisation of orientation is important to make sense of what it looks like to diverge from a heteronormative path (see Ahmed, 2006). Muñoz (2009, p. 65) argues that queerness is informed by "the intention of being lost". Queerness therefore provides an important theoretical contribution that troubles the sense of fixity. Queerness is not fixed, but divergent and ongoing, which means a queer archive is inherently an unfinished project. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, Muñoz (2009, p. 1) situates queerness as an ongoing

project that is not here yet, that necessitates a centring of futurity and hope. For Muñoz (2009), performance studies opens up the theoretical and conceptual possibilities of understanding queer acts, and therefore queer archives within a different schema. To this end, Muñoz (2009, p. 1) argues queerness is a performance: "a doing for and toward the future". Finally, I suggest that the notion of the queer archive is inherently about what it means to live a queer life. The embodiment of queer life and its documentation therefore requires a queering of the idea of evidence, in which evidence can be understood as the radical trace of histories that have been locked out of official modes of knowledge production. In this sense, when queerness is not emptied from race, we can understand the very presence of queers of colour to subvert traditional meanings of the archive.

The Politics of Narration

Everyday stories, accounts, narratives and archival materials all constitute BMR experiences and manifest practices of kinship, intimacy and care of the BMR movement. I have situated the larger frameworks in which these experiences act by thinking through how overarching narratives on race and belonging in the Dutch nation play out. In this section, I will further tease out why the politics of narration need to be considered for how experience is theorised. I recognise that there is an important dialectic relationship between stories and narratives which operates throughout this thesis. Drawing on John Paley and Gail Eva (2005), Gunaratnam and Oliviere (2009) argue that there is a difference between narratives and stories. Narratives at their most basic are focused on events, lacking

the complex structure and emotionality of stories. As such, while "all stories are narratives…not all narratives have the organisational structure or evoke the emotional reaction of stories" (p. 2). I argue that the stories and accounts of the BMR movement punctuate and rupture the wider dominant and hegemonic narratives that are told by and about the Dutch. What then do we make of stories coming out of the BMR movement, and in which ways does such rupture take place? Each of the chapters that deal with a BMR collective specifically interrogates these ruptures. It is important to note that these ruptures are not understood as merely critique or response, but rather as a political claim to telling stories that matter outside of the bounds of white heteronormative understandings of race, gender and sexuality.

Feminist Narratives

In general, feminist research is heavily informed by the need to tell and share women's experiences and perspectives. Feminist and queer stories come in many forms and are a part of wider discourses that recognise the power of storytelling. Feminist scholarship has taken up the category of the autobiographical, which is also relevant to many other disciplines such as cultural studies, history, literature, sociology (see Cosslett, Lury and Summerfield, 2000). Further, it has become common for feminist researchers to consider how we relate to the research process (see Letherby, 2014). Placing oneself within the research is an important practice as it allows for an interrogation of positionality as well as the opportunity to bring in experience. Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins (1990, p.

48) states that experience should be treated as a valid form of knowledge production. This stance inspired seeing alternative sites such as "music, literature, daily conversations and everyday behaviour" as valid locations to articulate core themes of Black feminist consciousness (p. 48). For the development of Black feminism, the use of the autobiographical has therefore been a prominent tool (e.g. Braxton, 1989; Ahmed, 1997; Mirza, 1997; Anim-Addo, 2013). Feminist stories are inherently political, and the BMR movement presents a myriad of stories deriving from the archives as well as the interviews I have conducted on themes that pertain to experiences related to race, gender and class, intimacy, kinship and death. In feminist narratives, there is a sense of individual and collective stories that often inform each other.

The stories that Western feminism tells about feminist history determine, to a great extent, how the BMR movement is located within feminist knowledge production. In this chapter, I make a link between liberalism and tolerance as a Dutch export product at the same time as showing how gender discourse solely concerns white women and migration men of colour. Even while, as Ghorashi (2005), aptly argues, BMR feminists contributed to debates in the U.S. and U.K. on the exclusion of white feminism, there has been hardly any international or Dutch media attention for this movement. It is therefore crucial to place the 1980s BMR movement in a wider context in which narration is politicised. In *Why Stories Matter*: *The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*, feminist theorist Clare Hemmings (2011, p. 1) uses the stories that feminist tell about Western feminist theory's recent past as a way to question what is at stake in feminist storytelling. Through this, we

can begin to understand how the political grammar of feminist storytelling allows for "a different vision of a feminist past, present, and future" (p. 1). Identifying that feminist stories hold narratives of progress, loss and return is an important way to start unpacking how feminist narratives are constructed. In Hemmings' (2011) analysis, there is a close reading of academic feminist publications that detail feminist histories and processes. On feminist narratives coming out of the 1980s, Hemmings (2011, p. 40) states: "The 1980s takes on a kind of explanatory role in progress narratives, temporarily anchoring the growing realisation of difference, bringing to light the problems of unity". What is important to note here is that the decade of the 1980s becomes narrated through focusing on what feminists have done to progress the conditions of their time.

The 1980s is known to be the decade that marks a shift in feminist thinking when it pertains to "difference". During this time, feminists from the global south start challenging the universal category of "woman". Influential feminist texts such as Chandra Mohanty's *Under Western Eyes* (1988) and Gayatri Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak* (1988) influence the development of a feminist praxis that takes into account differences of race, class, sexuality and nation. What Hemmings (2011) demonstrates through drawing on feminist journals that tell progress narratives in the 1980s, is that Western feminism starts to represent itself as being considerably attentive to progress (p. 44). In this sense, Western feminism co-opts the academic and activist contributions of Black feminists who challenged the whiteness of feminist scholarship in the first place. There is thus a danger present in the ways in which white feminism pays attention to Black feminist and women of colour scholarship. Within

the Dutch context, popular white feminism adheres to narratives of progress and tolerance without critically engaging with race. One of the most notable examples is the chief editor Cisca Dresselhuys from the feminist publication *Opzij* who declared she would never hire a veiled woman. In this vein, Wekker (2018, p. 140) argues that the Dutch see themselves as:

> Champions on women's liberation, and the emancipation of gays, lesbians, and transgender people; inherently and ethically on the right side of all kinds of socio-political issues; the "natural" procurers of international justice, euthanasia, the legalization of soft drugs, prostitution and what not. We, in addition think of ourselves as always having been proverbially tolerant, colorblind and free of racism, so much so that others, newcomers, interlopers, notably people of colour, now take advantage of us.

I cite this fragment at length here to draw attention to what it means for the Netherlands to have built their national image on "women's liberation and the emancipation of gays, lesbians, and transgender people" (p. 140). This investment is in white women breaking the glass ceiling and gay and lesbians attaining equality. Hemmings' (2011) theorisation of feminist stories offers a framework to start recognising how 'progress', 'loss' and 'return' narratives start to show up as signifiers in the telling of stories about Dutch national identity and the public response to interrogating race. Where Hemmings solely focuses on academic sources, I deliberately draw on a wide variety of sources such as BMR magazines, personal exchanges, radio shows, and visual cultures. This approach shifts how we read the

dominance of Western storytelling, and ultimately requires a rethinking of what becomes legible as archive. I, therefore, deliberately do not situate the BMR archives as counter or alternative archives. Having identified what is at stake in how feminism as a discipline tells stories, I will now turn to why the use of stories is a political and social process.

To construct a genealogy of the BMR movement is to tune into what is left behind of the movement. Stories are a powerful site to explore how the past is activated. Stories, sociologist Ken Plummer (2002, p. 18) argues, have become central to social thought. Although Plummer's primary concern is the telling of sexual stories to develop a sociology of stories, this scholarly contribution is significant in starting to discern what is at stake when telling stories. The sociology of stories is concerned with the social role of stories (p. 19). In the telling of stories, Plummer states that the mechanisms through which stories are told matters. Indeed, using archival materials, as a mechanism to tell stories is inevitably different to conducting interviews, which allows for a different engagement with the stories that unfold (I will further discuss these implications in relationship to methods and methodologies in the following Chapters). There are set of considerations in using the concept of the story, according to Plummer. The "nature of stories" as well as the "making of stories" are significant to consider in discerning how stories are told and what space is created for the telling of stories (Plummer, 2002, p. 29). When it comes to the nature of storytelling, I have identified stories coming out of the BMR movement to be related to questions of intimacy, kinship, loss and absence. In particular, the power dynamics that undergird the making of stories that pertain to loss and absence need to be accounted for.

I see narratives of loss and absence to be related to two broader considerations: to stories on loss and absence that speak to the early deaths of many BMR women (discussed in Chapter Two and Four), and secondly, to the impact of the silences around BMR histories within wider feminist public discourse.

Silences and Haunting

As illustrated in this chapter, the colonial past of the Dutch is cloaked with silence and denial which directly impacts how race is understood in the Netherlands today. Inevitably, the stories coming out of the BMR movement will index silences and hauntings related to this violent past that continue to surface within our contemporary society. In this section, I will address why it is imperative to consider how silence and haunting operate, within BMR stories and within larger dominant narratives produced by the Dutch. Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995, p. 48), in reference to the Haitian Revolution, identified four stages in which silences are written into the historic record: the creation of sources, the creation of archives, the creation of narratives, and the creation of formal history. Silencing is due, Trouillot (1995, p. 49) argues, to "uneven power in the production of sources, archives and narratives". It is therefore necessary to develop an analysis of power in relationship to the telling of stories. As discussed in relationship to Hemmings (2011) work, there is a political grammar to the telling of feminist stories, which results in the resonance of Western feminist stories over, for instance, Black feminist stories about feminism. Trouillot (1995) therefore suggests that power should be tracked throughout the process of

storytelling. This brings up an important set of methodological concerns that will be discussed throughout this project. In a similar vein, scholars such as Avery Gordon (2008) and Grace Cho (2008) use the concept of "haunting" to interrogate spectres of injustice as the visible unseen. The 'visible unseen' plays an important role in this project as this notion troubles the hegemonic, seemingly progressive stories the Dutch uphold. I recognise multiple modalities of the 'visible unseen', ranging from racial ordering mechanisms to the visible lingering remainders of slavery and colonialism in the spatiality and geography in the Netherlands. Haunting and the presence of ghosts are expressions of the afterlives of the silencing and denial of the role of the Dutch in the slave trade and colonial project. Sociologist Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters* (2008, p. xv) is written in response to racial capitalism in an endeavour to understand modern forms of dispossession. Haunting is related to power, as its very presence becomes a way that "abusive systems of power make themselves known" (p. xvi). Ghosts are therefore lingering reminders of these very power systems. The use of haunting allows the researcher to make visible what has been unacknowledged at first glance. In this sense, haunting is not a supranational occurrence, but becomes a mode of memory practice. Haunting, Gordon (2008, p. xvi) explains, "raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present and the future". What the work of Gordon offers us through engaging with the presence of ghosts, is a different type of (sociological) knowledge production. Cho (2008), studies trauma within the Korean diaspora and takes a psychoanalytical approach, in which the body and several cultural resources become 'an archive'. Cho explores the trauma tied to silence and what the Korean diaspora was not allowed to know. While Cho's

understanding of silence is very specific to the history of the U.S. and Korea, I recognise the importance of attending to how silence operates as a mechanism of control. In this sense, Cho (2008, p. 18) offers a theoretical framework to understand "what produces haunting and what, in turn, is produced by it". This is done through the use of "nonlinear temporalities, repetition, fantasy, and fiction" (Cho, 2008, p. 18). Cho's approach is particularly generative to understand how haunting operates on multiple competing levels. Personal and collective stories all mediate different experiences of haunting, and instead of focusing on the content of the overall narrative, Cho (2008, p. 18) suggests exploring the "traces of trauma left on it". This then leads to the question, "How, for example, is trauma transmitted across time and space through vehicles other than the speaking subject, such as the interviewee or the historical record?" (p. 18). While, this thesis does not directly examine trauma, it does engage with the traumas and traumatic events that appear within the archival materials as they pertain to the stories BMR women have told me. In this sense, archival materials detailing traumas related to specific colonial histories also carry a haunting, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Six. To map the implications of the 'visible unseen', I ask: In which ways do BMR stories haunt? What ghosts reside in the stories of the BMR movement? And how do we make these troubling spectres productive? Gordon (2008) asserts that the very essence of the figure of the ghost signals societal issues that are alive and present. Untangling the ways in which BMR stories punctuate and rupture the hegemonic meta-narratives of the Dutch point us to a deeper embodied and multi-sensory form of engagement with how BMR stories are told. Even more, using

haunting as a theoretical and methodological framework in working with archives requires us to tune into those who demand our attention.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have used my experience in the archive as a starting point, to bring together a series of key themes and theoretical perspectives that underlie this project. In the opening lines of this chapter I muse over what it means that some boxes are privileged over other boxes, and thus some histories over others. Drawing on the literature discussed, my primary argument is that the racial taxonomies of the BMR archive are a reflection of contemporary Dutch society in which race is wilfully denied; I consider this as a calling for a broader analysis of the movement. I assert that the stories coming out the BMR movement, located through interviews and archival materials, should be analysed through a transnational and diasporic lens. However, in doing so, I argue for the need for this analysis to be reflexive, which means that we need to question what is at stake in defining this project by the markers, transnational and feminist.

These discussions evidently also push and trouble our relationship with the archive. I have argued that feminist and queer theory in relation to a wider set of scholarship on archive theory encourage the broadening of the notion of the archive. Yet, while this broadening is necessary, the archive also far exceeds its own potential. The field of queer studies offers important theoretical insights into why the very idea of a 'queer archive' is an unstable one.

This is particularly true when we start considering the idea of futurity in relationship to the archive. Notably, the archive is not only tied to the past, but has an active role in that it typically preserves knowledge for the future. However, what queer theorists have argued is that this future is less certain for some than for others, either due to a resistance to following heteronormative conditions of life and/or due to their racialised and gendered position in society. Thus, the construction of race, the 'translocal' position of the BMR movement, and the instability of feminist and queer archives, inform the possibility of narration that comes out of the BMR movement. In the following chapters, I will discuss how these key themes and fields of study have shaped my research design and methodologies.

Chapter Two. Subversive Methodologies: Listening,

Mapping and Orientation

PART ONE

You say my name is ambivalence? Think of me as Shiva, a many-armed and legged body with one foot on brown soil, one on white, one in straight society, one in the gay world, the man's world, the women's, one limb in the literary world, another in the working class, the socialist, and the occult worlds. A sort of spider woman hanging by one thin strand of web.

Who, me confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me. (Anzaldúa, 1981, pp. 45–46)

All beginning in water, all ending in water.
(Brand, 2012, p. 18)

Introduction

The methodologies and methods used in this project come from a practice of experimentation and dialogue. This chapter consist of two parts, which function as interlinked 'canals'. The first part of this chapter will offer insight into my conceptual methodological framing and part two will provide a more descriptive account of how the research was conducted. Through conversing with women who had ties with the BMR movement and through engaging with archival materials, a range of questions and tensions emerged that speak to the complexities of the construction of a genealogy of the BMR

movement. This chapter puts these tensions to work: *What does it mean to grapple with fragmented and scattered histories? What does this tell us about how diasporic knowledges travel? How do the limitations of knowing an archive push us to turn to multi-sensory modes of research?* I address these questions through offering a methodological approach based on listening, mapping and orientation, situated in a conceptual framework informed by circulation and waterways. This framework is inspired by the wider connections between the politics of home and location and water, colonialism and diaspora. In developing this framework, I follow and extend on ethnographer George Marcus' (1998) multi-site ethnography, in particular in reference to the flows and movements between different sites and objects of study. In this sense, drawing on interviews and archival material is not, as Marcus (1998) explains, to merely offer different perspectives of the BMR movement. Rather, multi-sited ethnography is used to shift our focus to interflowing and multiple sites of BMR knowledge production. Marcus (1998, p. 86) states,

> In projects of multi-sited ethnographic research, de facto comparative dimensions develop instead as a function of the fractured, discontinuous plane of movement and discovery among sites as one maps an object of study and needs to posit logistics of a relationship, translation, and association among these sites. Thus, in a multi-sited ethnography, comparison emerges from putting questions to an emergent object of study whose contours, sites, and relationships are not known beforehand, but are themselves a contribution of making an account that has different, complexly connected real-world sites of investigation.

Multi-sited ethnography as offered by Marcus (1998) is particularly generative in probing the inter-relationship between interviews and archival materials. Following the flows and movements between these two sites of inquiry brings about new affinities and relationalities across time. As Marcus (1998) sets out — following people, things, metaphors, plots, stories or allegories, life histories of biography and conflict — are all modes and techniques of multi-sited ethnographies (pp. 90–95). I use a combination of these techniques, in particular following people, things, metaphors, stories and life histories (Marcus, 1998), which are woven into the empirical chapters. Marcus (1998, p. 97) points out that multi-sited fieldwork requires a "keen awareness of being within the landscape, and as the landscape changes across sites, the identity of the ethnographer requires renegotiation". In this sense, I recognise that my interviews, as well as archival research, took place within a specific time and place, and each of these sites constitute a specific landscape. In traversing and re-imagining these landscapes, I use the aquatic metaphor of circulation and waterways to imagine an overarching aqueous scape in which the BMR movement is buoyed. Rather than being marked by stasis, this scape is in constant movement, comprised of interconnected waterways and waves creating new relationalities. I draw on the work of the Forensic Oceanography workgroup based at Goldsmiths, who have conducted practice-based research following the deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea and the lack of accountability for these deaths.[10] Researcher Lorenzo Pezzani (2015, p. 10) interrogated the oceanic as follows, "the ocean as a digital archive, a

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[10] More insight into the workgroup and research can be found here: https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-left-to-die-boat (Accessed 12 June 2020).

sensorium mediated by a vast remote sensing apparatus composed of optional and thermal cameras, radars, tracking and satellite imaging technologies". Inspired by this framing of the "ocean as digital archive" where varied mediated waves constitute the 'ocean', I think through the multiple forms of sensorial connections including the digital and radio waves in locating and analysing the BMR movement. I situate the space in between the interviews and archives, as an "echo chamber" (Chude-Sokei, 2008) where waves meet, crash and create new affinities through my engagement with them. Louis Chude-Sokei's (2008) use of the "echo chamber" is derived from Black music sonic cultures, specifically reggae. In particular, Chude-Sokei (2008) shows the material reverberations of echoes in Black music coming forth out of Black migration pattersn. Chude Sokei's (2008, p. 7) idea that "After all, Diaspora also means distance and the echo is also the product and signifier of space", particularly resonates for this project. While my work is not focused on Black sonic cultures or solely the Black diaspora, I draw inspiration from the "echo chamber" metaphor here to think through the ways in which ideas, people, and objects travel and are in a constant process of translation. Overall this immersive methodology offers a multi-sensory reading of feminist and queer movement work.

Interlude: Waterways, Circulation, and Subversive Methodologies

In the previous Chapter, I set out the theoretical debates that inform how we can situate, understand and engage with the work of the BMR movement. Taking into account the unruly and unstable nature of archives, my research process does not offer a neat linear

archival recovery project. The wide range of feminist and queer subjectivities that are part of the BMR movement further speak to the need to move away from producing singular narratives on the movement. Instead, I offer a range of interrelated fragmented and scattered stories, that speak to the multi-subjectivities and experiences that come with being part of a wider diasporic movement and circuits of exchange. Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa's (1981) description of Shiva, in the opening quote of this chapter, feels particularly apt to start imagining these multi-subjectivities. In this sense, my approach to methodology is rooted in a circularity of ideas informed by kinship, and knowledge that has travelled between and among women in the diaspora.

The majority of my archival research and interviews took place in Amsterdam, my hometown. The BMR movement, however, mobilised throughout the country, in important cities such as Utrecht, The Hague, Rotterdam and Nijmegen. Each of these cities has important histories to tell about BMR networks and movement building. Yet, I am personally most familiar with the spatial and geographic landscape of Amsterdam, which informs the development of methodology and methods in this chapter. Every time I made my way to Atria on the Vijzelstraat in Amsterdam, to conduct archival research, I biked or walked alongside the infamous Dutch canals. Here, I specifically situate my own movement as a mode of research, which "allows for an orientation toward an ontology of being-in-the-making and of the entanglement of the body, knowledge, and environment, but also extends to more-than-human relations" (Norris, Bhattacharya and Powell, 2019, p. 4). Using movement in a multiplicity of ways as methodology, allows one to think about

movement in circular motions. While I trace the BMR movement, I also track my own movement through the city as a method that informs the work. I follow the idea of movement as a concept here that "extends to the ephemeral, vibrational, sonic, the drawn and rendered, the improvisational, and to streetscapes and landscapes" (Norris, Bhattacharya and Powell, 2019, p. 4). In thinking through movement as a mode of research and inquiry, I draw on spatial landscape of Amsterdam's city centre, a space from and through which my research emerged. In this respect, my methodology is also immersive as I am deliberately engaging with what moves beneath the surface of the BMR movement.

The 17th century canal district is a direct remnant of the Dutch Golden Age and continues to be one of the main tourist attractions, which I will further address in reference to the Gay Pride in Chapter Seven. Over the last few years, I became increasingly invested in the stories that these bodies of water tell. In a document composed by the Amsterdam municipality to back the bid for the UNESCO World Heritage List, which was granted in 2010, the canals are hailed as "a masterpiece of hydraulic engineering".[11] The canals are an ingenious system of fixed and moveable bridges, sluices and locks, which are still functional today. The city of Amsterdam was described as the warehouse of the world during the 17th century. *Water draws in*. There are one hundred and sixty-five canals. What do these haunted infrastructures tell us? The outer moats of the inner-city canals are built as a moat to protect the city from foreign invaders. *Water pushes out*. I ask

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[11] See WHC Nomination Documentation: https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1349.pdf (Accessed 12 June 2020).

what it means to write *from* and *with* this geographic imaginary? What do these infrastructures, waterways and circulations tell us?

The Dutch colonial city of Batavia was founded by the VOC over the ruins of Jayakarta. In 1619, a Dutch administrative and cultural headquarters in Southeast Asia for the Dutch East India Compagnie (VOC) was built. The principles of seventeenth-century Dutch planning over in the Netherlands were used in Batavia to secure domination and establish a Dutch identity (Kehoe, 2015, p. 2).

Spatial planning and water played an important role in the founding of Jayakarta, "Segregation was codified by Batavia's very form: the city's plan separated populations with unbridged canals and city walls" (Kehoe, 2015, p. 4). Water ties together and breaks open a set of entangled oceanographic histories as it pertains to Dutch colonialism. The use of water as a form of control, domination, order, and identification becomes clear in the fragment above, where we learn about the Dutch implementation of the canal system in the colonial city of Batavia, in what is now Indonesia. In this specific case, the Dutch had not thought about the changes in climate in the construction of canals in Batavia and according to reports, the canals smelled bad (Kehoe, 2015, p. 8). Subsequently, Kehoe argues, "the Dutch designers mistakenly presumed their model would function throughout

the world" (p. 8). I use this example to think through water not only as a colonial project, but to consider what the material afterlives are of the Dutch colonial engagement with water as form of domination. I am not able to offer an in-depth analysis of the Dutch hydraulic engineering projects across the world here, however, my main aim is to establish a connection between the potency of an aquatic geography and framework because of what it offers to the broader discussion on the politics of home, belonging, colonialism and diaspora. In this sense, I use the idea of circulation and waterways as a mode of analysing and locating the BMR movement to, in Patti Lather's words, "invite multiple entries and ways of reading" (Lather and Smithies, 2018, p. 35). To write about the BMR movement *from* and *with* this spatial and aquatic geography offers the possibility to become subversive in the use of methodology. In doing so, I use waterways and circulation as a form of reading and writing about the multiple fragmented and scattered stories that come out of the BMR movement. Norris, Battacharya and Powell (2019, p. 4) extend movement to "objects that might not move in the literal sense of bodily mobility but in ways that are figurative, as in the ways that objects connote memories, affect, or through their circulation of practices, uses, and meanings. This is a generative way to think about the relationality between the archival materials and BMR stories that comprise this project. I further illustrate this sense of mobility through including three intermezzos (Gathering, Slippage and Pathways) in the thesis, which serve as an extension of creating multiple forms of reading across and with circularity.

In constructing a genealogy of the BMR movement, I envision the exchanges, flows and circulation of ideas, movements and people through the water. The histories of slavery and colonialism, and the role of oceanography therein, play a pivotal role in understanding migration in our contemporary context. In Gilroy's (1993, pp. 16–17) widely influential work, *The Black Atlantic*, the Atlantic is imagined as an important transoceanic site, in which ships are imagined and understood as "living means" and "cultural and political units". Gilroy' (1993) uses the Black Atlantic to make a larger point about culture, which transcends ethnicity and nationality and to think through transatlantic culture. Omise'eke Natasha Tinseley (2008) challenges Gilroy's (1993) *Black Atlantic* through addressing Gilroy's erasure of sexuality, and theorises that the Black Atlantic has always been a queer Atlantic. While a more in-depth discussion of these transoceanic frameworks falls outside the scope of my thesis, my overall objective is to demonstrate why thinking about and with water, whether it be seas, oceans, or canals, offers us insight into material, sensorial, archival and diasporic realities that shape these spaces.

What then does the subversion of Dutch colonial water infrastructures have to offer? I argue that working with waterways, circulation and waves, garners innovative ways of thinking through the BMR movement and their diasporic presence. I subvert the well-known colonial infrastructure and imaginary of the canals to re-imagine a landscape of circles that intersect with other waterways. These waterways represent intersecting points of entry within the BMR movement such as collectives, informal gatherings, transnational connections, cultural productions and so forth. In this landscape, I invite and draw in the

trouble, ruptures and punctures that stories of BMR women and archival materials bring. I see these stories as the unpredictability of the climate and simultaneously, as a calling to move away from the idealisation of a linear methodological research process with clear outcomes. I offer this methodological interlude to provide a roadmap for the methodological processes that underlie this project and to offer a set of suggestions on how to read the stories of the BMR movement, which further unfold in the following chapters. Based on my theoretical discussion in the previous chapter, I have re-formulated the questions posed in the introduction to make sense of the scope of this project, which have in turn informed the choice for a mixed-method approach and the construction of feminist and queer methodology(ies). I will first discuss the queer and feminist methodologies used in this project, which have informed my approach to the representation of fragments and non-linear stories alongside the adopting of a practice of listening, mapping and orientation.

I will start with a set of working research questions that I have developed to inform my overall approach:

1) What do the experiences of BMR women tell us about a circuit of transnational feminist and queer exchange and organising in the 1980s?
2) What does the BMR movement reflect about the racialised and gendered organisation of space in the Netherlands?
3) What is the relationship between the archive, the politics of narration and power dynamics in the creation and preservation of memories?
4) To what extent is this research project constitutive of an archive of its own?

To answer these questions, I conducted eight interviews with BMR women, carried out archival research in three different institutional archives, analysed relevant literature and organised and attended events on the role of archives in feminist and queer research. My interviewees were all with women who were active within the BMR movement. All eight women interviewed were active in specific BMR organisations. The women that I interviewed currently work in or still contribute to academia, the cultural sector, and policy work. To address the first and second questions, I conducted semi-structured interviews in person and one interview over Skype. In addition, I have conducted archival research that created an interdependent relationship between the archive and the interviews. To answer the third and fourth questions, I have put the gathering of archival materials and interview material in conversation with relevant feminist and queer literature, theory and methodologies. Throughout this chapter I further detail the methodologies used to navigate the questions that underlie this project.

Developing Research Methods: Situated Knowledge and Archival Trouble

In constructing my research design, I paid specific attention to questions of knowledge production in working with interviews and archival materials. Specifically, this chapter will provide insight into the tensions within knowledge production across temporalities. In using interviews and archival materials from BMR women, I understand all knowledge to be situated, which means that each of us has specific knowledge and also ignorance about

the positions we hold (see Collins, 1990, 2002; Harding, 2004). As Collins (1990) asserts from a Black feminist theorisation, those who are marginalised have a different sense of their surroundings, than those who are not marginalised. In the previous chapter, I used the work of Lewis (1996) and Haraway (1988) to show that we do not just have experience, we produce it. The use of the category 'experience' is thus not just a theoretical consideration, but also a methodological one. In making 'experience' central to this thesis, I ask how BMR experiences are narrated and co-produced through my role as researcher. In using experience as a legitimate mode of analysis, Lewis (1996, p. 25) argues one has to "undo established ideas about what it means to 'know'". My research methods therefore aim to legitimise the modes of racialised and gendered knowledges the BMR movement produces. This requires reflexivity on my part, where I locate my interactions with archival materials and interviews as an inherent part of the research process. Gunaratnam (2003, p. 7) argues that,

> (…) radical reflexivity in research involves rigorous attention to explicating the ways in which research participants *and* researchers are socially situated (Haraway, 1988), at the same time as making our research accountable to the past (Gatens and Lloyd, 1999).

In this sense, I will account for the claims that I make while holding them accountable within their histories. Subsequently, Lewis (1996, pp. 26–27) calls for a critical examination of 'experience' that is rooted within a deeper understanding of the histories that shaped experiences,

(…) so that the web of historical relations in which all 'experience' is inscribed is brought to the fore. In this way it is possible to reveal not only the binaries, the boundaries, the closures and erasures which are produced in time and space, but also the subjectivities and identities which it is possible for specific social groups to inhabit in specific places at specific times.

This conceptualisation unravels the intricate layers and processes that are held under the framework of 'experience'. Drawing on 'experience' as a category of analysis is not merely about how we 'live' through experience, but also how we are 'lived' through experience. These binaries — and boundaries as Lewis argues, are far from clear — allow us to deepen our understanding of experience as discursive resource. This means that we are called to task to problematise what the category of 'experience' does and to question how it is mobilised within particular "interactional, institutional and discursive" spaces (Lewis, 1996, pp. 27–28). This is particularly pertinent in working with diasporic stories. The experiences of Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese and Dutch Antillean women, for instance, produce a different set of knowledges. In theorising these situated knowledges as BMR knowledges, I acknowledge and make productive the tensions therein. While my aim is not to offer overarching general claims about the movement, there is a need to attend to the "the binaries, the boundaries, the closures and erasures" in how we use the category of 'experience' and the effects this has (pp. 27–28). Furthermore, as I am studying a movement that was at its height about thirty years ago, I must also account for the role that time plays in telling and retelling stories. In reference to sociological accounts of transnational dying and care, Gunaratnam (2013, p. 31) states, "Archival stories are never mimetic descriptions.

And stories always change in the retelling". As such, my interviews and archival materials do not tell one or the same story about the BMR movement. Rather, what my analysis of archival materials and interviews show is that their interdependent relationship produces new stories across temporalities.

Developing Queer and Feminist Methodologies

My discussion on queer and feminist methodologies comes back to the conceptual aquatic framwork set out in the beginning of this chapter. In working with BMR stories and archival materials, I became more invested in the modes of circular exchange between these sites, and how this allowed for relationalities and affinities to emerge, which I envision through waterways. This inherently produces an important interdiscipinarity in the work. In the well-known text, *Female Masculinity*, Jack Halberstam (1998, p. 13) introduces a queer methodology of interdisciplinary work as a "scavenger methodology that uses different methods to collect and produce information on subjects who have deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behaviour". The figure of the scavenger is particularly generative when working with fragmented and scattered stories. In the development of a "scavenger methodology", I set out how a practice of mapping, listening and orientation guided the research. These practices are used and conceptualised with circularity in mind, where each of the practices encircles the other.

Mapping, Listening and Orientation

In working with both archival materials and interviews, I provide a 'remixing'[12] of methods and methodology rooted in how we 'listen' to materials and multi-sensuous stories; how we 'map' quotidian political experiences; and how we 'orientate' to materials and stories as much as they 'orientate' us. In understanding the complex set of entanglements that comes with being part of the 'diaspora space' (Brah, 1996), I argue that a multi-sensory approach most adequately illustrates how mapping, listening and orientation take place. The scattered and incomplete nature of the BMR archive pushes me to start my journey from a place of not knowing. I depart from fragments, scattered through the archive, tracing bits and pieces of information, connecting places and names. When we are presented with fragments there is an inclination to make them whole, rather than to look at what caused fragmentation, or to see the wholeness in the very nature of fragmentation.

fragmentation |fragmɛnˈteɪʃ(ə)n|

A breaking or separation into fragments.[13]

In Chapter One, I discuss the fragmented nature of the BMR movement as a result of colonial violence and labour migration, considerably influencing the composition of the movement. The fragmentation of materials within the institutional archive is related to this

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[12] I use 'remixing' here to refer to how these methods together 'alter' materials from their original state by creating new relationalities.

[13] "fragmentation, n." *OED Online,* Oxford University Press, September 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/74118. (Accessed 2 September 2020).

history. A key question for my research project is how movements are remembered. The archive functions as an often-used metaphor for the recollection and safeguarding of memories. However as historian Carolyn Steedman (2011) points out, an archive is not like human memory. Archives are restricted in what they can hold and recollect. Yet, this does not mean that everything that ends up in an archive is necessarily significant and organised. Here I refer to what Steedman (2001, p. 68) describes as the, "mad fragmentations that no one intended to preserve and that just ended up there". Fragmentations tend to come up in all sorts of forms and shapes, and often form a site through a different form of knowledge production. How then can fragmentation become a part of an archival research methodology? And how does feminist and queer archival research challenge traditional archival research? In recent scholarship, there has been a push for experimental approaches to methodology (Pester, 2017), a call to become attentive to the materiality of the archive and queer bodies (Cifor, 2017), and the need for an archival consciousness when dealing with the histories of Black feminists (Burin and Sowinski, 2014). The call for archival consciousness is related to the encompassing ways that the we engage with the archive and negotiate access, from racialised coding systems to what is documented and why.

Mapping Fragments

I locate this sense of fragmentation within and outside the archive within a multi-sensory conceptual framework. A practice of mapping, listening and orientation is particularly generative to allow the interviews and archival materials to interact with each other. The

use of fragmentation as a form of non-narrativity, in this sense, could then also be envisioned as way to allow the reverberations of both sites of inquiry to crash into each other, thereby producing new sets of knowledges. I come back to the earlier referenced 'echo chamber' (Chude Sokei, 2008) here, to think through a place where multiple diasporic waterways and connections come together to manifest, trouble, and open up forms of relationality through which to understand the intricacies of a 'diaspora space' and exchange. In tracing the connection between BMR women (and their transnational connections), I see the fragments to have a cartographic quality. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty (2010, p. 31) state, "Stories are simultaneously "maps" in that they mobilize both histories and geographies of power". A practice of mapping thus illustrates how BMR stories are situated in relationship to their wider historical and social context. This is equally true for archival materials. Sociologist Mariam Motamedi Fraser (2012) speaks to the different modes of relationality that exist between the archival materials and researchers. The relationality with archival materials is more than just "*a* relating to materials", as the very act of 'relating' brings about questions of the forms of possible relations (Fraser, 2012, p. 86). For Motamedi Fraser (2012, p. 88), the potential transformative element of relating becomes evident in this question: "How do I open this letter? How does this letter open me?" The 'relationality' to materials is therefore bound up with the movement, orientation and travelling we permit the materials to do with us. We orientate towards the materials as much as the materials orientate us. *What does it mean to be moved by a letter? Where does a photograph take us? How might we imagine these sites beyond the archival reading room?* The other important issue raised by Motamedi Fraser (2012, p. 86) is

how "relationality, also, inevitably, implies conflict".[14] This is ultimately also a question about affect, asking: in which ways are these relationalities informed by affect? In this respect, I argue that 'listening', 'mapping' and 'orientation', are shaped by how we construct affective relationalities between them. The relationality between the archival materials and interviews can equally be understood through thinking through affect. Following Motamedi Fraser, we might then ask what does it mean for the archival materials to open up the interviews and for interviews to open up archival materials? What kinds of circulation can be found in these interactions? For instance, through researching corresponding letters, photographs, documentation of meetings, and social documents in the *Sister Outsider* materials and Audre Lorde Papers, a methodological question arises: How do these materials listen to each other? And how do the interviews with Gloria and Tieneke speak to the materials? Elsewhere I argued that this mode of research allowed for new connections to emerge "across oceans, buildings, boxes and folders" (Frank, 2019b, p. 17). Mapping stories and their affects between the interviews and archival materials thus means understanding fragmentation as a map. I actively configure this map by offering insight into the BMR movement through analysing BMR stories as archives, and archival materials as stories.

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[14] Thereby building on earlier work. See Fraser (2009).

Sensuous Orientation

In thinking through the affective relationship between interviews and archival materials, I understand 'orientation' to be a key practice. Orientation, especially when working with archival materials and interviews, is a sensuous practice. Theorising the sensuous offers us insight into what the 'ephemeral' (Muñoz, 1996), 'haptic' (Bradley, 2014; Campt, 2017) and 'sound' (Campt, 2017) register in tracing kinship networks and cultural modes of queer diasporic production. As much as the materials 'orient' towards each other, I also play an imperative role in activating these modes of orientation. In Ahmed's (2006) conceptualisation of queer phenomenology, 'orientation' is sexualised in the same way that queer geographers understand space to be sexualised (Browning, 1998; Bell *et al.*, 2001). Following Ahmed (2006) here, I understand both the process of 'orientation' by and towards materials, as well as the actual archival spatial site to be racialised, gendered and sexualised. In other words, the ability of materials to 'orient' us is bound up, to an extent, in where they are housed. Sitting at tables at Atria and at the Spelman Archives surrounded by papers, files and boxes, and carefully reading the exchanges between Black lesbian women makes the space I inhabited a sexualised site. This relationship between materiality and locality therefore requires a sensuous approach that allows for narratives to 'orient' us towards non-Western narrative structures embedded within the materials. The development on a non-linear approach in this thesis is thus informed by the need to allow fragmentation to become part of the narrative. Narrative structures as discussed in Chapter One, are informed by the context that they reside in. Having drawn from sociologists who study narrative structures, I am most inspired by the methodology Cho (2008, p. 2) adopts

through working with "auto ethnography, hallucinations, fantasies, historical and artistic archives". Cho (2008, p. 18), who as mentioned earlier writes within the context of diasporic trauma stories, understands non-narrative methods to allow for competing stories. Further, incorporating non-linearity within the methodology of this thesis gives space to larger societal 'hauntings', as discussed in Chapter One, that inform my overall inquiry into the BMR movement. In this sense, the non-narrativity can be used as an approach that allows me to move between personal and shared accounts in relation to the narratives that the Dutch tell themselves about race that inform the structure of archives and knowledge production. For instance, as Cho (2008, p. 32) observes, Gordon's work on haunting shows that "narratives of Western progress play a large part in producing ghosts through this very process of epistemic violence". What gets erased due to this process of epistemic violence therefore becomes "undocumented, illegible, and irrational" (p. 32). The materials of the BMR movement, that detail the afterlives of slavery, colonialism, racial capitalism, and the formation of a liberal progressive state that propagates islamophobia as a form to protect Dutch culture, therefore hold an ambiguous place in grander narrations of Dutch history. While they are located within an actual archive and are material, I also question what kind of loss this tangibility produces. I therefore ask: what happens when the act of archiving turns into an institutional act of disappearance? In the following section, I will set out how 'listening', in addition to 'mapping' and 'orientation' configure in my methodology.

Listening

Listening is about paying close attention to what is beneath the surface. I follow Tina Campt's (2017, p. 5) "listening to images", as a proposition and intervention that offers both a description and a method. Informed by Gilroy's (1993) conceptualisation of the Black Atlantic, Campt (2017) interrogates how images of the African diaspora hold a sonic quality, which allows for a sensory interaction with photographs. An intimate listening to correspondence, photographs and documentation is not about 'giving voice' to those who are forgotten within the archive, but rather seeks to understand how the materials of BMR women might 'orientate' us. This intimate listening practice generates an approach in which we do not only pay attention to documents and their materiality, but also to intangible performative gestures such as rituals and behaviours (Muñoz, 1996; Taylor, 2003). Practically, I use this method of 'listening' to think through questions of legibility in the archive. For instance, in researching the personal archives of Anne Krul, Tania Leon and the materials of Hellen Felter, active within the Black Women's Radio collective, I came across quite a few hand drawn maps. These maps often offered directions to events and gatherings, and in one instance, there was a map of how a radio station worked (see Pathways intermezzo). I 'listened' to these maps to think more critically about the knowledge each of these maps produces as images. These maps were not just about the existence of BMR events, but about what they offered in terms of thinking about the structures that operate beneath their surface. In developing this framework of 'listening', I think about how these maps produce "frequency or vibration" (Campt, 2017, p. 8). Campt's

(2017, p. 9) locating of images as 'haptic objects' offers insight into what this method opens up:

> Engaging these images as decidedly haptic objects is a method that requires us to interrogate both the archival encounter, as well as the content of archival collections, in multiple tenses and multiple temporalities and in ways that attend to both their stakes and possibilities. It is a method that reckons with the fissures, gaps, and interstices that emerge when we refuse to accept the "truth" of images and archives the state seeks to proffer through its production of subjects posed to produce particular "types" of regulated and regulatable subjects.

This method provides a productive way of contending with both the genealogies and meanings of collections to ask, what is at stake in the process of archiving? In this regard, I think of archiving beyond the bounds of the institution. Further, to embrace and refuse the "truth" of images, is to understand archival images in relation to the power relationships and dynamics underlying the production of subjects. While Campt (2017, p. 8) here specifically addresses the use of photography as a medium to provoke questions of refusal of the "truth" of images, all archival materials inherently exist within "multiple tenses and multiple temporalities", which should make attending to fragments and non-linearity in archives, a necessary political project. I came across most of the earlier referenced maps somewhat by accident and started compiling them separately. In this sense, the maps became 'haptic objects', each producing its own tonalities. It is the idea of the 'haptic object' that I will unpack further in relation to so-called slippages within the archive. The use of archives

requires a close reading of stories, ideas or people who have slipped through the archiving process. What do we do with these fragmentations in the research and therefore fragments in the story? A lost hair in a file, coffee stains, and scribbles in the margins of documents. These unexpected encounters offer insight into the 'haptic' (Bradley, 2014), which I will further unpack in Chapter Five.
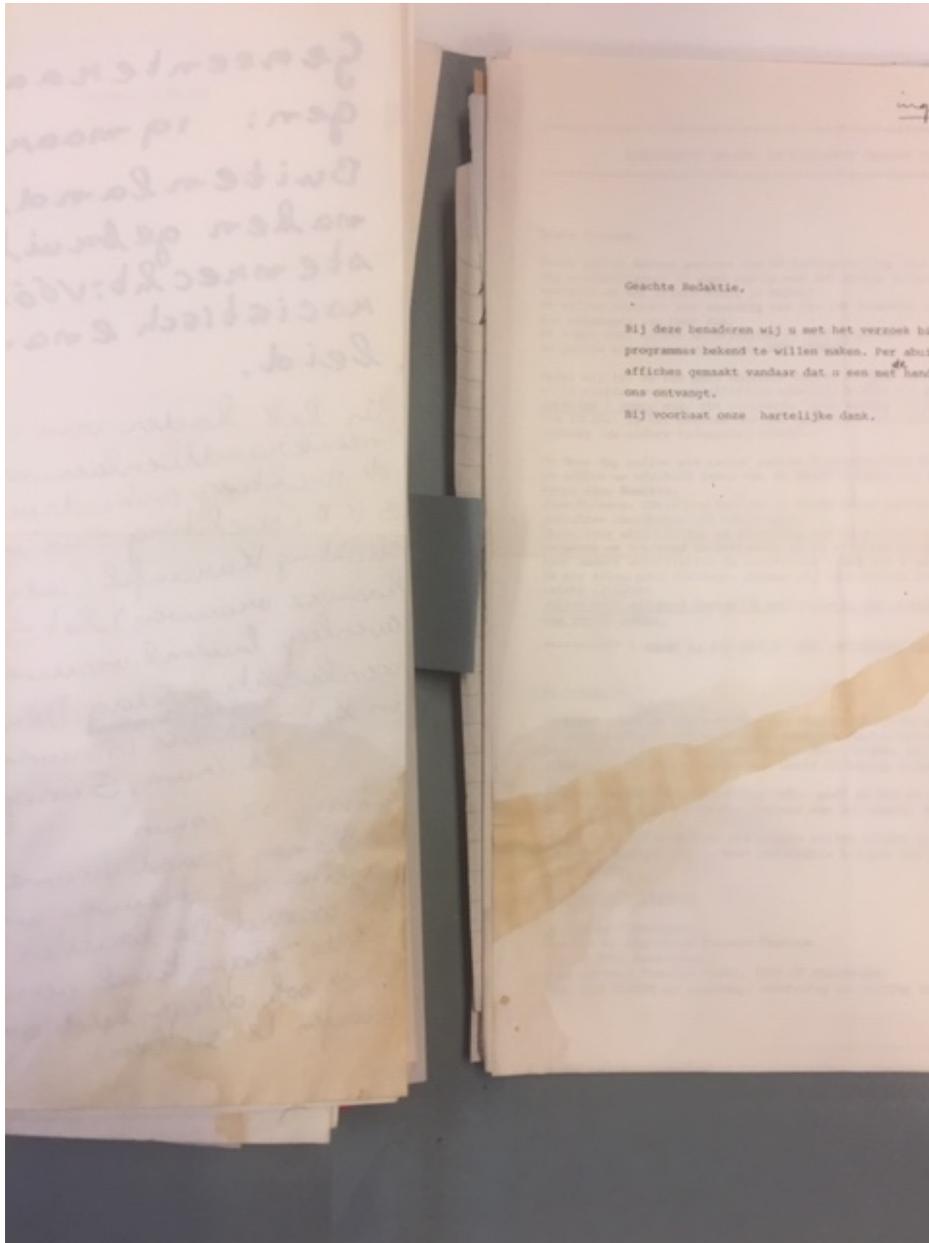
Image 1. Coffee Stains. Personal Archive Anne Krul. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of the author.

DEF   *door wie*   *herkomst*

Zwart verwijst hierbij niet direct naar huidskleur, maar naar de politieke betekenis van zwarte identiteit waarmee Antilliaanse en Arubaanse, Surinaamse, Molukse en Indische vrouwen stelling nemen tegen het racisme dat zij dagelijks ondervinden. Ook kiezen zij hiermee positie in de zwart-wit verhoudingen die hun oorsprong hebben in het koloniale tijdperk (Fienieg, 1998). Een tijdperk dat angstvallig uit de Nederlandse geschiedenisboeken wordt gehouden, ondanks de relevantie ervan voor de huidige multiculturele samenleving. In plaats daarvan leerden we over de slag bij Nieuwpoort in 1600 en dat Bonifatius bij Dokkum werd vermoord. Racisme en rassenscheiding in de Verenigde Staten en Zuid-Afrika worden veroordeeld, terwijl we tegelijkertijd niet willen beseffen dat dergelijke uitwassen ook deel uitmaken van onze eigen geschiedenis. Niet voor niets is 'apartheid' een Nederlands woord en waren het blanke, Nederlandse kolonisten die in 1652 aan de Kaap in Zuid-Afrika een samenleving vestigden die gekenmerkt werd door de verhouding blanke macht en zwarte *afgedwongen* dienstbaarheid (Lapping, 1986). Ondanks dat vele generaties Nederlanders in Nederlands-Indië en Suriname geleefd -of beter gezegd 'huisgehouden'- hebben, wordt er niet over gesproken of op een misplaatste sentimentele manier. Het Nederlandse koloniale systeem heeft de bedenkelijke reputatie één van de wreedste uit de wereldgeschiedenis te zijn geweest. Tussen 1669 en 1832 werden er in Suriname 300.000 tot 325.000 slaven ingevoerd, terwijl de zwarte bevolking aan het eind van dat tijdvak nog maar uit ongeveer 50.000 mensen bestond. Ter vergelijking: De Noord-Amerikaanse koloniën voerden in diezelfde periode zo'n 427.000 slaven in, terwijl de zwarte bevolking in 1852 2 miljoen mensen omvatte (Wekker, 1986).

De tweede groep migrantenvrouwen kwam zelf of met hun mannelijke familieleden als arbeidsmigranten uit het Middellandse Zee-gebied naar Nederland. Zij gebruiken de term migrantenvrouwen om aan te geven dat de consequenties van het 'gastarbeiderssysteem' nog steeds bepalend zijn voor hun positie en belevingswereld.

Gedwongen door oorlog, politieke vervolging of schending van mensenrechten hebben vluchtelingenvrouwen hun land van herkomst moeten verlaten. Samen met de bijzondere regelgeving omtrent hun verblijf, is dit bepalend voor hun positie in de Nederlandse samenleving en de wijze waarop zij het leven daarin ervaren.

De gemeenschappelijkheid van de ervaringen van zmv-vrouwen zit in hun geschiedenis van migratie en het moeten leven met verschillende, culturele referentiekaders. In stelselmatige uitsluiting van machtsmiddelen als onderwijs, arbeid, voorzieningen en besluitvormings-processen. In dagelijkse confrontatie met racisme en seksisme. In het verinnerlijken van deze negatieve oordelen. In het zich teweer stellen tegen deze ervaringen, het gebruiken van krachtige overlevingsstrategieën en het aangesproken worden op probleemoplossend vermogen (Fienieg, 1998).

Zwart is een beladen term, net als het begrip blank. In het woordenboek verwijst zwart naar een donkere kleur, vuil of somberheid. In vele spreekwoorden die het woord 'zwart' in zich hebben, heeft het woord een negatieve betekenis. Een *zwarte bladzijde uit de geschiedenis van...* betekent een tijd van weinig verheffende gebeurtenissen; in *zwarte handel* verwijst het naar criminele, onwettelijke handelingen; *iemand zwart maken*, lelijke dingen van iemand zeggen; *de Zwarte Piet toespelen*, iemand de schuld geven....

De aan de term zwart verbonden negatieve connotaties zijn een uitvloeisel van de eeuwenlange negatieve benadering en bejegening van zwarte mannen en vrouwen vanuit de witte, westerse wereld.

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Image 2. Scribbles in archival documents. Personal Archive Anne Krul. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of the author.
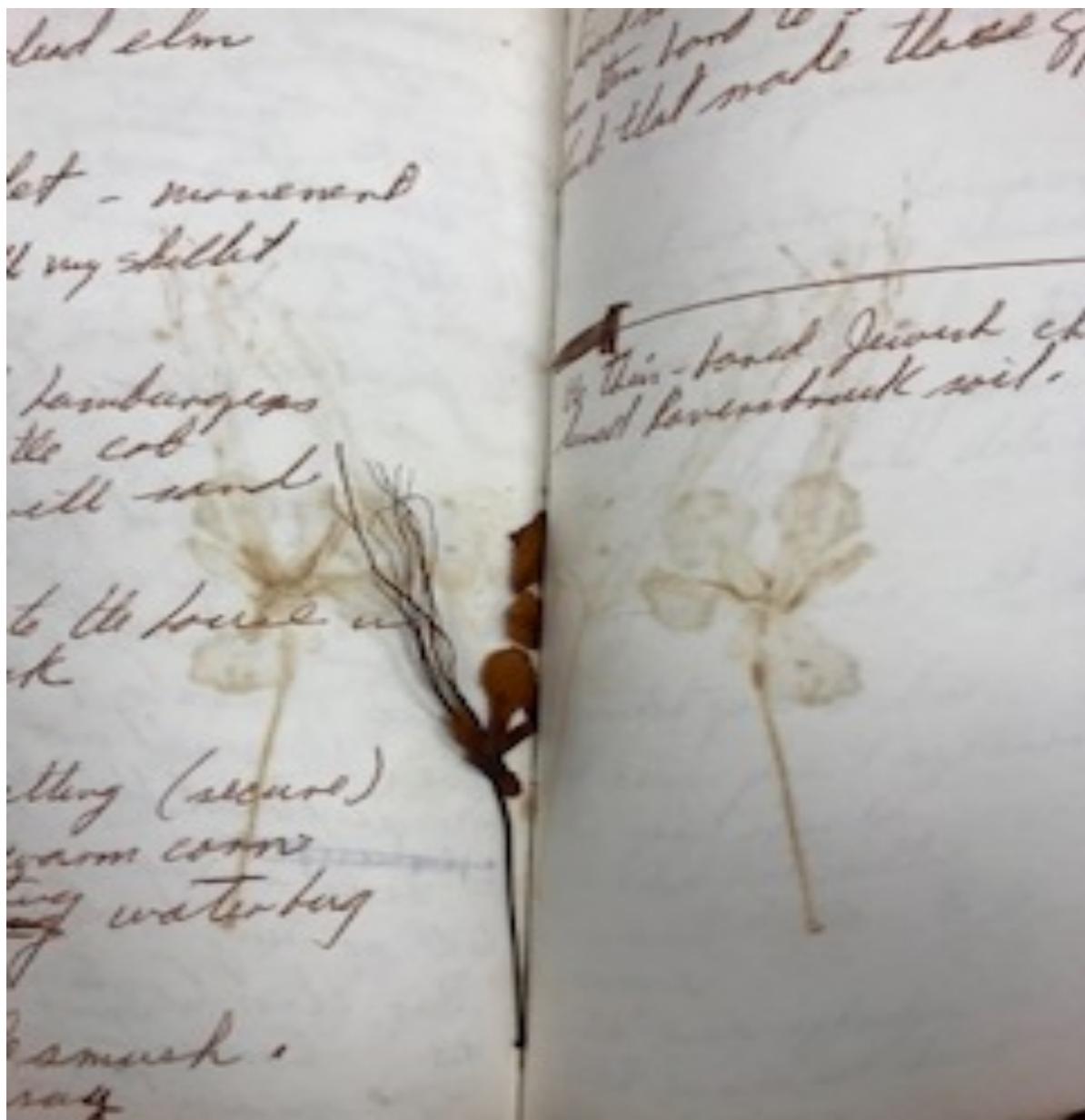
Image 3. A dried flower in Audre Lorde's diary. Audre Lorde Papers. Spelman College Archives. Courtesy of the author.

These unexpected and almost poetic gestures produce a map of their own. In this experiencing of the archival materials, we can recognise the function of what Campt (2017, p. 72) calls the 'haptic' or "multiple forms of touch". In this approach, there is an opening up to potential new connections and recognitions with the materials. These interactions and the relationality we develop with the archive and BMR stories seem to be informed by both presence and absence at the same time. With the wide range of BMR materials and stories, we might ask who becomes present and who remains absent? In developing a framework through which to understand presence and absence in archival materials and stories, I draw on Lewis' (2017) conceptualisation of presence/absence. As I have argued elsewhere, "the presence' of archival materials can contribute to the institutionalisation of absence" (Frank, 2019b, p. 20). I use this framework to think through what kinds of knowledges are produced in this project, and what we can gain from them. In particular, this framework is important in considering the political shifts in organising in the Netherlands (Frank, 2019b). In other words, in extending an analysis on the racial taxonomies of the archive, we can also ask what happens with terminology such as 'political blackness' that carries difficult legacies? I further pick up on this question throughout the project to sit with the multiple ways in which concepts and categories become necessarily unstable.

Presence can allow to bring into focus what was previously unseen. Lewis (2017) draws on conceptualisations of 'presence', taken from performance studies, psycho-analysis and decolonial political praxis. A "praxis of 'presencing'" is embodied and thus not about a mere observation of exclusion.

I take Lewis' formulation of 'presencing' as an important call for developing particular methods that are attentive to the ways that the representation of archival materials can contribute to the institutionalisation of absence. These absences, as I show through an affective engagement with the archive, are embodied and lived. Lewis (2017, p. 8) offers consequential insights on how the figure of the Black woman becomes present:

> But what would the possibility of growth in the presence of 'black woman' require? One thing would be to acknowledge what becomes absent in us when we absent or disappear her particularity from our collective histories, current realities, future potentialities. Another requirement would involve development of our courage to acknowledge the harm done to her, historically and in the here and now, by utilising the resources we have in the archive in the interest of practicing presencing.

In constructing a BMR genealogy, it is crucial to pay specific attention to who disappears from collective histories. How can we tend to particularity in the archive? Keeping in mind the embodiment of presence and absence, I thus want to foreground individual stories within the collective. This means taking into account that for Black women from the former colonies, processes of racialisation and presence are distinctly different than, say, for Turkish or Moroccan women.

I further want to incorporate the notion of 'presencing' within the archive as a mode of future 'orientation'. In so doing, the idea of presencing might also be embraced as a potential for speculation.

> Can we summon the kitchen table as a witness to the formation of Black feminist speculative thought?

When absence or harm is not apparent or bound up with the structure of the archive, the speculative becomes especially generative. Black feminist poet and scholar Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2018) uses a form of speculative documentation of Black life. This kind of work challenges our methodological choices and vision. Ultimately, the practice of 'listening', 'mapping' and 'orientating' to archival materials takes us beyond the confines of the archive and breaks open the possibility non-traditional modes of archive research that creates space for new methods to emerge. In the second part of this chapter, I look in more detail at this co-production of stories, between myself, the interview participants and, archival materials.

Chapter Two. Subversive Methods: Interviews and

Archives

PART TWO

"Sister Who?": Working in Institutional Archives

In this second part of the chapter, I will pay specific attention to what it meant to research across archival institutions and conduct interviews. I offer a close description of my multi-method approach. My aim here is twofold, I discuss the complexities of working in white archival institutions and set out how these complexities can be made productive for the overall research design.

Atria: The IAV Collection

I conducted research at Atria between 2015 and 2018, and in total I spent about three to five months doing archival research during various visits. Initially my research visits to Atria were about gathering materials of the movement. However, the more time I spent at Atria, I realised the archive was not merely a building I frequented, but a site that I was in

continued conversation with. In reference to conducting archival research, Tamboukou (2011, n.p.) argues:

> Genealogy is, put very simply, the art of archival work, the patience to work meticulously with grey dusty documents, looking for insignificant details bringing into light unthought-of contours of various ways, discourses and practices that human beings used to make sense of themselves and the world.

Tamboukou (2011) firmly situates this genealogical archival method within a feminist framework. Following Tamboukou, I incorporate a close reading of the archive in the construction of the BMR movement. I will briefly give some background context to Atria, which has greatly informed the development of my research methods.

In 1935, Atria started collecting materials from individual women and women's organisations. The archive started being an active site when 300 books from Rosa Manus, one of the founders of the International Archives for the Women's Movement were taken into the collection. Later she donated the archive of Aletta Jacobs, the first woman doctor in the Netherlands. The archive holds over 700 archives and includes papers of individuals and records of private organisations. The IAV collection is comprised of:

- 108.848 books, brochures, reports and theses
- 44.600 image and audio items

- 8.867 biographical clipping folders

- 1540 meter archives and personal documents

- 1.900 objects

- 192 magazine subscriptions

- 107 Oral History interviews[15]

The material is comprised of diaries, letters, notebooks, photographs, works of art, meeting papers and more. I would typically bike down Prinsengracht, which is one of the circular canals, to get to Atria. I use my descriptions and reflections of working in the archive as vignettes to ask what it means to do research in a white feminist archive with queer and feminist of colour collections. These vignettes provide brief moments of encounters that speak to the unruly nature of archives and working with archival institutions. Atria is a historically white feminist archive where predominantly white students, researchers and staff work. For the various periods of research, I kept to a similar rhythm: I would walk in, sign my name into the guest book, request particular materials, read and browse, document my findings, find more names, and at the end of the day, excited by even more connections, try to make sense of the scope of this project.

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[15] This information is publicly available on: www.atria.nl. (Accessed 12 June 2020).

Image 4. Photo of the street view of Atria, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Courtesy of Atria.

Since the materials of the BMR movement do not exist within a specific archive or as a separate collection within an institutional archive, I had to navigate how to conduct the research. At the start of my archival research, I used the software-mapping tool *IThoughtsX*, which is a mind-mapping app, to keep track of the collectives and names I encountered in the research. I started doing this quite informally to have a visual map of the movement as I was going along. I began with the names of collectives I already knew about or encountered in BMR newsletters and magazines such as *Flamboyant* or *Ashanti*. I was able to weave together a large network of names, collectives including the transnational connections women made. This process was mostly satisfying as I could see the movement expanding through this practice. However, as I became more deeply aware of the ordering systems of the IAV collection, my focus shifted to thinking about or incorporating materials

I could not find, or, which were harder to find. I started by posing questions about what it meant to delve into this work without fully knowing the extent of the collection. In posing this question, I am aware that we can never fully know an archive, however this inquiry is also concerned with the absence of an accessible BMR feminist and queer archive in the Netherlands. This speaks to the larger concerns that pertain to the politics of archives, documentation and memory, which I will further unpack in the next chapter. I informally started doing research by asking the predominantly white staff questions about the BMR movement to get a sense of the scope and scale of materials available. Through conversations over the course of nearly 4 years, I noted that the staff, apart from one or two archivists who had worked on BMR materials, were largely unaware of the history of BMR feminism and the materials available at Atria. It soon became known that I knew the BMR archives better than the staff did. One of the white archivists jokingly said, "You should just come and sort out all these materials here". The underlying assumption was that I would be doing this as a voluntary project because I knew the collection so well.[16] Using these conversations as an informal research method opens up a broader dialogue on white feminist institutional politics. Here I want to ask how whiteness becomes a mode of orientation (Ahmed, 2007) within the archive. In this sense, my discussion of archival research methods is informed by understanding how the archive reproduces whiteness "as an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting

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[16] I also think here about my role as brown researcher, and in which ways my gendered and racialised labor was taken for granted in this exchange. I felt that there was an assumption made that I would be happy to take this on as an unpaid voluntary project for "the community" because of my positionality. There was never a serious intent to explore what I might have to offer in terms of my research.

how they 'take up' space'" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 150). In this regard, I acknowledge that the very term 'research' has a particular history that in this project is "inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (Smith, 2012, p. 1). Any discussion of archival research methods should thus consider the power constellations in which archival materials are held.

Chandra: "I'd like to request materials on the Dutch Black lesbian collective, *Sister Outsider*, please".

Atria Staff Member: "Sister.. who? I am not sure I know what you mean". (Frank, 2015)

Documenting such encounters garners a deeper understanding of archival sites as s/places where researchers of colour inevitably became part of the racial dynamics of these sites. I first started conducting archival research through entering a variety of search terms in the database. My first set of questions focused on how to get a sense of an incomplete archive. In my research notebook, I wrote down the responses to my queries. For instance, on one occasion I was told that the BMR movement's collection was fairly small and comprised of a few personal archives, while during another research visit, I was told there was no way of knowing what would be part of the collection, as it was so extensive. The responses I was getting situated the BMR materials through an ambiguous prism of loss and abundance at

the same time. These early archival experiences inform my analysis on the futurity of the archive, which is discussed in Chapter Seven. Taking into account the racial taxonomies of the archive, which formally structure how we can know the materials, requires us to think through the trouble that this archival research project produces. Generally speaking archival research methods include: "a broad range of activities applied to facilitate the investigation of documents and textual materials produced by and about organizations" (Ventresca and Mohr, 2005, p. 805). Yet, since each archival research project is different, scholars note that it is hard to offer a generalised set of methods (L'Eplattenier, 2009, p. 68). In beginning my archival research, I had a few guidelines in navigating the database and collection. Archival research methods are critical to attaining the information you need from collections. Here, the difference between methods and methodology becomes most visible. Scholars such as Barbara L'Etlattenier (2009, p. 69) state that in relationship to archival research, "methods are about achieving access to information, about finding aids, about reference materials, about the existence of evidence or the lack of evidence". This approach to methods assumes that archival research is inevitably about access. While I argue that access to materials, and being able to engage with archival materials is a significant part of the process, I aim to expand this notion of access within a wider discussion on how archival research methods are informed by race and race relations.

I identified the IAV collection, at Atria, as the primary collection to work with, based on prior knowledge that this institution held the majority of the BMR movement's materials.

Without a finding aid for the BMR materials, I searched the entire IAV collection by entering terms such as; <ZMV> (BMR), <Zwarte Vrouwen> (Black Women) and <Zwart Feminisme> (Black feminism), to see how many hits the terms would get and what these terms covered. (Frank, 2015)

The IAV-Atria search engine offers an overview of the hits through specific categories such as books, magazines, photographs, pamphlets, and personal archives. Conducting research with unstable research terms was inevitably messy. My main focus was to gain insight into the organisations that were active in the 1980s, as well as the publications that came out of this time period, to get a sense of the scale and scope of the movement. While the BMR movement spans from 1970 until the early 2000s, I directed my focus to the height of BMR organising in the 1980s. Due to local and global political shifts, this time saw a proliferation of collectives, gatherings, publications, and conferences. I went through the magazines and newsletters of prominent BMR organisations that came up under <Zwart Feminisme> (Black Feminism) and <Zwarte Vrouwen> (Black Women). What made the research process particularly challenging is that similar publications, newsletters and personal archives would be tagged differently in the database. The following example illustrates this;

the newsletter of the Flamboyant organisation is tagged under <black women>, <allochtonen>, <women's information service> and the <Netherlands>. I want to contrast this to my search for the *Ashanti* magazine which is tagged under <women's movements>, <black feminism> and <Suriname>. (Frank, 2015)

Granted, the publications are not the same, but they both fall under the broader production of the BMR movement and therefore contribute to Black feminist thought. However, the tag <BMR> is not provided for both. The use of <black women> and <black feminism> reveal two different sets of findings. The first tag tells you the materials will be about Black women, while the second tag places the materials within the broader movement of Black feminism. As *Flamboyant* (discussed in Chapter Three), was one of the most important BMR organisations, it is surprising to not find the organisation placed under Black feminism. I documented these gaps within the archival database research process as they provide a roadmap for how BMR archival materials have been filed after entering the IAV collection. To situate these gaps as part of a theoretical and methodological discussion, we might ask: do these gaps produce loss, abundance or both? What exactly do we do with these inconsistencies? Writing down these inconsistencies and making them productive in the research design also requires a reflection on how my own experience and knowledge with the search engine and collection in general changed over time. Scholars such as

Thomas P. Miller and Melody Bowdon (1999, p. 591) state that, "Methods are a means to an end, and before we can discuss methods or purposes, we need to be clear about what the object of study is". However, when working with unruly archival search engines and materials, methods do not operate as a "means to an end". Archival search engines, in this sense constructed by a white feminist archive, produce a specific path as orientation. Ahmed's (2007) earlier referenced work on a phenomenology of whiteness is relevant here to think through how archival collections and materials are ordered through a white feminist orientation. The inconsistencies in the results of the search engine thus shaped my methods, not as a "means to an end", but to understand how methods have to adapt according to what orientation the materials pull us in. This includes foregrounding the colonial inflections of archival ordering within a white feminist archive.

With the absence of a search aid for BMR materials, inconsistencies in tagging policies and lack of knowledge of information specialists, I started making connections between both the searches and the materials I had found. In this respect, my methods were both directed at finding relevant information for my research and documenting the ways in which this search was obscured. Indeed, my research was therefore interactive, defined more by inquiry than by method (Graban, 2009). This research method, searching for materials and then re-tracing how materials are tagged provided insight into a larger problem. The information specialists who tagged the materials lacked the adequate knowledge to place these materials within an appropriate context. In other words, the coding system reflects a lacuna in specialist knowledge when it pertains to the materials of BMR women. Scholars

of the archive note that keywords cannot account for every research question (see Tirabassi, 2010). However, it is necessary to pay specific attention to how race informs coding systems. For instance, what does it mean for Atria and the IAV Collection that the use of *<allochtoon>* is still an active search term? My archival research methods reflect that researching queer and feminist histories of colour within a white institutional archive requires a more critical and holistic understanding of how archival knowledge is produced. Chapter Three will provide a more elaborate discussion on the whiteness in information services and what impact this has on knowledge production.

Analysing Archival Materials in the IAV Collection

Having acknowledged that the coding system of the IAV collection produced gaps and inconsistencies, I considered how I would analyse the materials within the collection. I should note here that most of the BMR materials I engaged with were in Dutch. However, quite a few posters for parties and events, flyers and especially letter exchanges between BMR women and their transnational counterparts were in English, which reflects the transnational character of the BMR movement. I translated material from Dutch to English myself and did not make use of translation software. Newsletters such as *Flamboyant* were mostly written in Dutch, but did include English poetry, words or flyers. Further, magazines such as *Ashanti* also include words in Sranang Tongo or Sarnami (Surinamese and Hindustani Surinamese) languages. Collectives such as Strange Fruit (discussed in Chapter Five) deliberately included Dutch, English, Turkish, Arabic, Sranang Tongo and Papiamentu in the various flyers and posters they used. Working with multiple languages

further illustrates how the movement created its own infrastructures and waterways to circulate information.

In the analysis of the archival materials, I circle back to the importance of movement and put the earlier referenced waterways, connections, and bridges to work. In other words, this is where I work towards conceptualising movement and circularity in the analysis of archival materials. In Cho's (2008) work with archival fragments and dreams, there is a presence of "wandering in circles", which become "movements that rehearse exilic trajectories as well as the research process, moving with trepidation and curiosity towards what is blocked on route" (Gunaratnam and Hamilton, 2017, p. 2). These kinds of considerations of method as 'wandering' and thinking about the routes that methods take are particularly productive for archival research due to the multifaceted issues set out earlier. Selecting a broad range of materials, from personal archives (e.g. the papers of Tania Leon, Anne Krul) to newsletters (*Flamboyant* and *SUHO*) and magazines (*Ashanti*) and organisations (*Flamboyant*, *Sister Outsider*, *Strange Fruit*), demonstrated the need for a fluid approach to what the materials were doing and showing. In using circulation, I do not suggest that the archival materials, interviews and literature produce perfect round circles that have a beginning and an end. Rather, I think of what circles push in and out, and how we make sense of the rough edges and complexities that shape them. Taking into account that feminist and queer diasporas are not fixed, I looked for networks, patterns, and maps of connection across this wider selection of materials. BMR newsletters and magazines present us with an intricate web of 'experiences', ranging from articles on policy, politics,

academia and transnational relations, to cultural work and sexuality. In the following chapters, I will provide fragments and snippets of these articles to demonstrate what these publications index. It is important to note the educational element that is clearly present in the majority of articles. Newsletters and magazines offered an excellent place to start thinking about solidarity practices. Editors recognised the need to provide information on the plight of various racialised groups. In my analysis of the archival materials, I therefore became more attentive to the shapes and forms that movement work takes instead of conducting a close thematic study. Nevertheless, looking for and following these shapes and forms were not without thematic focus. I drew on key themes such as spatiality and belonging, transnational queer and feminist exchange, intimacy and kinship, and queer of colour politics and cultural work.

In analysing the materials in personal archives donated to Atria, I paid specific attention to what kinds of experiences these archives held. The personal archives of women like Tania Leon and Anne Krul, map kinship, almost as an inherent logical structure of being in the world. I am invested in enabling what Celia Lury and Nina Wakeford (2012, p. 2) situate as "*the happening* of the social world – its ongoingness, relationality, contingency and sensuousness". How does this happening become reflected in archival materials? And how can methods become attentive to this happening? I addressed these questions by making use of an archival research journal to document my responses to the archives,

I scanned 380 pages of Anne Krul's archive today. This is such an incredibly well organised archive – anticipating a reader/researcher/curious wanderer. I feel lost in the complete abundance that this archive offers us. In between documents, reports, flyers, newspaper clippings, are these loose paper trails with names, addresses, transnational connections, books, films, and scribbles. I think about the relevance of those names, what it means to encounter them here. I realize these paper trails map a genealogy – a myriad of moving dots – ongoing. (Frank, 2017a)

In my notes, it becomes clear that the archives become and perform a "*happening* of the social world" (Lury and Wakeford, 2012, p. 2). In this sense, as Lury and Wakeford (2012, p. 7) argue, "the inventiveness of methods is to be found in the relation between two moments: the addressing of a method – an anecdote, a probe, a category – to a specific problem, and the capacity of what emerges in the use of that method to change the problem". For instance, in simply observing what is happening in Anne Krul's archives, I am able to take a step back from the emphasis placed on method, knowledge, and analysis, and make room for the inventiveness of archival research methods. I took a similar approach in staging a conversation between two archival collections, which leads me to the

discussion of working with the Audre Lorde Papers at Spelman College in Atlanta. Tania Leon's personal archive holds all the materials of the Black Dutch lesbian collective *Sister Outsider*. In going through the materials, I noticed a back and forth correspondence between Black Caribbean feminist Audre Lorde and the members of *Sister Outsider*. This immediately caught my attention as I was aware that the transnational relationships of the BMR movement are hardly discussed, and that Audre Lorde's own presence in Europe is not well known in the U.S. (Bolaki and Broeck, 2015). I will address this transnational relationship in more detail in Chapter Four. Suffice to say, upon finding these materials, I made the decision to trace this unexpected opening, and I travelled to Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia in 2017. Conducting research in two archives expanded my research methods and called for a consideration of how I would put the materials in conversation with each other.

Spelman College Collection: The Audre Lorde Papers

In 2017, I spent a week with the Audre Lorde Papers at the Spelman College Collection. The green campus felt inviting, and the two archivists who I had arranged my visit with, welcomed me into the small archival space. Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall (2009), founder and director of the Spelman Women's Research and Resource Centre (WRRC), states that it was the friendship between Audre Lorde and Dr. Johnetta B. Cole (Spelman's first woman president between 1987–1997) that led to Spelman becoming a home for Lorde's materials. As Spelman College is a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), I immediately

noticed a different atmosphere. Institutional archives produce an affective relationality, in which it becomes clear whether we belong in a particular space or not (see Puwar, 2004). In terms of scope, the Spelman archives are relatively small and therefore cannot be compared to the IAV Collection in terms of size and capacity. My aim is therefore not to compare these archival sites but to explore the potential of this "new archival arrangement" (Frank, 2019b, p. 16). Upon learning that Audre Lorde had donated her papers to Spelman, I requested the electronic finding aid, an archival inventory, from the College Archives. The first thing I did was to search for the names of the *Sister Outsider* women to see whether they would show up. Under correspondence, I found the names of Gloria Wekker and Tania Leon, and knew that the letters that the women wrote to Audre Lorde during the 1980s would be a part of this archive. A finding aid is described as a map of the collection that is designed to give researchers a general idea about the content of a collection (Morris and Rose, 2010, p. 65). The finding aid for the Audre Lorde Papers is substantive and includes, amongst others, the names of correspondents, organisations and journals that Lorde was in conversation with. While I predominantly looked at the letter exchanges between Audre Lorde, Tania Leon and Gloria Wekker, which were all in English, it was clear to me that the letter exchanges between Lorde and women across the world inform a transnational feminist analysis. Tamboukou (2011, n.p.) argues "working with letters as documents of life in narrative research raises a complex spectrum of questions around representation, context, truth, power, desire, identity, subjectivity, memory and ethics". In this respect, I felt both cautions and curious about engaging with letters, especially because consent by the senders of the letters is not always a given. I scanned the letters that were written by

Gloria Wekker and Tania Leon and browsed through other folders to get a sense of the scope of the collection. Besides the names of *Sister Outsider* members, I searched the term <Amsterdam>, as I knew Audre Lorde had spent extended time there with the collective. This search led to a box with folders that contained Lorde's photographs from her time in Europe, one of them titled "Amsterdam". I recognise the importance (and privilege) of physical movement here as a mode of tracing and locating diasporic exchange. Overlapping circles and connections started to emerge. Upon looking through the folder that held envelopes with photos, I realised there was another uncategorized envelope that was not on the finding aid. I recognised Amsterdam in one of the photos because of the Albert Cuyp market that was shown. From the *Sister Outsider* materials, I had learnt that the women had visited this market together. In order to place the photos in the context of both archival collections, I therefore used different methods of visual analysis (see Zinkham, 2009). While these photos might not fall in the typical tradition of family photos, they should most certainly be situated as images that reconfigure ideas of family and kinship within a feminist and queer framework. In using what Gunaratnam and Hamilton (2017, p. 5) call "method as participant rather than an externalised, pre-existing route", I show what it means to tune into the trouble that archives bring up. In reconceptualising the approach to the outcome of my findings, I allowed for the research into the BMR movement to transpire as *movement*[17], which led me to visit the Spelman College Archives.

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[17] I do not italicise the word 'movement' throughout the thesis, however, I want to briefly note the different uses of 'movement' here. I examine both the political work done under the BMR movement and the flows and currents that generate a sense of 'movement' in the work.

IHLIA: LGBT Heritage

I will briefly speak to my experience at IHLIA situated in Amsterdam, which is the third institutional archive where I conducted research into the BMR movement. IHLIA is a heritage organisation with a specific focus on information pertaining to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. Whereas I deliberately set out to conduct research at Atria, I developed an unexpected relationship with IHLIA due to my conversations with one of my interlocuters, Anne Krul. In 2014, I spent five days at IHLIA to gain insight into what kind of materials they hold on the BMR movement, however, the majority of the archival research for this project was carried out at Atria. I made a mental note to return to look into the *Strange Fruit* materials, which are part of the IHLIA archive, but which had, at that time, not been made accessible yet. Between 2017 and 2019, I had several conversations with Anne Krul, whose archival materials reside at Atria, IHLIA and the Black Archives. Both Anne's personal archives (at Atria) and the work she undertook with *Strange Fruit* (at IHLIA) are part of this project. While I was determined to write about the *Strange Fruit* collective, further discussed in Chapter Five, the materials were still not accessible as my project further developed. Combined with my earlier experiences at Atria, I realised the need to think through access in terms of the methods used in this project. What meanings does access have in relation to archival materials? In Chapter Five, I further detail how I came to work with Anne and how we collaborated in negotiating access to her archival materials. To explore these questions, methodologically and practically, I draw on Karen Barad's (2007, p. 30) "diffractive reading", which is described as a method of "reading

insights through one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge". Access to one set of materials, in this sense, could then provide new insights into another set of relationalities. Working with scatters and fragments unsettled my assumptions about what access meant for this research process. In other words, access to archival materials is not a straightforward process, but rather emerges through a set of close interactions with the archive.

In August 2019, Anne offered to join me on several trips to IHLIA to specifically engage with the Strange Fruit materials. Over the course of a week, we met three times and spent long days at the archives. On one of these occasions, I accompanied Anne to bring archival materials to IHLIA, which provided me with a more intimate understanding of how materials enter collections. The collaborative nature of conversations, archival research, emails and text messages that construed over the course of two years between Anne and I, will be more closely discussed in Chapter Five.

Working with BMR Stories: Interviews and Approach

The interviews conducted for this project reflect a broad scope of experiences and accounts of women who were active in the BMR movement. In this section, I specifically address what it meant to work with BMR stories and what kind of approach I adopted in conducting the interviews. In addressing the ontological context for ethnographic methodologies,

Southwest borderlands scholar María Cristina González[18] (2000, p. 625) describes a methodlogical approach that is 'organic' and of 'circular order', which offers a "creation-centered" ontology. This approach is understood to be "significantly different from a received western, linear, mechanistic, and positivistic wordldview" (p. 625). Writing from the experience of ethnography within Native American tradition, González (2000, p. 627) speaks to a methodology "rooted in the spirituality of the seasons of life". The metaphor of the four seasons is envoked to think through the process of ethnographic research, in which relationality and interdependence are centrered. Further, through foregrounding circulation, this process goes beyond static and linear western conceptualisations and research of movements. Four season methodology shows that methods are not a means to an end, but that they challenge us to think more critically about how interviews and archival materials enhance, overlay and contrast with each other. What a four season methodology then offers is a meaninful engagement with the circularity of these multiple research sites. Similar to how Marcus (1998) conceptualises his multi-sited ethnography, four season methodology understands that we are not removed from the interdependence between sites, objects, flows or movements, if anything, we enact with these relationalities to produce specific sets of knowledge. In thinking through the use of methods for conducting conversations with BMR women, I put to work Lewis' (1996) conceptualisation of 'experience' and González's 'four seasons methodology', to question what sorts of knowledges can be produced and what my role therein is. The "circular order" that González (2000, p. 628) offers is understood as "the circular proces of a spiral, the

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[18] Currently known as Sarah Amira de la Garza.

researcher and theories develop cumulatively and rhytmically, with no claims of absolute knowledge". My methods, between archival research and interviews, took somehwat of a circular shape. I conducted archival research, held interviews, and returned to conduct further archival research. This form of analysis forced me to take deliberate decisions in following stories, things, methaphors and people based on insights gained from my interviews and archival materials. In this sense, I co-produced the relationships between the archival research and the interviews, which becomes visible in my empirical chapters.

Selecting Interview Participants

The process of selecting interviewees seemed relatively straightforward at first as I already knew quite a few of the BMR women through my own community in Amsterdam. By the time I started conducting interviews in 2016, I had already done some archival research, which had led to more names. I selected interviewees broadly on the basis of the collectives they were affiliated to. For instance, I knew that Gloria Wekker and Tieneke Sumter were part of *Sister Outsider*; Kamala Kempadoo, Cisca Pattipilohy and Troetje Loewenthal were early members of *Flamboyant*; Anne Krul was active within *Strange Fruit*; and Ida Does and Ernestine Comvalius were not part of collectives I researched, but all played a pivotal role in the political and cultural sector during the BMR movement. All of my interviewees come from different racial backgrounds; I interviewed women who have Surinamese, Dutch Antillean, Indonesian, Ghanaian, and Guyanese heritage. What do my interviews tell us about who BMR women are? I situate the process of conducting conversations with BMR

women and the analysis thereof with the 'Four Season' guiding ideals in mind (González, 2000, p. 632). My personal relationships and situatedness inherently shaped my research (González, 2000, p. 633). By this I mean that the limitations of this project are not abject, but a result of the connections I already had established, and how and where I am situated in the broader landscape of the Netherlands as a Dutch South African Indian queer woman. In this respect, González (2000, p. 633) states that "all experience is part of the whole process". Using four season methodology requires critically reflecting back on how my own experiences and engagements with archival materials and interviews as a researcher have changed over time. Further along in the research process I was faced with complex questions about the importance of including a multiplicity of perspectives. Reflecting back on the choices I made in selecting interview participants, I can now see the benefits and limitations of selecting a small number of participants who are tied to the same collectives and thus often also know each other. This approach produced rich interactions in terms of tracing kinship and a range of experiences and perspectives within one collective. The interviewees or people within my wider community recommended many of the women I spoke to. However, this also meant that the pool of participants are generally more widely known and prominent within the BMR movement. While I had planned to interview at least one or two more participants, my conversations and relationship with Anne continued to grow, and I decided against interviewing more people, but instead to follow this seemingly organic cycle of research that had unfolded.

A clear limitation of my project is the lack of adequate and wider representations of geographical, multi-racial, and classed backgrounds of participants. I have not interviewed Moroccan and Turkish women, for example, nor women who came to the Netherlands as 'refugees'. In part this was due to the connections I had already established; in other cases, it was because I was not able to contact certain women. For instance, one of the Hindustani women I had wanted to interview no longer lives in the Netherlands and the emails I sent to her brother to get her information were not answered. I acknowledge that this project is not complete or a finalised study on the BMR movement by any means, but rather offers a starting point to further progress and develop multiple research projects related to the movement.

Conducting Interviews: Who are BMR Women?

The eight BMR women I interviewed come from different backgrounds, in terms of race, sexuality, class, education and geographical location, and were part of a wide variety of BMR organisations, often more than one at the same time. These overlaps inevitably mirrored the movement that underlies feminist and queer work. Most participants were born outside the Netherlands and migrated either at a young age or in the case of one participant, later in life. However, since the participants differ in age, they would have had different experiences of coming to the Netherlands. From all the women I interviewed, at least 4 moved back and forward between different countries, either for their studies, personal life or work, and two of my participants no longer reside in the Netherlands. At

least three of my interviewees are academics, and still contribute to feminist knowledge production in the Netherlands and internationally. Two of my participants are active within the cultural realm and are well known public figures. Finally, at least three of my participants openly identify as lesbian or queer, while others have not specifically disclosed their sexuality.

In traversing Amsterdam to get to my various interview appointments, I became aware of the interdependence of my own presence – moving through the city – and the reimagining I was doing as part of this ethnographic research. Women made references to specific sites in the city – feminist and queer community sites, markets, the home of a close friend, a lesbian café, and so on. As such, I am offered a new layer of spatial awareness through these interviews. Their recollections collide with my movements in the city – I start to develop a different kind of awareness of temporality and space. (Frank, 2016b)

Most of the interviews took place in Amsterdam and I held interviews at people's home, in office spaces and at cafés. Interviews lasted between one and three hours. In one case, an

interview was held over the course of several sessions. Interviewees were generally excited to speak to me, and some even brought their own archival materials to the interview. Some of the interviewees emailed me after our conversation with additional information. Most of the interviewees knew each other, which reflected in the conversations I had. They would ask whether I had spoken to so and so and even sometimes asked after them. There was genuine excitement in my interlocuters' suggestions about who I should speak to next. In reflecting on the work of anthropologist Zora Neal Hurston, Kamala Visweswaran (1994, p. 33) states, "in Hurston's ethnography, community is seen not merely as an object to be externally described, but as a realm intimately inhabited". In choosing interview participants, developing questions and analysing BMR stories, this notion of community as an inhabited material and sensorial site was particularly important.

Developing Questions

The interviews were semi-structured and inspired by feminist ethnographic methodologies. For all the interviews, I used the same template as interview guide, but I adapted the questions slightly for each interview. Adaptions in the interview guide were made to reflect a specific collective that I was interested in. The questions I asked were aimed at gaining an understanding of what BMR experiences told us about the 1980s. I was particularly interested in how BMR women experienced the movement within a wider social and historical context. My questions and off-script follow-up questions reflect this interest. Over time, between 2016 and 2019, my questions and engagements with interviewees changed. In part, this was due to gaining deeper insight into what kinds of

questions would provide more in-depth understanding of the movement. Further, as my

archival research developed, my own knowledge on the BMR movement continued to grow.

This eventually resulted in a series of conversations and collaborative research with one of

my research participants, Anne Krul (discussed in Chapter Five). To illustrate these

developments, I have included short ethnographic description of the interview process that

details my questions and observations.

The first interview I conducted was in 2016 with Cisca in her home. I had drafted up an interview guide well in advance, but the interview did not proceed as I expected at all. Before we started recording, I told Cisca more about the project, we had only been in email conversation before this, and that I would be recording the conversation. I also made sure to discuss the consent form I had brought with me, and as this was my first interview, I felt unsure about the 'right time' to bring out the forms. Once we were settled with the form, tea and snacks, I told her I would now start recording. The first thing (on record) that Cisca responded to was the recorder, to which she said, "I typically am interviewed with this thing and sometimes they sent me the typed out interviews and it doesn't make any sense, I'm very bad in not drifting off, I

always talk a lot and you always need to steer me back to

the subject". With this firm warning she however proceeded

to tell me about the last interview she had with a group of

Moluccan women. Eventually, she circled back to how the

transcript of that interview was full of mistakes. I assured her

I would try my best. (Frank, 2016a)

This interaction with Cisca stood out when revisiting the transcript, in which indeed Cisca drifted off (in many interesting directions), and also shows how my attempts to steer us back to the conversation were not successful. For instance, when I asked Cisca where she was in the 1980s and what her relationship with this time period was, she mentioned the Winter University (1983) as an important landmark.

Chandra: Were you also part of the university?

Cisca: No, no, no, that's what I wanted to tell you, I only came to the Netherlands in 1968. (Pattipilohy, 2016)

The conversation moved to Cisca's experiences growing up in Indonesia and how she had ended up in the Netherlands. What I realised in reflecting on these extracts, is that for Cisca it was more important to tell me about *how* she ended up in the Netherlands than to jump into the work she had done in the 1980s. To allow participants to situate themselves, I

adapted the interview guide to include an introductory question. In my conversation with Anne, this generated the following conversation,

Chandra: Could you introduce yourself in a few sentences?

Anne Krul: I am Anne Krul, I am Afro-Dutch, born in 1958 in Haarlem from a Dutch mother. I call her my birth mother and my biological father is a man from Ghana and I've been adopted as a baby in a Dutch family, but my family has multi-cultural roots, but they always act very white about that. So, I grew up very white and also in a very white environment. (Krul, 2017a)

The extract above shows how Anne situates herself in the beginning of the interview. From there the conversation flowed quite naturally to her studies and feminist activism. An important observation here is also related to age. Cisca was born in 1926 and Anne in 1958. Both women are situated differently, in terms of generation and geography within the 1980s. I realised that in helping participants to reflect on their experiences during the 1980s, it would be useful to draw on examples I had found in the archival materials to 'coax' the telling of stories about certain events or important moments in history. For instance, I have used specific pieces of writing, photographs or landmark events to generate deeper conversations. In some cases, this was successful, while in other cases participants could not remember specific events and gave me a more generic recollection than even the archival materials detailed. Most of the interviewees said something along the lines of: "It's

so long ago" or "It's been so long since thinking about this". Some interviewees used paper and pen to trace their personal history, while others brought in archival materials with dates.

In my interview with two lifelong friends, Ida Does and Ernestine Comvalius, the women relied on each other to recall specific details. In some cases, because I had studied the BMR history, I would be able to offer names and dates. To prepare interviewees, I gave a rough idea of the type of questions I would ask. The interviewees generally felt at ease knowing the questions beforehand so that they could recollect some of their memories upon meeting. I was most worried that interviewees would not be able to remember specific conditions of the 1980s, but I later realised this would become equally productive for the overall project.

Analysing BMR Stories

This section discusses how the interviews have been transcribed and interpreted. I transcribed and translated all interviews myself. My main incentive for this was that I wanted to make sure that I paid close attention to the different emotions that interviewees had during the interviews. All the interviews took place in Dutch, except for my conversation with Kamala, which was conducted in English. Holding interviews in Dutch, even though this is my first language, was more challenging than expected because so much of my thought processes and daily conversations take place in English. Being fluent (and

raised to speak both languages), however did not prevent me from running into language issues. Language is an important part of identity and the way Dutch is spoken can differ depending on culture, ethnicity and region. These nuances are not always easy to translate into English. Language, in addition to, cultural contexts need to be translated (Filep, 2009). The interviews generally oscillated between the present and past in quite fluid ways. At times participants were struck by a memory or laughed suddenly in the recollection of some of their activities. In analysing the stories that emerged in our conversations, I specifically listened to how BMR women narrativized and re-counted their everyday experiences. Hall (1990, p. 222) states, "Practices of representation always implicate the position from which we speak or write – the positions of *enunciation*". Analysing these "positions of enunciation" allows us to see how BMR women were able to take up space and constitute feminist and queer politics. Gunaratnam (2003, p. 110) states that if we are to interrogate, "ideas about 'race' and ethnicity as socially produced, relational and given particular situated meanings through individual experience, then narratives of identity are of critical importance". In this sense, the analysis of BMR stories must push back against essentialist readings of the BMR movement as singular object. In analysing interview materials, I asked: *What is the importance of diasporic understandings of space and place for BMR women? How did kinship and sexuality become a feminist and queer praxis? How does temporality inform the relationality with the movement and archival materials?* These questions allowed for my analysis to "embrace multiplicity, misalignments, and silences" (Brim and Ghaziani, 2016, p. 17). In leaving space for multiplicity, which comes back in how Anzalduá (1981) envisions Shiva in the opening quote, there is also space to think about the 'misalignments' and

'silences', which are inevitably part of this work. In using a mixture of feminist and queer methods, I adhere to the importance of "making space for what is" (Love *et al.*, 2012, p. 144). I have done this through directing specific attention to the everyday, ephemeral, multi-sensory, and affective in conversations with BMR women. In multiple interviews, BMR women offered their own reflections on the historicisation and construction of genealogy. For instance, Gloria Wekker reflected on the use of 'queer' where Kamala Kempadoo interrogated the use of 'Black' as a coalition building term. I was thus aware that the majority of the participants had some level of what Gunaratnam (2003, p. 112) terms "'race' un/consciousness, which structures how we see ourselves, talk about ourselves and how we live our lives". However, I had also made a set of assumptions on the basis of "race un/consciousness", which I subsequently had to attend to. For instance, I had made an assumption that the topic of political blackness would have played a more prominent role in BMR organising and discussions. But while most of my participants recognised it garnered deep discussion, they did not feel strongly about its use. In this specific example, I realised I was bringing my own assumptions and understandings of political blackness into the interviews.

Much of the analysis of the interview materials in relationship to the archival materials provides a critical reflection on the politics of time. Scholars such as Gary Saul Morson (1994, p. 3) argue that we need "multiple concepts of time – multiple 'chronotopes', as

Bakhtin would say for diverse purposes and circumstances".[19] This is particularly relevant as the meaning of BMR stories and archival materials changes over time. By this I do not mean that these stories hold a different resonance in the past than in the present, but that time is constantly refigured and indeed serves different purposes. This inevitably also includes my own relationship to time as it pertains to the research process. With time, I was able to look more critically, and with more distance, at the interview extracts. The interviews started to take on a different quality, and I became less concerned with making the BMR stories 'fit' into the archival research and vice versa. Further, instead of feeling hindered by the role time played in some of the conversations where specific details and events were hard to remember, I started interrogating how time resonated for the different interviewees. A short example of this was discussed earlier in how Anne and Cisca positioned themselves in relationship to the 1980s. Lastly, it stood out to me that in one of my interviews with Gloria Wekker, time had become a marker of the many BMR women that had died from the 1980s onwards. Within the field of 'illness narratives', scholars reflect on the meaning of dying and bereavement on narrative structures and form (see Gunaratnam and Oliviere, 2009). Time, in interviews, can thus also be constituted by loss, absence and death. I further pick up on these implications of death, kinship and care in Chapters Four and Six.

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[19] Morson (1994) refers to Bakhtin's (1981) 'The Dialogic Imagination of Four Essays' here, which explores how space-time is constructed in text.

Conclusions

By way of conclusion, I would first like to note that the discussion of my research design and methodologies have urged asking what it means to refuse the archive as an end-goal for BMR histories. While much of my discussion focuses on working with the archive, including the generative potential of the archive and its limitations, I feel that it is necessary to allow space for a politics of refusal. Through drawing on waterways and circulation as a conceptual framework, I allow for multiple methodological flows to emerge. In the opening quote of this chapter, Dionne Brand writes "all beginning in water, all ending in water" (Brand, 2012, p. 18). I end this chapter by thinking about how we read *with*, *against* and *from* the water. My discussion of methods and methodology in this two-part chapter is rooted in understanding why it is generative and important to offer multiple ways of reading in working with archival materials and BMR stories. I suggest that this is done through adopting a circular approach, in which 'experience', difference, absence and presence guide the analysis. I further offer an experimental methodology through using 'listening', ''mapping', and 'orientation' as waterways that are interconnected. In the following chapter, I will further put these methods to work by reflecting on the Flamboyant organisation. I will bring together archival and interview materials to provide insight into the racial organisation of space, the development of political solidarity and the politics that underlined the setting up of the very first Black documentation centre in the Netherlands.

GATHERING

Image 5. Kamala Kempadoo Teaching Black Women's Study Course at Flamboyant. Courtesy of Kamala Kempadoo.

Image 6. Alice Walker in Flamboyant. Photo of Amazone Nativel. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of Atria.

Image 7. Visitors during 'Onderbelicht'. Troetje Loewenthal, Anne Krul, Angela Davis (left to right). 1995. Photo by Marije van Mierlo. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of Atria.

Chapter Three. *Flamboyant*: Untamed Feminisms, Diasporic Belonging and Archival Imagination

"What is in a name".

Flamboyant is the name of our centre.

We are continuously asked how we got our name and what it means.

Here it goes:

1. Flamboyant: Flaming (Van Dale)

2. Flamboyant: The most beautiful ornamental tree of the tropics. He gets ± 20 meter high, has wavering leaves like an acacia and blooms with big bunches beautiful flowers in the colours of a flame that varies from yellow-orange to fire red. If the tree blooms it looks like the bloom is flaming hot, hence the name.

Contrary to other trees/plants from the tropics that are known as Dutch houseplants (the ficus, hibiscus etc.) the Flamboyant has not been tamed and would prefer to die instead of shrink in the Dutch living room. (Flamboyant, 1987)

Introduction

Singel nr. 260. Amsterdam. Repeating circles. Protective circles. The Singelgracht, dug in 1872 for defence purposes, was the city's outer limit at the time. Singel is Old Dutch for 'encircle'. It is within this landscape of circles, that I want to imagine Flamboyant's emergence in 1985. A site of water crossings. Flamboyant. A feminist site, a queer site, pushing against the outer city limits with its presence.

Flamboyant is the first and only nation-wide Black and migrant women-run meeting place and documentation centre that operated between 1986 and 1990 in Amsterdam. The goal of *Flamboyant* was to offer BMR women a space to attend activities, lectures and workshops, and to have access to a documentation centre, archive and library with materials relevant to BMR women. When I first read the explanation behind the name, as referenced in the beginning of this chapter, I felt pulled towards *Flamboyant* (the organisation, the flames, the tree). I encountered the Flamboyant tree during travels in Curacao and Durban, which made me reflect deeper on the significance of the Flamboyant tree and how she might subvert and guide ideas about what constitutes diasporic landscapes. Art historian W.J.T. Mitchell (1994, p. 1) situates a landscape, "not as an object to be seen or a text to be read, but as a process by which social and subjective identities are formed". How does the Flamboyant emerge in the Dutch spatial imaginary? Environmental studies scholar Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2004, p. 266), calls our attention to the "complex diasporas of plants and peoples", which bring into question what makes a natural landscape. The Flamboyant tree,

as an imaginary of the tropics, and its juxtaposition to other tropical plants, which have been domesticated within the confines of the Dutch living room, calls attention to the "'uprooting' of plants and peoples and their transplantation to colonial botanical gardens and sugar plantations across the Atlantic" (Deloughrey, 2004, p. 270). While the Dutch living room is not a colonial botanical garden, there is a larger point that is made in relationship to domesticity and a 'refusal to shrink'. DeLoughrey (2004, p. 137) draws on the work of Caribbean writer Jamaica Kincaid (1999) to further trouble these ideas of 'uprooting' plants and people, and to imagine what was there before Columbus, "What herb of any beauty grew in this place? What tree? And did the people who lived here grow them for their own sake?" DeLoughrey (2004) argues, drawing on the writer and poet Édouard Glissant (1992), that these questions separate the precolonial Caribbean from the contemporary, creating a temporal rupture. The question of what was *before before* becomes bound up within this temporal rupture.

In the opening paragraph of this chapter, I describe Amsterdam's inner-city centre through its circular infrastructure. In conceptualising some of the directions the Flamboyant tree might steer us in, we can start to see how ecologies cultivate a "sense of place", thereby "creating the island as a world" (Deloughrey, 2004, p. 273). It is from this place that I think of *Flamboyant's* emergence in the city centre of Amsterdam as where metropole and colony collide, where colonial histories meet in the waterways of the canals. In writing about the history of *Flamboyant*, I think about the importance of circular infrastructures, in which the water does not define the peripheral margin but itself becomes the centre. In the middle of

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this Dutch colonial centre, *Flamboyant* created its own island-space. I recognise that my use of 'islandness' in relationship to the city centre of Amsterdam, and the *Flamboyant* centre more specifically, does not hold the same spatial, geographic and socio-political connotations as land that is an island formation. The presence of Flamboyant women from the Dutch Antilles, Indonesia, South Africa, Suriname, Morocco, Turkey, the Philippines, and Pakistan in this centre produces a racialised notion of intimacy (Lowe, 2005; Eng, 2010) and shape a 'diaspora space' (Brah, 1996). Notably, this space is not just occupied by BMR women, but also by those, as Brah (1996, p. 16) points out, who are "constructed and represented as "indigenous". In other words, spaces such as *Flamboyant* do not operate within a vacuum, but actually undo constructions of insider/outsider (Brah, 1996). How these intimacies and constructions that operate in the production of space engage with everyday experiences, will be further unpacked in this chapter.

The central questions that underlie this chapter are: *What role did the politics of solidarity play in a sense of home and belonging? How do we work with the 'untameable' and the 'refusal to shrink' as a feminist political project? How did Flamboyant rethink the subject position of BMR women within the Dutch archival landscape?* My aim in answering these questions is not to offer a factual history of *Flamboyant* nor to present a conclusive story on the centre and its organisers. Rather, I situate *Flamboyant* (the organisation, flames and tree) as an imaginary site to think through spatial politics, BMR feminism, and the legibility of the archive.

Diasporic Landscapes: Blooming Flowers

Set up as a foundation on 17 February 1986, *Flamboyant* operated as a national centre for Black and migrant women until its doors closed on 31 December 1990 due to a lack of funding. After a transitional period, *Flamboyant* continued under the name *Zami* and still continues some of its activities to this day. The newsletters that *Flamboyant* brought out provide invaluable insight on the scope of organising and activities. *Flamboyant* started organising under the framework of 'political blackness' and operated as the 'Black women's centre', and later used 'Black and migrant' to become more inclusive of migrant women coming from Morocco, Turkey and countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. While they did not add 'refugee' to their name, the newsletters demonstrate that women who had fled their countries for a variety of socio-political and economic reasons, were an important part of *Flamboyant's* organising.

Initially, the municipality of Amsterdam funded the centre to further the integration and emancipation of BMR women. The Dutch funding landscape for BMR organisations changed drastically after the 1990s as by then it was understood that BMR women no longer needed funding for special projects (see Botman, Jouwe and Wekker, 2001). *Flamboyant* was one of the only organisations that actively resisted ethnicity-based research funding. The Amsterdam municipality preferred BMR women to organise along the lines of ethnicity and to stick to non-political activities such as arts and crafts. This strategy was used to keep BMR women depoliticised and within their own 'pillars'. Pillarisation was a common feature in

Dutch society between 1900 and 1960 and referred to the "segmentation of society into religious and secular blocs and subcultures" (Schrover, 2010, p. 332). The BMR movement was impacted by how pillarisation became part of multicultural policy, which was focused on integration of "ethnic minorities" within a depoliticised framework. I argue that the tactic of pillarisation should be read as the refusal to allow for a political intimacy to emerge. *Flamboyant* occupied the Singel number 260 for almost five years; the building became a home, a meeting point for BMR women, and a site where BMR feminist knowledge was produced. Many of the women who would later become involved with *Flamboyant* were already shaping and informing politics, policy, culture, and academia in the Netherlands (and continue to do so). The backstory of *Flamboyant* reveals years of committed organising and a broad range of diverging discussions on what shape the first Black and migrant women's documentation centre should take. After the aforementioned Winter University in Nijmegen in 1983 had taken place, a group of women came together under the name of *Landelijke Zwarte Vrouwengroep* (National Black Women's Group). Amongst them were women with Dutch Antillean and Indo-Dutch and Moluccan backgrounds. While this group of women gave the initial push, they were soon joined by a larger group of women who organised with and in *Flamboyant*. *Flamboyant* had a board, general coordinator and a variety of paid and unpaid employees. The first very first board members were Mea Venster (chair), Tania Leon (treasurer), Nanny Nierath (secretary), Maddy Tolud, Lioe Tan, Kitty Lie, Cisca Pattipilohy, Troetje Loewenthal and Kamala Kempadoo. Many of these women organised with *Flamboyant* and other organisations for years. The centre functioned both as meeting place and as a site for activities, as well as an information service and

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documentation project, making *Flamboyant* into a unique site and centre of feminist struggle. In this chapter, I work with the stories of Cisca Pattipilohy, Troetje Loewenthal and Kamala Kempadoo, who were amongst the core founders of *Flamboyant*. Their stories and experiences in working with *Flamboyant* are telling of the embodied politics of place, home and solidarity practices.

Homemaking

Imagining *Flamboyant* as an island space allows us to think about what materialises as the centre. What does it mean to belong to this centre? Feminist and queer scholars of colour have long theorised the notion of home as a politics of location (Brah, 1996). Brah (1996, p. 177) powerfully argues "the concept of diaspora offers a critique of discourses of fixed origins, while taking account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as desire for a 'homeland'". I locate *Flamboyant* as a centre where homing desires convergence. Gender studies scholar Zenzele Isoke (2011, p. 118) theorises homemaking as follows, "Homemaking is also a critical form of spatial praxis. It involves reconfiguring a hostile and deeply racialized landscape". *Flamboyant's* praxis of homemaking offers a gendered understanding of diaspora. Hayes Edwards (2003, p. 122) asks: "What would it mean to theorize a feminist articulation of diaspora?" Similarly, Tina Campt and Deborah Thomas (2008, p. 1) ask: "What does it mean to theorize diaspora through an explicitly feminist frame?" How can we best put these questions to work? I argue in this chapter that *Flamboyant's* presence in the city centre brings together entangled geographies of colonialism, migration, transnational

circuits, that are inherently part of a diasporic feminist and queer praxis. In doing so, I grapple with the multi-presence of diasporic routes and flows at the centre:

> Video presentations about Antillean women | Black and Migrant sex worker rights forum | Filipina women conferences | Black women's literature course | Conference about racism, sexism and classism | Seminars for Pakistani women | Moluccan women's theatre group | Political gathering ANC women | Ethiopian women's group event | Indonesian women gatherings | Study days for Moroccan women | Visit and lecture by Alice Walker | Black lesbians from the diaspora in conversation.[20] (translation mine).

These events, conferences and gatherings speak to the multiple ways of being in and outside of 'the movement' and disrupt linear and restrictive understandings of the place of 'minorities' in the Dutch political landscape. BMR women organising at centres such as *Flamboyant* show a rich tapestry of interactions, curiosity, and political alignment that reconfigure race, gender, and sexuality outside of the bounds of the nation state. In this sense, the geographies of BMR women are constantly made and remade. As a discipline, geography is said to comprise "a wide range of systematic studies which have one or more of environment, place and space and their foundational concepts" (Johnston, 2005, p. 11). My engagement with geography here is primarily focused on human geography, and the production of space and place. Katherine McKittrick and Linda Peake (2005, p. 39) argue that geography in the Anglo-American tradition is traditionally exclusionary of "women, non-white communities, and non-Western geographical subjects". The idea of difference

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[20] This summary is compiled from multiple newsletters.

within geography is therefore pertinent to addressing the power dynamics of the production of space and place. The working definition of McKittrick and Peake (2005, p. 40) offers a clear analysis of how difference is linked to understanding which geographies have been excluded:

> While geographers and other social theorists have used divergent definitions of 'difference', we understand difference through socially produced markers (such as race, class, gender, and sexuality) and their attendant geographies (colonial geographies, post-colonial geographies, patriarchal geographies, feminist geographies, white geographies, non-white geographies, cross-culture geographies, and so on).

Difference here is thus tied up with geography; the two are not seen as separate entities, but rather as being intertwined. They move with and encircle each other. We might then ask what the attendant geographies of the BMR movement are? Scholar Keguro Macharia (2016, p. 184), in relation to area studies and 'being area studied', situates the Black diaspora as, "a s/place from which to contemplate the relationship between deracination and encounter, to focus on how black individuals from across the world interact with each other: how we imagine worlds, inhabit geographies, and produce fugitive temporalities". This framing of Black diaspora in relation to area studies refuses the U.S. as "the place to which information flows" (p. 187). Keeping these frameworks in mind, I am invested in thinking about the politics of translation when it comes to reading and mapping geographies. Conceptualisations of difference and geography need to be translated within a feminist and queer European post-colonial and post-national context.

To address the specificity of a BMR diasporic framework, I draw on similar debates emerging out of Black British feminism. First and foremost, as the history of Flamboyant shows, the organisational terms used by the BMR movement are "inevitably 'discovered', reinvented and troubled, over and over again" (Gunaratnam, 2014, p. 4). In the 1988 landmark anthology, *Charting the Journey*, the authors speak to the arrival of the idea of 'blackness' in Britain. This publication is significant because it maps 'blackness' as an "idea and process", which equally informed movement building politics in the BMR movement (p. 1). The creation of a movement and political coalition that "though disparate in voice, was sympathetic in direction" (p. 3), is perhaps one of the most apt ways of thinking through formations of 'blackness' that were never fixed or solid. These formations of 'blackness' and the construction of 'migrantness', were important for the collective organising and coalition building *Flamboyant* undertook. In the Black British context, there was a need for "frameworks which are not fixed in biology, but in the social changes that are forever occurring around us" (Grewal *et al.*, 1988, p. 258). This conceptual framework is in direct conversation with how the notion of diaspora informed and shaped political blackness. Nydia Swaby (2014, p. 13) argues, in relationship to Black British feminism that ultimately "*political blackness is a politics of solidarity*". Women were coming together in small groups and organising events to discuss the multiple meanings of 'Black womanhood' during the BMR Movement. In similar ways to the U.K., political blackness in the Dutch context was seen as the "most pointed way to decentre whiteness" (p. 23). Another poignant observation made by Swaby is on how political blackness was strategically used, "gendered political blackness was only made possible through the recognition that black women were not only

divided by ethnicity, but also the ways in which they experience oppression, and when necessary, how they choose to mobilise" (p. 19). I quote Swaby at length here to further untangle the multi-layered use of political blackness in diasporic feminist movements. While there has been an ongoing circuit of exchange between the U.K. and the Netherlands since the 1980s, little scholarship has come out of this. A project which could better engage and unpack tensions and contemporary discussions on the use of 'political blackness' would thus be welcome and generative.

Flamboyant strategically identified the need to document and coordinate initiatives on a nation-wide scale to keep track of BMR organising. One of the newsletters aptly states, "It seems important to spread information about the thousands of flowers that are blooming" (Flamboyant, 1986, p. 16). In theorising about *Flamboyant* in the present, I draw on the earlier referenced key concept of 'diaspora space' (Brah, 1996, p. 178), which entails the "intersectionality of diaspora, border and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes". In thinking through the notion of 'diaspora space', and how this space became embodied, I work with Kamala Kempadoo's stories on her time in Amsterdam, where she arrived by way of Guyana. Kamala, now a professor in Canada, studied and worked in Amsterdam during the height of the BMR movement. I interviewed Kamala over Skype and our interview lasted for about an hour. I first asked Kamala quite a broad question to get a sense of where she was during the 1980s.

> Chandra: I wanted to start with asking you if you could describe where you
> were in the '80s and what that time period meant for you? I specifically look

at this time period because from the research that I have done at the Atria Archives it appears to me that this was the decade in which so much of the feminist activity was happening.

Kamala: Yes, it's interesting, I moved to the Netherlands in '77 right and started studying at the University of Amsterdam in '79, and it was partly through my engagement with the Guyana and the Walter Rodney Collective as it was called. In 1980, Walter Rodney in Guyana was assassinated and a group of us, Guyanese, the Guyanese filmmakers, as well as and people of Surinamese and Curacao-an descent who were living in... There was a bookshop around and we were all active, it was kind of support for the time, these kind of solidarity groups. These kind of solidarity groups, and there were quite a few at the time. There was a Surinamese group, of course there was a whole new migration from Surinamese at the time. I moved to the Netherlands because I was living in Suriname before. I was living with a Dutch guy, and independence came up and his job was kind of ending. So, he suggested we move, you know, to the Netherlands. So that's how I ended up there, but my family was in Guyana, right. That's how it came together for me. And I was part of those solidarity movements at the time. And just sort of coming to consciousness and studying also at the University of Amsterdam, which at the time was a very lefty university. And I got introduced to the work of Frantz Fanon – *Wretched of the Earth* and reading that in my first couple of years, and there was a lot of talk about anti-colonialism, you know what was going on in these new post-colonial societies in the Global South.

So, a lot of my awareness was kind of growing as I was being active and involved in these solidarity committees and groups. And it is through that, that I became involved in the Black Women's movement. And it had to do with

two key figures in my experience of what underpinned my Black feminist consciousness at the time. Tara…because she used to have political gatherings for black women, [at] her home, we used to go there, we were all taking about anti-racism, women's positions. She was at the time part of the communist party: CPF, Dutch Communist Party. And one of the few people of colour in the party at the time. So, she had these meetings, informal gatherings at her home, we used to go and talk about things to do with both Suriname and you know, the Global South or the third world at the time, as well as what was happening in the Netherlands. (K. Kempadoo, 2016)

The way that Kamala narrates her story demonstrates how the category of 'experience' (Lewis, 1996) becomes animated across geographies and in relation to others. Multiple temporalities and storylines are part of Kamala's narration. Her account starts with her arrival in the Netherlands, but this is not offered as the *start* of her story. Kamala locates her presence in the Netherlands in relation to her having lived in in Suriname, but also in reference to her family being from Guyana. Kamala's narration makes clear that there were multiple sites of learning and processes of consciousness raising, from gatherings at home to the university space. Kamala's story leads us through multiple intricate networks that are largely unfamiliar within public discourse. Nevertheless, these networks of solidarity shaped much of Amsterdam's political, racialised and gendered landscape and through them, the importance of home, belonging and kinship networks come to the fore. In particular, there is an important emphasis placed by Kamala on the collective and the significance of informal and intimate political gatherings as a form of Black feminist consciousness. These gatherings are also tied to local and global political processes, from the local Communist

party to politics in the Global South, which shows how Kamala and other BMR women were mapping their experiences and positionalities in a broader historical framework.

Kamala further explains how from these initial meetings, there was a similar movement towards consciousness raising in academic circles,

> And then around that time also, so that was happening, and there were people like Gayatri Choennie who was also involved, in that kind of women of colour, Black feminist, training, schooling, we had consciousness-raising sessions, that was what it was, coming out of the women's movement. Gayatri and Tara Oedayraj Singh Varma had experienced the Dutch women's movement and had recognized the kind of racism … and so therefore were kind of trying to mobilise women of colour, or we didn't call ourselves women of colour, we were Black at the time. And, simultaneously, Philomena Essed was having some sort of, we were meeting at her house, and with women who were sort of more involved within the academy, at the university of Amsterdam. Because there at the time there was also the push back to set up this new Race and Ethnicity studies department at the University of Amsterdam. (K. Kempadoo, 2016)

Kamala brings together a couple of key insights on the developments within Black feminist consciousness raising circles. There is a juxtaposition between the home as political domestic site and the need to bring critical thought to the university space. The push back Kamala refers to at the University of Amsterdam, should be seen in light of the broader discussion on race in the Netherlands as set out in Chapter One. These multi-layered narratives further speak to where political struggles take place and how these sites are subsequently shaped by these pushes and pulls of political activity. What becomes most

apparent in this form of storytelling that Kamala employs, is the mapping of the BMR movement through the seemingly informal political gatherings that happened across Amsterdam in homes and in other such more intimate spaces.

When I asked Kamala to tell me more about her role in *Flamboyant*, she became noticeably excited in her reflections back on this time,

> Chandra: I have been reading a lot of the *Flamboyant* newsletters and it seems to me that, exactly because of these post-colonial, but also labour migrations, that there was a real need for a Black women's archive and documentation centre and to have a physical space, so I was also interested in your role with *Flamboyant* in realizing those projects.
>
> Kamala: Yeah ... so I was part of the (...) not the very first original founders, but there was a small group and I joined them pretty soon, I think in 1983, 1984, and then we got the centre on the Singel in 1985 if I remember... (...) We did a lot. I think I almost lived at the Singel you know, it was my home, it was my life. It was very much the sort of the – I was there and I learned so much, it was a fabulous experience, and it was amazing to work with so many women of different backgrounds and histories and ethnicities, because even though we were identifying as black women, I mean, we, you have met some of them, we were really very diverse. And it was so remarkable, so it was also a learning period about culture, about Dutch society, about Dutch history (...). (K. Kempadoo, 2016)

There are a couple of insightful points that Kamala makes about her time with *Flamboyant*. In Kamala's narration, there is an important shift from gathering in living rooms to gathering

and working with *Flamboyant*. The sense of a home space and place of belonging is linked to working with, as Kamala states, "women of such different backgrounds and histories and ethnicities". Kamala evokes the category of 'experience' (Lewis, 1996) as it pertains to the process of learning about each other. Difference becomes more important to Kamala than the use of 'Black' as a political category in this account. In this sense, Kamala is racialising, but not essentialising the experiences of BMR women; her comments about their approach help us to think through difference in a more holistic manner. Overall, these accounts constitute "multi-realities", acknowledging connecting threads without arguing sameness in experience (Brah, 1996, p. 20). There is an important geopolitical imagination that emerges through informal meetings and through situating difference within a broader post-colonial political framework. The metaphor of the blooming flowers as the proliferation that was happening in the 1980s is apt in this context. I argue that through tuning into these stories and archival materials, diasporic 'routes' and connections become visible, some even new and realised through the work of collectives such as *Flamboyan*t and the work done here, so many years after their organising.

The *Flamboyant* newsletters make clear that these 'diasporic routes' shaped the organisation's vision of becoming a national centre. Through understanding BMR positionalities as racialised and gendered political identities, *Flamboyant* worked toward improving the position of BMR women. In a newsletter reflection on the three-year existence of the organisation in April 1988, Kamala writes, "Flamboyant activities are not limited to one ethnic minority or migrant group. On the contrary, the centre endeavours to stimulate

an exchange of knowledge, information and experiences from and amongst all black/migrant women" (Flamboyant, n.d.). In our conversation, Kamala reflects further on the shifts in language and the use of 'Black' and 'migrant' in the Netherlands,

> It was not Black and migrant, it was just Black women's centre. And it was a group of people like Cisca, you know the Moluccan Indonesian, you know Surinamese, we were very diverse in that sense. But the term Black as you know was a political identity, having to do with our racialized position in the Netherlands. It coincided, I think, with a shift away, that was happening in the Netherlands at the time, that as thinking of oneself as migrant to Dutch citizen... I had grown up personally myself, because I was born in England, I had grown up thinking of myself as Black British or British so I came into the movement, with this sense of I am European or I am of this place, I am not from there. So, the solidarity work was important for connecting me to my histories, but yet it didn't address my situation in the Netherlands at the time. And so, I was being very informed by what was happening by what I was hearing about and going on in England, right, partly this sort of idea of Black Britishness, and I brought that into, I was connecting with women who were kind of sort of second generation or had been in the Netherlands for a very long time or had been born there you know, sort off second generation immigrants if you like, and I felt like that. (K. Kempadoo, 2016)

Several significant shifts take place in this account that provide insight into how political blackness was shaped in the Netherlands. Kamala connects the politics of naming of *Flamboyant* to her own personal story and experiences to trace the shifts in identification in multiple geographic contexts. Here, we start to see what Lewis (1996) refers to as a "multivocality" of racialised experience. The account maps how within the Netherlands one

could be seen as a 'migrant' from elsewhere in its broadest sense, whilst with the marker 'Black British', Kamala locates a clear connotation with place. Kamala makes a distinction between how solidarity work offered a connection to her histories but did not address her 'situation' in the Netherlands. There is also an important generational aspect at work here, where Kamala makes a link between being in the Netherlands for a very long time or having been born there, which would move one outside of the category of 'migrant' and more into one 'of this place'. Kamala further uses her 'experience' to bring in a diasporic and transnational sensibility by offering a comparative analysis between the Netherlands and the U.K.. This comparative storytelling through the concept of belonging offers deeper insight into movement and the circulation of words, for instance, through rearticulating what 'Black' signifies in both contexts. Kamala was aware of the conversations and circuits of exchange between the U.K. and the Netherlands, and shaped and contributed to this mode of feminist exchange, which inspired how *Flamboyant* used political blackness.

Not long after my conversation with Kamala, I revisited the following definition of Blackness in one of the *Flamboyant* newsletters by Marina Quindiagan (emancipation worker at *Flamboyant*),

> Blackness in the Netherlands means a lot of things. Blackness is difference. Difference means a lot of things. "You, Black women from the former Dutch colonies, women with Afro-historical background, women from the Mediterranean who came here with their father, man or brother, women from Asia who fled poverty to build a dignified life, women who fled dictatorships

in South America, you – we – have founded Flamboyant, and not the Winter University of 1983. (Flamboyant, 1987a; translation mine).

This aspirational description, in one form or another, was picked up by a range of collectives, radio shows, and magazines at the time. I should note that while political blackness was common as a marker, its practical implications, including the critical pushback against the term, are not widely documented. In Quindiagan's description, there is a resonance here between those who 'fled' and who 'founded' *Flamboyant*, signaling the importance of BMR feminism and *Flamboyant* as a place of feminist refuge. Towards the end, the author clearly states that it is these women who founded and made *Flamboyant*, not the Winter University. While I do not know the backstory to this claim, I do recognise an interesting push to acknowledge the 'multi-realities' in geopolitical, educational and class backgrounds here. There is a reclaiming of *Flamboyant* as a centre that belonged to a multitude of women who kept it running. I recognise that with Kamala's account and the fragments from the newsletters, I have only provided insight into a few approaches and conceptualisations of political blackness. However, these accounts have been chosen to demonstrate how a diversity of narratives helps to not produce a dominant narrative. Moreover, in Kamala's accounts, political blackness becomes animated across geographies, which provides a richer insight into how ideas travel. My aim, therefore, is not to resolve the tension around the terminology, but to understand how the concept travelled and was used in the Netherlands. From Kamala's stories and its wider use, it becomes clear that political blackness was framed as a mode of solidarity practice organised around difference. Most of all, political blackness was not fixed or used in the same way across the movement. If anything, conflicting ideas

about its potency make visible the issues that came with thinking through the politics of solidarity. In the following section, I will build on the making of these BMR feminisms to think through the idea of the 'untameable' and a 'refusal to shrink'.

Untameable Feminisms: A Refusal to Shrink

When *Flamboyant* was offered a building at the Singel 260 by the municipality of Amsterdam in May 1985, they were awarded a multi-year subsidy, activity, and one-time interior design from the Bureau of the Coordination of Women's Emancipation and the Project Women and Minority Policy (Flamboyant, n.d.). It took a few months before the organisation could fully take up its residence. One of the newsletters mentions briefly the centre had received racist threats and needed security before they opened their doors (Flamboyant, n.d.). This snippet of information from my archival research remained in the back of my mind when I started thinking through "untameable feminism" and the "refusal to shrink". How do these diasporic entanglements, forming a centre, constitute a specific kind of politics within the wider context of belonging?

Intimate Constellations

I do not posit the idea of 'untameable feminism' without problematising the idea of what it means to be or to name something 'untamed'. Untamed is usually understood as not domesticated, wild or free from control. Further, the use of 'untamed' has a racialised history

within disciplines of colonial anthropology. In this chapter, the idea of being 'untamed' is understood as an orientation that breaks free from white ordered spatiality. This notion of the 'untamed' in relation to space and domesticity speaks to a broader theorisation of the racialisation of intimacy. Drawing on Lauren Berlant's (1997), theorisation of the "shrinking public sphere", David Eng (2007, p. 6) argues for the need to develop, "a critical vocabulary and analysis of the ways in which racial disparities and property relations embed and recode themselves within the private realm of family and kinship relations, only to seep back into circulation with the public domain". These processes, as Eng (2007, p. 10) argues, "draw(s) awareness to the ways in which racialized subjects and objects are reinscribed into a discourse of colorblindness". This analysis of the U.S. can be extended to the Netherlands, where government policy for BMR women was particularly aimed to keep up the status quo of colour-blindness. The pillarisation of BMR women and the focus on emancipation and integration, through non-political activities, is an extension of Dutch processes of domestication. Ethnic minority policies, built on thinking about 'ethnicity' and culture, do not see the interrelations between race, class and differences based on sex (Flamboyant, 1988). Eng (2007, p. 10) states that "the racialization of intimacy indexes other ways of knowing and being in the world". This becomes visible in relationship to the BMR movement. On the one hand, we see the institutional workings of the state; there is a clear incentive to prevent the intimacies that would emerge from coalition building, and on other the other hand these intimacies are formed between BMR women because of *how* policy and racialisation effects BMR women. Entangled with these modes of intimacy are the everyday encounters and expressions that shape much of the political life of the BMR movement.

In terms of coalition building, *Flamboyant* recognised the limitations of being stuck between the white feminist movement and 'general' non-political Black and Migrant organisations. Where white feminism did not include an analysis of race and class, migrant organisations were easily convinced to just focus on the cultural aspects of 'ethnicity' and never considered gender (Flamboyant, 1988). What does it mean to advocate for change for BMR women within this landscape? To gain more insight into the organising politics of *Flamboyant*, I spoke with Troetje Loewenthal. Troetje and I met at a café in Amsterdam and were able to sit outside. Our conversation lasted about an hour. It so happened that Troetje was in Amsterdam, because she usually resides on the island Curaçao. Troetje taught Spanish at universities in Leiden and Amsterdam and was also deeply connected with the BMR movement. In our conversation, Troetje indicated she was not able to remember much specific details, but provided important points of reference. By the time, I spoke with Troetje, I had combed through all the *Flamboyant* newsletters and used the interview as a way to return to some of Troetje's writing on collaborative organising and Dutch policy in the newsletters.

> Chandra: Could you tell me more about the modes of collaborative organising?

> Troetje: Flamboyant was (...) this is also interesting, the municipality did not want us to be for everyone. From the start we were inclusive.

> Chandra: They'd rather have everyone organising separate

Troetje: They indeed would rather fund women separately and typically it would be sowing clubs and that kind of stuff (...) and we said no, we're not going to do sowing clubs, we want something more advanced, we wanted documentation and archives, no sowing clubs. (..) Sowing and biking clubs, I don't have anything against them, but I do have an issue with pushing people into a corner (...) we just became political. (Loewenthal, 2018; translation mine)

In this excerpt, Troetje refers to an important conundrum BMR women faced. With ethnic minority policies being solely focused on men of colour, and women's emancipation policies on white women, BMR women were clear about the need to resist and strategise collectively. The focus on sowing and biking as a means of BMR integration exemplary for the 1980s. Troetje played an important role in organising conferences such as, 'Racism/Position of Black/migrant women', to unpack how Dutch local and national policy effected BMR women. The *Flamboyant* conferences, workshops and articles show, as feminist literary scholar Barbara Christian (1987, p. 52) argues, "people of colour have always theorized – but in forms quite different from the Western forms of abstract logic". It is here where I locate the potential of an 'untamed feminism' that manifests itself through everyday political experiences. The BMR movement is not characterised by *en masse* public protest, but the intricate networks that underlie the movement do produce, theorise and conceptualise what it means to inhabit private and public space in the Netherlands. *Flamboyant* was thus an important place – centre – to theorise from. In *Living a Feminist Life*, Ahmed (2017, p. 46) writes that "collectivity can become a direction: a clearing of the way as the way of many". The metaphor of the Flamboyant tree refusing to shrink is a proposition for a collective direction. I further unpack these ideas through thinking through the notion of the

untameable, wildness and refusal in relationship to the notion of study that characterised *Flamboyant*.

Wildness

The *Flamboyant* organisers understood the idea of being 'tamed' to be on par with participating in Dutch (read white) culture and language. Becoming part of Dutch culture means you have to be 'tame' and 'quiet' in order to fit into the normal order of things. *Flamboyant* offered important strategies for BMR women to grapple with their racialised and gendered experiences, on a personal and institutional level. These strategies can be read as a continuous mode of learning and exploring the very 'refusal to shrink'. I think here of Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) poignant essay, 'How to tame a wild tongue', which uses the idea of 'taming' in relationship to language, specifically the use of Spanish language and its 'border tongue' iterations in an Anglophone context. In response to a dentist visit where Anzaldúa (1987, p. 75) is told to keep her tongue under control, she writes,

> And I think, how do you tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down?

The power of this metaphor of the taming of the "wild tongue" lies in thinking about what 'wildness' does or what it is able to do. What can we gain by tuning into this 'wildness'? Marc de Leeuw and Sonja van Wichelen (2014) provide the example of Dutch integration exams

to show how Dutch cultural codes are communicated and implemented. For instance, the exam provides new citizens with a clear understanding of the importance of shaking hands and kissing in public (De Leeuw and van Wichelen, 2014, p. 340). These practices and codes of Dutch culture are not only "used as an ideological tool, but far more complex and subtle, culture is used as an appeal to an emotional wish of belonging, citizenship, and recognition" (De Leeuw and van Wichelen, 2014, p. 340). The letter written by Prime Minister Rutte in Chapter One, is a vibrant example of what happens when the 'Other' deviates from the norm. I would argue that the control of Dutch public space plays out through benevolent forms of racism that require a slow shrinking. Ahmed's (2007) work on phenomenology and race draws on Frantz Fanon (1986) who describes whiteness as a weight. The slow shrinking within Dutch public space could thus also be read as the weight of whiteness. Within this schema, the 'refusal to shrink' is therefore a political project and significantly, a means to survive. *Flamboyant* undertook this through placing emphasis on the need for self-study, information and documentation services. While on paper this might not sound 'wild', I argue that there is something to gain from understanding *Flamboyant's* modes of organising as in service of the 'untameable', as not quite following the structures rules and conventions of Dutch culture and processes of assimilation and 'normal'. In the *Wild Beyond: With and For The Undercommons*, Halberstam (2013, p. 7), situates Harney and Moten's (2013) undercommons, as a "wild place that is not simply the left over space that limns real and regulated zones of police society; rather, it is a wild place that continuously produces its own unregulated wildness". *Flamboyant* could be situated as a site where study happened outside of the regulations and constraints of Dutch academia, where race, gender, sexuality and

colonialism were purposefully not *studied*. Halberstam (2013, p. 8) states, "The path to the wild beyond is paved with refusal". The women active within *Flamboyant studied*, in a variety forms and ways.

Image 8. Flamboyant conference Liu Tan, Jenny de Lannoy, Troetje Loewenthal. Photo Courtesy of Kamala Kempadoo.

Above I include a photo sent to me by Kamala after our interview where we see three *Flamboyant* members, Liu Tan, Jenny de Lannoy, and Troetje Loewenthal sitting behind a table draped with *Flamboyant* banners. The theorising that was not possible within the university space, was brought to the centre and on the pages of the newsletter. These modes of study where inherently collective. In situating *Flamboyant* as an important *island place* and *centre* of study, I am also invested in attending to the troubles that come with creating such a place. Harney and Moten (2013, p. 9) suggest tuning into the noise without shaping it into "music". In other words, in working with stories on *Flamboyant*, I am not suggesting the centre can be understood as a finished project or site. Instead, I would argue that the refusal to shrink as a politics is a broader and on-going project, which is on par with the politics of refusal. The 'routes' and paths taken to politicise women and shape collective feminisms were not straightforward. In an article on the position of migrant women and their struggle, Özden Kutluer-Yalim addressed the complexities Turkish and Moroccan faced during the 1980s. What did it mean for the majority of Turkish and Moroccan women to be dependent on their spouses for their residency permits, to not speak the language, and to deal with institutional racism? (Flamboyant, 1988). By organising workshops and setting out these issues in the newsletter, *Flamboyant* called for a wider solidarity politics. In my conversations with Troetje, it appears this was not always straightforward,

> Chandra: Could you tell me more about how *Flamboyant* worked with other organisations?

Troetje: The Moroccan women rented a room in *Flamboyant*, I am not sure how we connected with the Turkish women. I was a communist, so maybe it was via that link. There were demonstrations … and Surinamese and Dutch Antillean women sparkled in their absence, during protests for residency permits or labour rights. I felt connected to their plight. (Loewenthal, 2018; translation mine)

Troetje's account is imperative because she provides insight into some of the political complexities and contestations. Troetje, who hails from Bonaire, continued working and writing on migrant rights in the Netherlands for years. The conversation went on after this, and I did not ask a follow up question about the demonstrations. However, situating Troetje's experiences in tandem with the *Flamboyant* newsletter further exemplifies the educational value that was placed on understanding migrant rights as a feminist issue. I noticed Troetje distinctly identified as a communist and asked her what this looked like in the 1980s.

Troetje: It's very long ago… I am not sure, but I was always quite marginal, quite marginal. But not during the BMR.. I poured my heart and soul into that, wasn't marginal during that. (Loewenthal, 2018; translation mine)

Troetje's account of her involvement or link to communism remains quite vague, she was not able to really tell me much about communist organising. Instead, Troetje narrates her experience through a sense of locality in the communist and BMR movement respectively. While she identified as a communist earlier, she defines her involvement as 'marginal'. What stands out to me is this shift from margin to centre, which within the wider context says

something about how the BMR movement resonated. Feminism here was not shaped for the

sake of *feminism*, but rather with a collective direction in mind. Anzaldúa (1987, p. 76) states,

"Wild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out". For *Flamboyant*, an 'untameable

feminism'" and wildness was part of the everyday refusal to be de-politicised. This refusal

further extended itself to the archive, in which BMR women were rendered invisible. I will

address the politics of this illegibility in the next section.

Outside of the Archival Imaginary

The conversations on funding that underlie the mission of *Flamboyant* to become a nation-

wide meeting centre, information service and documentation project tell an important

story about 'emancipation policies' in the Netherlands. As stated in the beginning of this

chapter, the government's 'emancipation' policies for BMR women were geared towards

the arts, crafts and basic participation in society. The government could not see how the

documentation centre would possibly contribute to the 'emancipation' of BMR women.

While there were national archives, municipal archives and specialist archives such as IAV

(discussed at length in Chapter Two), *Informatie en Dokumentatiecentrum voor*

Nederlandse Vrouwen (IDC)[21], *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis* (IISG)[22]

and public libraries, these archives were run by and for white women, and did not cater to

the needs of BMR women.

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[21] Information and Documentation Centre for Dutch Women.
[22] International Institute of Social History.

Archival Structures: Access

Cisca Pattipilohy, former *Flamboyant* board member, librarian and information specialist, played a key role in shifting the political archival landscape for BMR women. I was invited to meet with Cisca in her home; she is 94, but is still frequently interviewed and regularly receives visitors. Cisca was born in 1926 on the island of Celebes in Indonesia, and in our conversation she detailed what it meant to grow up in Indonesia, and how she eventually journeyed to the Netherlands. Cisca told me her stories with great detail and precision, and what struck me about her narration was the interrelatedness between growing up in Indonesia, grappling with the Dutch colonial system and language, and her interest and commitment to making information services more accessible for BMR women. With Cisca's widescale experience as a librarian — amongst others, the law library of the University of Amsterdam, Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies[23] and the KIT Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam[24]— it comes as no surprise that she was asked to set up the library and documentation centre for *Flamboyant*. I spoke with Cisca for about two and a half hours and while I started with a broader question about the 1980s and where she was during this time, Cisca started narrating her upbringing and experiences in Indonesia, from her formative years to how she landed her first library job in Indonesia. Later in our conversation, when I asked how she became involved with the BMR feminist movement, it came as no surprise that she emphasised the importance of documentation,

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[23] Known in Dutch as *Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-Land-, en Volkenkunde* (KITLV) in Leiden.
[24] Known in Dutch as *Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen* in Amsterdam.

Only with the right kind of documentation, you can discover how things work, and what you need, what's wrong and what isn't wring, in order to do something, and that's why there are libraries, and that's something I feel like is emphasised too little. (Pattipilohy, 2016; translation mine)

While serving me *pisang*[25] and tea, Cisca describes how her work in the world of libraries led her to meet Black women who had been involved with the Winter University in Nijmegen in 1985,

Chandra: How did your experience with libraries shape your involvement with *Flamboyant*?

Cisca: I was at work [at the Royal Tropical Institute] when they had meetings, for the delegation going to Nairobi. (…) I of course was there for work and I got to meet Black women and when they had had Winter University in 1985 and wanted an organisation, to start a collective (…) I don't know who it was, maybe Troetje, [who said] we can't do anything if we don't have an archive, documentation [centre] and library too. But where do we get our knowledge from? They asked whether I wanted to join the founding of *Flamboyant*, and I was thrilled. (…) The women who founded *Flamboyant* were almost all academics, Troetje and Kamala (…) The women's movement was predominantly about Surinamese women and *Indische* [Euro-Asian] women. A lot of women didn't speak Dutch, Moroccans and Turkish people were guest workers, we had one or two Latin American women. You needed an education to speak about these subjects. (Pattipilohy, 2016; translation mine)

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[25] *Pisang goreng*, fried banana fritters.

A close reading of Cisca's narration offers insight into a broader discussion on knowledge production and who is seen and recognised as knowledge producers. In particular, Cisca's question stands out to me, when she asks: But *where* do we get our knowledge from (emphasis mine)? By this point in our conversation she has told me about her experiences in Indonesia and the Netherlands, and has emphasised the importance of documentation. She quite specifically addressed how and why Dutch colonialism impacted knowledge formation. However, swiftly after posing this question, Cisca's narration starts to detail *who can be knowledge producers*, by placing emphasis on the ability to speak Dutch and be educated. It is important to question why Cisca narrates her experience with *Flamboyant* as such. For Cisca, one of the elder members of *Flamboyant*, feminist consciousness and knowledge production is linked to having a university education. Cisca was 90 years old when we spoke and her recollection of her education in Indonesia and the Netherlands was much more vivid than her experiences with *Flamboyant*. Cisca's account tells us a story about a particular generation within the broader framework of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia, in which it makes sense that the emphasis for her is on education. Overall, this account is important because it demonstrates how different stories are produced on *Flamboyant* from multiple perspectives. Cisca's account poses important questions on access, which I further unpack by engaging with a lecture given by Cisca on the politics of archives for BMR women.

Image 9. National Day of Women's Information Services. Cisca Pattipilohy presenting Black Women's Documentation Centre. 1986. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of Atria.

In a lecture given by Cisca for the National Day for Women's Archives, Libraries and Documentation Centres (see image 8), later published in the *Flamboyant* newsletter, Cisca sets out the racialised politics the centre grappled with. The response of the Dutch government official overseeing 'emancipation' to secure funding for a specific documentation centre, is summarised by Cisca in the following questions:

- Is there truly such a great need for literature relevant to Black women? What does it comprise of? For which groups would it be meant, and on which level?

- Surely there is relevant literature in public libraries, university- and state libraries for Black women?

- Besides, isn't there an International Archive for Women (IAV) and an Information and Documentation centre for Dutch women (IDC) that are specialised? (Flamboyant, 1987a, pp. 26–27; translation mine)

These questions speak to the archival imaginary and how knowledge is made within this archival terrain. I argue that there are several ways to read how BMR women become unintelligible here. The work conducted by *Flamboyant* in relationship to archives and documentation offers "a map towards a new or different perspective on the production of space" (McKittrick and Woods, p. 5). In *Demonic Grounds*, McKittrick (2006, p. xiii), argues that Black people and their geographies have long been incorrectly deemed "ungeographic". McKittrick (2006, p. 5) directs our attention to "the ways in which blackness has been translated as ungeographic", because "it cites/sites how dispossession

is an important racial narrative, which socially and economically rates ownership, domination, and human life/value". These mappings of the 'ungeographic' are purposefully specific to the Black diaspora and the afterlives of slavery and colonialism that continue to uphold this "ungeographic" site. I pick up on the notion of the "ungeographic" from McKittrick (2006) here and apply it to the BMR archives, to tease out what *Flamboyant* and their archival endeavours tell us about what materialises as 'ungeographic'.

The questions by the Dutch government official here provide insight into the workings of institutional archives and documentation. After being granted a small research budget, *Flamboyant* started the 'Bidoc-project'[26] in October 1987, to "try and get an impression of the material available in libraries and documentation centres and how accessible these materials are" (Flamboyant, n.d.). One of the main findings of the project was the lack of documentation from Black women's perspectives. Even though materials and literature relevant to Black women was available, they were hardly visible or accessible. The archive is frequently theorised as a site of exclusion and erasure when it comes to race and gender, but there is a need for more specific analysis on how these exclusions and erasures happen within a white feminist framework. Elsewhere, I argue that the racialised power structures within the archive, which determine how materials are processed, turn "the act of archiving into an institutionalised act of disappearance" (Frank, 2019b, p. 16). These "acts of disappearance" operate within a temporality, which becomes evident in this project. Whilst

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[26] Bidoc brings the two Dutch words *Bibliotheek* (library) and *documentatie* (documentation) together.

researching the *Flamboyant* materials, I made the following notes in my archival research diary:

> I feel as though I am part of an archival time travelling project, in which these acts of disappearance fall into each other like Russian dolls. I am reading about the archival lacunas BMR women like Cisca indexed whilst encountering the same wilful acts of disappearance. My work about the silences produced, created and upheld by white feminist archival structures is not new, but they continue to emerge. I think about the importance of situating these acts of disappearance as a white feminist project. What does this tell us about the making of archival taxonomies? *Flamboyant* identified this lacuna, provided research and offered tools, but here I am faced with the exact same issue they described. How to make sense of this dystopian loop of disappearance [of BMR histories] as white feminist practice? What disappears is alive. (Frank, 2017b)

Looking back on my own notes, I am grappling with these overlapping temporalities in which we all operate. I want to use these experiences (*Flamboyant's* and my own) to further tease out how fabulation is at work here. How do we access what is not visible? The structures of white feminist archives are built on the universal category of white 'woman', which becomes evident from the questions of the Dutch government official. In this legibility of 'woman', BMR women are illegible, unlocateable. There is a larger question at stake here about archives, legibility and humanity. The archival structures of the white feminist archive are based on consistent assertions that white women (and their experiences) are 'archivable' and therefore 'human'. Over the span of a good thirty years, these questions of access have remained pertinent.

The response of the Dutch government official made me think more deeply about how BMR women are not granted immediate access to these archival structures; for they could just go to a public library to 'find' relevant information. From a disability studies perspective, Aimi Hamraie (2017, p. 19) draws on "the normate template" to refer to how encountering a doorway or toilet shows that there is an "outline of the body meant to use it". This tells us something about who is meant to access and use said doorway or toilet, and who cannot. I would argue that "the normate template" is ingrained in the conceptualisation of the archive here, even though it is less visible in terms of structure. The first question of the Dutch government official seems to suggest that BMR women would not make use of libraries or archival sites. Their need is questioned because they are not the intended users of these spaces. In relationship to architecture, Hamraie (2017, p.

20) argues, "A universal body has served as a template for the architectural user for centuries". We could also extend this "universal body" and the construction of the 'normal' user to women's archives; In other words, that the assumed 'normal' user of the archive is a white, middle class, educated user. Ahmed's (2019, p. 46) instrumental exploration of 'use' shows that, "Something can thus appear unused while having been used if that use did not leave traces where they usually appear. Use is a frame: not all activities appear as uses if not all uses appear". In close consideration of archival structures we can recognise that access and use both have an intended user. White feminist archives are able to function 'normally' for white women because they are built on the ontological premise that women are white. Following Ahmed (2019), such use would thus not appear as unusual. The request for a BMR focused archive, which holds information produced by BMR women for BMR women, disrupts the intended use of the idea of archives and documentation. *Flamboyant* showed that existing archival sites either did not hold relevant information at all or that such material was not accessible. The titles they did find when retrieved were, according to the Bidoc team, done entirely by "using our own orientation" (Flamboyant, 1989, p. 14). One key finding was that due to the separation of metropole and colony within the Dutch imagination, BMR women were rendered invisible while 'Blackness' was situated in the Third World. In the following section, I will further discuss this notion of the 'ungeographic'.

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Mapping the "Ungeographic"

In the earlier referenced lecture given by Cisca, she recalls that the need to set up *Flamboyant* was in part born out of an experience at the Women's University in Nijmegen in 1983. For the second time, the programme had not included anything about Black women apart from the subject of 'non-western cultures'. In this category of research, Black women featured as research endeavours or objects — the work of white women who travelled to faraway countries to bring back knowledge (Flamboyant, 1987a, p. 24). In these discussions, Cisca observes, "there was no reflection on the actual lives of these women, let alone a connection made with the reality that several women from these cultures actually live in Dutch society" (Flamboyant, 1987a, p. 24). This line of thinking is on par with the persistence of the Dutch imaginary that slavery and colonialism happened over *there* and not *here*. Wekker (2016a) identified how the Dutch position themselves as pioneers and liberal beacons within the field of development aid and international justice. BMR women were not only left out of the programme but were also used to educate white women on how to unlearn racism. Their own knowledge production, praxis and scholarship was not deemed relevant. While an in-depth analysis of these dynamics falls outside the scope of my project, these experiences provide important insights into how women's studies became further established as an academic discipline in the Netherlands.

Following these experiences, BMR women started to conceptualise the idea for *Flamboyant*. In her lecture, Cisca explains,

amongst the many existing women libraries, archives and documentation centres, there is none for Black women, focused on their own struggle, issues, and set up from their own vision. Besides gathering information and literature, the centre can also contribute to research and the analysis of the history and struggle of Black women. (Flamboyant, 1987a, p. 24; translation mine).

BMR women were not understood to be part of the archival landscape and even existed outside of the Dutch imaginary of what was constituted as "Black". For instance, the International Conference on Women's History held at the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague in March 1986 held about 30 workshops, but only a third was about the Third World/Black women,

> The history of the Third World/Black women seemingly only happens in the third world. This caused great astonishment by several participants from the Third World because despite the many Black women who live, work, and study in the Netherlands (...) nobody was involved or invited to write a paper. (Flamboyant, 1987a, p. 24; translation mine).

To demonstrate the importance of these connections and to advocate for funding for *Flamboyant*, Cisca headed a research project across thirteen libraries that held collections on the Third World. However, literature about women was incredibly hard to find or not available at all because these materials had never been indexed under 'woman'. In other words, there were no entry points to make the subject 'woman' searchable (Flamboyant, 1987a, p. 24). Following this research, the Directorship of the Coordination of Emancipation

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policy decided to fund *Flamboyant* for a year (and a quarter) to make an inventory, in the form of a bibliography, to index literature relevant for Black women in libraries in the Netherlands. Every quarter *Flamboyant* was to publish a list of titles they had found, accompanied by a short description. The four-part bibliographies that *Flamboyant* made to assert their presence and relevance in the (white) archival world were made available for sale and are now part of the IAV collection. When I requested the bibliographies at Atria, I was reminded of the work it took to bring these booklets into existence. These bibliographies did not only reflect the knowledge production that the BMR women had generated, they also situated BMR women in a wider diasporic constellation.

Another fiction within the Dutch colonial imagination is how different parts of the Dutch colonial history are treated and imagined. Wekker (2016a) points out that within the Dutch imaginary (and in Dutch scholarship) there is a fair amount of admiration and nostalgia placed on the Dutch East Indies, often referred to as the emerald of the Dutch empire. However, the Dutch West Indies, comprising of Suriname and the Dutch Antilles, is merely seen as a financial burden. This tells us something about how anti-blackness is ingrained within material and imagined geographies. To fall outside or inside of the archival imaginary is a tension many scholars of colonial and imperial archives grapple with: the desire to capture and document, as well as the desire to make absent histories of violence appear alongside each other. What makes this analysis particularly challenging is that we cannot separate the functioning and making of the white feminist archive from the Dutch

imperial archive. If anything, this is what the presence/absence of the BMR movement makes evident.

Returning to the centre

In returning to the centre, where this chapter began, I will provide insight into the endings (not the end) of *Flamboyant* to offer a way to read in between the (un)accessibility of the archive and the 'ungeographic'. In 1989, *Flamboyant* moved to a new location and finally opened the doors to their library and documentation centre. By this time, the "Bi-doc" project had gathered 800 titles in terms of literature that had previously been difficult to access or which was completely inaccessible. However, by 1991, the situation had become untenable because *Flamboyant* had lost the funding battle. The Amsterdam municipality thought that the centre had become too intellectual. The centre was initially funded to enhance the integration of BMR women and their activities including the Bidoc project which showed that their integration was 'complete'. I think here about the circular motions that underlie the history of *Flamboyant*. Eventually, to become 'documented' was to be 'emancipated'. The centre, by foregrounding documentation, knowledge production and self-study, had become too intellectual by Dutch standards. This demonstrates how mapping oneself into existence can become a threat; Institutions can thus — as was the case with *Flamboyant* — exceed the purpose of 'integration' and can then appear more dangerous than sweet and unthreatening. I situate the cutting of funding here as a direct

response to *Flamboyant* becoming too visible and in this sense too 'wild'. In between the notion of a completed and successful path to 'emancipation', we can thus read how political self-organisation needed to be 'tamed' by the Amsterdam municipality.

In 1995, Cisca was asked by Atria to become involved with a project called *Information Service within the Field of Black and Migrant Women*, which had set itself the task of developing an anti-racist women's thesaurus. In the concluding document of the project, the working group writes, "we need to look at *racism* within women's information" (n.p.).[27] The group concluded that the work that would go into this, alongside the setting up of new structures, was not about "marginal adjustments but a fundamental revision of the women's thesaurus" (n.p.). The work and the report are jarring to read because Cisca and other BMR women had long identified the lacunae in information gathering. However, despite efforts to get funding to the restructuring of the IAV collection this never quite materialised. The majority of the Atria staff remains white, and specialist information services for the BMR movement are still not available. As per my own experiences, the question of what the collection of BMR materials comprises remains unanswered. *Flamboyant's* archival knowledge production is still very much alive albeit without an institutional home. In this sense, these forms of knowledges still run 'wild' and have not

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[27] Naar een anti-racistische vrouwenthesaurus (Towards an anti-racist women's thesaurus) (Van Groningen *et.al.*, 1995), a brief written as a result of the sub-project adjustment women's thesaurus Project Informatieverzorging op het terrein van Zwarte en Migrantenvrouwen (Project Information Service within the Field of Black and Migrant Women) (translation mine).

been contained by the archive. Julietta Singh (2018a, p. 569), who contemplates the concept

of the errand through its colonial ties, offers the following powerful consideration:

> The colonial errand is an act of entering the "wilderness," in order to convert,
> to destroy, to civilize. It does so through the force and play of some bodies
> against others, through the enforced delivery of messages that articulate and
> require the destruction of all that is "wild" in the wilderness". Against this
> history of interpreting and acting out the colonial errand, I desire a
> counterintuitive reclaiming of the errand as an inventive public project of
> *wild erranding* – of collectively performing missives for the wild, the unruly,
> the antipolitics of dissent – in the abiding effort to live toward an
> ungovernable future-present.

In closing, I draw on Singh's intervention project of *"wild erranding"* as a way to understand

and make tangible how *Flamboyant's* refusal to be 'tamed' and 'shrink' is a form of

reclaiming documentation and archiving for BMR women. The 'errand' also becomes

temporal. In this meta-temporal archival project, I navigated the present-day IAV

collection with the tools set up by the Bidoc project in the 80's and 90's. The newsletters

and the Bidoc project function like errands across time which assist in better understanding

where and how to find materials in the present; I move between documents from the past

which predict the lost-ness of the future.

Conclusions

In this Chapter, I have situated and re-imagined *Flamboyant* through the framework of "untameable feminism" and the "refusal to shrink", drawing on the collective's use of the tropical tree they named the centre after. Working with these broader themes, untameable feminism and the refusal to shrink, allowed for deeper connections to emerge between organisational politics and the racial structures and systems of control embedded in Dutch society. Through situating *Flamboyant* as an island space, I purposefully shifted the attention from the margins to the centre to think through how we might read and analyse *Flamboyant*. The stories of Kamala and Cisca combined with archival materials from the *Flamboyant* newsletters provide insight into how BMR feminist politics related to the politics of archiving and documentation. The work conducted by *Flamboyant* to ensure that BMR materials and stories would be part of the Dutch imaginary is an important intervention. The interview accounts and archival materials provide their own structures and maps with which to think about *Flamboyant* as a diasporic site of knowledge production. The tensions that arise in this process are important to continue and to tease out, in particular, where it pertains to understanding hierarchies within the BMR movement in terms of class and education. It is here where larger questions on how archives speak and listen also become most visible. The *Flamboyant* archival materials offer insights into a multiplicity of voices illustrating the various ways in which *Flamboyant* made consciousness raising and education available to a wide range of women, regardless of their background. In this sense, *Flamboyant* as a centre produced an important kind of *wildness*, which is the result of the refusal to shrink into the white-ordered Dutch societal

expectations. This *wildness* can then also be read as an important refusal to become 'ungeographic' within and outside of the archival imaginary. Overall, this Chapter shows how, across archival temporalities, the BMR archives only become legible to those who deconstruct the underlying forms of illegibility.

Chapter Four. *Sister Outsider*: Transnational Queer

Kinship, Fragments, Scatters and Archival Trace

Oshun's Table

Amsterdam, 1986

How the fruit lay at your feet

how you dressed the wine

cut green beans

in a lacy network

wound to the drum

russet arm hairs

in the candlelight

we ate pom and fish rice

with a fork and spoon.

A short hard rain

and the moon came up

before we lay down together

we toasted each other

descendants of poets

and woodcutters

handsome

untrustworthy

and brave.

(Lorde 2000, p. 453)

Introduction

I open this chapter with the poem 'Oshun's Table' written by Afro-Caribbean poet Audre Lorde after one of her visits to Amsterdam in 1986. The poem holds a palpable diasporic and sensuous intimacy. I use Lorde's words as a point of entry in exploring the role of kinship in shaping transnational circuits. This chapter traces the intricate networks of exchange between the Dutch Black lesbian collective *Sister Outsider* and Audre Lorde. I deliberately situate this exchange within a queer diasporic and transnational feminist framework. This chapter further deepens questions posed in Chapter Three on what it means to offer a gendered account of diasporic relations. *Sister Outsider* used to organise in *Flamboyant*, and Tieneke Sumter and Tania Leon, who were both part of *Sister Outsider*, were also both involved with *Flamboyant*. These overlaps between collectives and community organising are exemplary of the *waterways* that run across BMR organising. In tracing the connection between *Sister Outsider* and Audre Lorde, I work with the stories of former members Gloria Wekker and Tieneke Sumter, who I both interviewed for this project. I engage intimately with the materials of former *Sister Outsider* member Tania Leon and Audre Lorde, who both died from breast cancer in 1996 and 1992, respectively. Working with the stories and archival materials of women who died, further shapes the affective connections we made in theorising kinship within a temporal conceptual framework. In the first part of this chapter, I provide insight into what might constitute transnational queer and feminist modes of exchange whilst also picking up on the tensions that underlie these exchanges. I situate *Sister Outsider* within the cityscape of Amsterdam, and tune into what the collective tells us about

non-Western modes of queerness within the BMR movement. In the second half of the chapter, I will explore the archival fragments and scatters that detail these stories and argue how working across continents with archival collections requires a practice of 'listening' and 'orientation'. This chapter then asks: *What does Sister Outsider tell us about Black lesbian subjectivities in the Netherlands? What does a diasporic queer understanding of transnational feminist exchange have to offer us? How can we best work with archival scatters and fragments across collections?*

Queer Encounters

I begin with an encounter that took place in a bookstore in Rotterdam, the Netherlands in the 1980s. Gloria Wekker, who frequented the city because of work (and a lover), stumbled on a purple book called *Zami* in 1983. Gloria was drawn to the cover of *Zami* and she picked it up. *Zami* would be the very first book she would read by a Black lesbian and it would offset a series of encounters and exchanges with the author Audre Lorde. Soon after Gloria read *Zami*, she began circulating the book around her community. Together with Tania Leon, Gloria started a Black lesbian consciousness-raising circle, which centered around literature by and for Black lesbians. Four women, Gloria Wekker, Tania Leon, Tieneke Sumer and Jose Maas[28] hosted these circles to make Black lesbian culture more visible within and outside of the BMR movement. The start of these circles demonstrates the need to render Black lesbian

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[28] Jose Maas was later succeeded by Joice Spies in *Sister Outsider*. Their presence is somewhat marginal in the archival materials. Therefore, this chapter mostly works with the stories of Gloria, Tania and Tieneke.

culture visible. I read these circles as an intervention and response to the absence of an analysis and of activist politics that attended to Black lesbian subjectivities within the Dutch context (Frank, 2019b, p. 10). Through a mutual connection, *Sister Outsider* had heard that Audre Lorde would be teaching Black women's literature as a visiting professor at the Free University of Berlin, whilst receiving homeopathic treatment from a German doctor for her cancer diagnosis. After reading Lorde's well-known work *Sister Outsider,* the collective adopted the name and would continue to organise under it from about 1984 – 1986. *Sister Outsider* decided to write to Lorde, care of Kitchen Table Press, to ask her to consider a visit to the Netherlands:

> Dear Ms. Lorde,
>
> (...) We are a non-formal group of Black lesbians, living in Amsterdam. We come from different parts of the world, South Africa, Suriname, Netherlands Antilles – countries that are or have been colonies of the Netherlands. (...) We'd like to hear more of our Black sisters across the 'The Great Divide' and would to tell you also of our situation here in the Netherlands. (Sister Outsider, n.d.a)

In this note to Lorde, the women of *Sister Outsider* clearly situate themselves within a Dutch colonial framework, but also in relationship to their "Black sisters across 'The Great Divide'. This is significant because it signals how women in the diaspora in the Netherlands position themselves within a wider collective socio-political framework. Reflecting back on this time, Gloria recalls how the letter inspired Lorde to reach out to her (Lorde's) girlfriends to

exclaim, "that of all places there were Black dykes in Amsterdam…" (Ellerbe-Dueck and Wekker, 2015, p. 58). This initial exchange would lead to two visits by Lorde in 1984 and 1986, and an ongoing friendship and letter exchanges with Gloria and Tania Leon. By following seemingly everyday events, things (the picking up of a book) and people (the relationship formed between *Sister Outsider* and Lorde), I offer insights into what we have to gain from thinking through transnational queer and feminist exchange through a multi-sited ethnographic reading of the collective. The kinship formations between *Sister Outsider* and Audre Lorde speak to the importance of thinking through queer migrations outside of a U.S. centric framework, and to purposefully consider what it means to theorise from other histories of empire and displacement.

Survivors: A Group Portrait of Sister Outsider

One of the few unofficial publications on *Sister Outsider* is a document written by Gloria entitled *Survivors: A Group Portrait of Sister Outsider*, which I came across in the *Sister Outsider* archival materials. The *Sister Outsider* materials are part of Tania Leon's personal archives and are part of the IAV Collection. I was elated when I came across this specific document and brought it up in my interview with Gloria in December 2016. Gloria, who appears in this thesis in multiple overlapping modalities — as scholar and an interlocutor — is Professor Emeritus of Gender and Ethnicity at Utrecht University. Gloria's stories coming forth out the BMR movement inevitably interact with her scholarly work. The connections that emerge from engaging with Gloria's stories and scholarship on sexuality,

coloniality and race in the Netherlands create a more complex analytical engagement with narrative. When I asked Gloria about the document *Survivors: A Group Portrait of Sister Outsider* in our interview, she told me it had been the first draft for an article to be published in *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out* (1992), the first book and by now foundational text published by Afro-German women with a foreword by Lorde. The article provides insight into how *Sister Outsider* mapped their presence in the Netherlands through engaging with individual and collective histories. The women state that they come from three different continents,

> Africa, Asia and Latin America, and have diverse ancestry...Jewish grandmother, Sikh father, Afro-Javanese mother, Chinese grandfather, Indian-Creole mother, 'Cape Coloured'. (Sister Outsider, n.d.a.; translation mine).

This mapping of personal histories, writes Wekker, functions as a social document, "they say more than just something about us, they share something about the arrival of the groups we belong to in the Netherlands" (Sister Outsider, n.d.b.; translation mine). Race and belonging operate as an important collective overarching narrative for *Sister Outsider*, which then allows women to bring in their individual stories. In much of the writing coming out of the BMR movement, whether in the form of newsletters, novels or other modes of publication, we see the importance of mobilising a gendered understanding of identity and place. For the article, Gloria interviewed her fellow *Sister Outsider* members to shed light on the various forms of arrival of the group in the Netherlands. The multiple interviews and accounts incorporated in this chapter, from *Sister Outsider's* own documentation to my

interviews, provide a layered and textured meta-narrative on the experiences of *Sister Outsider*. The analysis on *Sister Outsider* is thus co-produced by my deliberate inclusion of stories on the collective across temporalities. This also shifts the temporal arrangement of transnational feminist work and framing. Even more, my overall aim in including multiple narratives over a time span of thirty years illustrates how transnational feminism is constantly evolving and changing. What is particularly interesting about Gloria's approach to the interviews is the deliberate inclusion of multi-generational experiences of arrival. These generational differences between the *Sister Outsider* women trouble static notions of the arrival of migrants to the Netherlands. Gloria and Joice have both been in the Netherlands since the 1950s, and their stories provide an imperative framework for understanding the traps of assimilation migrants would face,

> (...) If you wanted to make it in Dutch society, you needed to behave like a Dutch person as much as possible, don't smell like garlic or be too generous or hospitable, because people would think you are crazy, and try to be as white as possible in your behaviour, clothes and intonation of Dutch. But from the other side there was a clear message that we were better than the Dutch; they did not wash themselves, were kind of dirty, greedy and around dinner time you did not need to come by. (Sister Outsider, n.d.b.; translation mine)

This account speaks to important generational differences of migrants in terms of their arrival in the Netherlands. The extract makes an important observation on the power dynamics at play in competing discourses of belonging. The specific markers of assimilation, for example, not smelling like garlic, not being too generous or trying to

behave as white as possible stand out. These markers are indicative of how migrants were perpetually seen as guests who were expected to perform gratitude. The excerpt also shows what kinds of conversations first generation migrants were having behind closed doors about white Dutch people. Towards the end, there is a shift and the emphasis on 'the other side', and the use of 'we' versus 'them' (the Dutch) becomes apparent. The emphasis placed on trying to behave as white as possible inherently implies that racialised subjects stay quiet about racial abuse. Dutch coloniality, as argued in the previous chapter, is contingent on upholding this silence and complicity. What is illuminated in the mapping done by the *Sister Outsider* women, is that colonial histories were entangled long before people started arriving in the Netherlands.

Tania Leon is the only member of the *Sister Outsider* collective who arrived in the Netherlands as an adult. Tania lived in 'voluntary' exile in the Netherlands for many years and was known for her involvement with the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and the Netherlands, her work with Siste*r Outsider, Flamboyant* and the Mama Cash organisation in Amsterdam. In *Survivors: A Group Portrait of Sister Outsider,* Tania shares,

> I left South Africa for several reasons. When I actually left, it was all still confusing to me, only later I could add up things and make sense of it all. There was unrest, the feeling that the place where I lived was too small. I felt very trapped: the frustration of living under such a regime, and the entrapment and feeling unsafe because I am a lesbian. I had a clandestine affair with a woman. We had to pretend to just be friends, and could not share problems or joy with anyone. I left and said goodbye, but I left my lover

behind. In the decision to leave three reasons played a role, being black and woman and lesbian. They are so closely interwoven that I cannot separate them. It was really a choice to not hide I am a lesbian, I could not live like this anymore, I wanted to come to the deepest core of being human, and to do so, all three barriers needed to be removed. (Sister Outsider, n.d.b.; translation mine).

Tania's account produces an important insight into queerness and migration, and the histories of exile. Generally speaking, the histories of queer South Africans in exile are erased. While Tania indicates that she felt confused when leaving South Africa, by the time she narrates this story (I am not sure about the time lapse) she is able to make sense of why she left. Tania's narration further shows how identity is understood according to our social locations. Gunaratnam (2003, p. 126) argues that, "Class, gender and geographical location can all affect the nature, form and the sites of racist practices and how individuals are able to respond to, or to resist racism". In this sense, Tania makes an important observation about how her experiences and oppression were based on being "Black and woman and lesbian", and did not allow her to feel "the deepest core of being human". In Tania's account, the focus is not on 'arrival' in the Netherlands, but on the conditions that made it impossible for her to stay. Tieneke Sumter, the youngest member of *Sister Outsider,* came to the Netherlands with her mother in 1969 from Suriname. Tieneke shares in *Survivors: Group Portrait Sister Outsider*,

(...) One of the reasons that we came here was that my mother's brothers did not agree with the way she lived and raised me. My mother is also gay, and

her brothers cut her off, and threatened to take me away from her if she wouldn't change her life. One of the reasons was also that she wanted me to have more opportunities to study than she had. She was the youngest of 11 children and never went to school, she taught herself to read and write. You can imagine how my mother felt last year when I received my degree from the social academy. (Sister Outsider, n.d.b.; translation mine).

Tieneke's account provides important background as to why she and her mother came to the Netherlands. Through this situated and individualised experience, we are able to gain closer understanding of the multiplicity of reasons why people moved to the Netherlands. Dominant narratives on post-colonial migration remain quite monolithic and static. What stands out is that Tieneke starts her story by stating that her mother's brothers did not "agree with the way she lived and raised me". Only after this comment on relationality and extrication almost, does Tieneke speak to the implications of her mother's also being gay and what this meant for her family life. Another important theme for BMR women, and for Tieneke, is the relationship between migration and having access to more opportunities. The work that the theme of 'opportunity' does in migration stories is important to reflect upon. In relationship to racism and democracy, cultural critic Egbert Alejandro Martina (2015, n.p.) states, "The reality of racism, however, serves as a reminder that democracy per se offers little in the way of equality of opportunity for all". Nevertheless, opportunity becomes an important draw and framing of migration narratives.

I use these stories shared and produced by *Sister Outsider* to highlight the importance of how BMR collectives narrate their own positionalities within a wider socio-historical

framework. Each of these stories speak to the "intersections of racial formation, sexuality, empire, capitalism and colonialism" (Desai, Bouchard and Detournay, 2012, p. 49). The 'arrival' stories of *Sister Outsider* trouble fixed and static notions of the 'post-colonial migrant' in the Dutch imaginary. The stories of Tania and Tieneke directly speak to the importance of not just considering queerness in migration stories but *queering* our understanding of migration. These stories in *Survivors: A Group Portrait of Sister Outsider*, exemplify the need to move away from centering queer diasporic narratives in North America. At the same time, I recognise that these stories still saturate queer diasporic transnationalism to migration and movement. Desai, Bouchard and Detournay (2012, p. 49) argue for the need to ask what might shape a "transnational queer critique" to grapple with the power dynamics, including "epistemological frameworks, privileged location, or its mobility". While I cannot resolve how these tensions arise here, I do want to acknowledge that my use of transnationalism in the framing of *Sister Outsider* and its relationship to Audre Lorde needs to be broached with a critical lens. The transnational is configured in "local, global, and diasporic regimes of power, privilege, and oppression" (Campt and Thomas, 2008, p. 6). In Chapter Two, I set out why, in particular, the theoretical framework of 'queer diaspora' disrupts linear understandings of nationalism and sexuality. Gopinath (2005, p. 10) posits, "*queer* diaspora, then, may begin to unsettle the ways in which the diaspora shores up the gender and sexual ideologies of dominant nationalism on the one hand and the processes of globalization on the other". Generally speaking, (white) Dutch liberalism is equated with white gay rights and the fierce protection thereof, and the 'Other' is automatically placed (in varying degrees) in opposition of liberal values and sexual

freedom. Wekker (2016) points out that Dutch coloniality continues to hypersexualise Black people but strictly through a heteronormative gaze. Lastly, there is a general understanding that BMR people *became* gay in the Netherlands and could have definitely not been queer before. Drawing on a "queer diasporic" framework to situate these stories, allows us to recuperate the "desires, practices, and subjectivities that are rendered impossible and unimaginable within conventional diasporic and nationalist imaginaries" (Gopinath, 2005, p. 11). In the stories of Tania and Tieneke this saturation of "queer" and "diaspora" is also very much lived and embedded in their movement. Tieneke Sumter's story about her mother being gay bears testament to the long history of so-called *mati* work, an old institution among Afro-Surinamese women who have multiple sexual relationships with men and women, explored by Gloria Wekker in *The Politics of Passion* (2006), in which Tieneke's mother actually played a small part. In *Survivors: Group Portrait Sister Outsider*, Tieneke shares that after her graduation, her mother went back to her lover in Suriname, who she had known for over 30 years. These stories contour experiences with queerness that fall outside of Euro-American notions of queerness and homonormativity.

Outsidership

Sister Outsider was founded on a shared sense of 'outsidership' from the white feminist/lesbian movements in the Netherlands. The term is introduced in *Survivors: A Group Portrait of Sister Outsider* and holds larger resonance for this project. The women state that their "shared outsidership" functions "as a protective barrier against their own

internalised forms of oppression, the impossibility of discussing racism, the loneliness of being Black women in the movement" (Sister Outsider, n.d.b.; translation mine). These themes would also surface in my conversation with Gloria. We arranged to meet at the School of International Training in Amsterdam, where I used to teach. We had an empty meeting room available to us, plenty of tea, and Gloria had brought a notebook with her. I asked Gloria, similarly to how I had with my other interview participants, to share where she was in the 1980s. Gloria started by telling me about her professional life and her work as a public servant within the Amsterdam municipality, where she worked on anti-racism policy. Quite effortlessly, Gloria started sharing about *Sister Outsider,*

> (…) And next to that, I was also involved with Sister Outsider in my free time, how I could do all of it is a mystery to me. Anyway, I started Sister Outsider with Tania Leon, (…) who is also dead. Yes.. I will say something about this later, because I can hardly imagine it's a coincidence that so many Black women die so young … well okay … Yes, Tania and I were both active in the women's movement and we were often the only Black women. And it really made me upset, of course it was also very racist, so at some point we decided to just start our own little group, and we would gather in Tania's home, on the *Marnixkade*, a very long floor, very long so a lot of people would fit in. And we just started with literary afternoons, people could read from their own work or the work of others that they enjoyed, I hold very dear memories to this time. (Wekker, 2016b; translation mine)

Gloria's account of becoming involved with *Sister Outsider* brings together several significant insights. Just before Gloria shared how she started *Sister Outsider,* she told me

that two of her former colleagues who became close friends, Mea Venster and Ellen Robles, both died. Early on in the conversation with Gloria, the premature deaths of Black women become an important theme in the narration of her experiences, both in working as a public servant and in her free time activities with *Sister Outsider*. This extract speaks to multiple important intersecting histories. Gloria does not explicitly link the early deaths of Black women to the racist and lone experiences in the white feminist movement, but the proximity of these experiences is palpable. Similar to Kamala's accounts in the previous Chapter, the women of *Sister Outsider* turned to organising within the confines of the home space. Living rooms, kitchens and intimate community spaces are historically important sites where a complex set of relationalities plays out. In relationship to queer of colour formations in Berlin, Jin Haritaworn (2015, pp. 2–3) writes, "In a context where 'queer space' is publicly carved out in ways that mark an area's recovery, and the displacement and policing of communities once confined to it, the kitchen table emerges as a key site of mobilising that is often unacknowledged in social movements. It is what and where remains in the wake of the racist backlash". The living room and kitchen table hold an important function and meaning for BMR women. These are the sites where feminist pedagogy takes place and "often the only sites where women have the opportunity to engage in pedagogical practices" (Elenes, 2000, p. 596). Gloria's account demonstrates how in the face of the racist white women's movement there was a need to think more critically about how and where BMR feminisms are mobilised and produced.

The experiences of the Sister Outsider women also index the work that white sexuality does

within a spatial, cultural and political context. In reflecting on *Sister Outsider*, Gloria recalls the following experience,

> One night in the late 1970s stands out in particular. Tania and I had gone to the women's center and, and we were having a good time dancing exuberantly, showing each other our special moves, bumping and grinding, when suddenly we became aware that we had become the center of attention. Lots of white women around us stopped dancing and were looking at us disapprovingly, and they were discussing us. That was a painful moment; clearly we had stepped outside the bounds of white lesbian-feminist respectability. These boundaries had not been clear to us before (Ellerbe-Dueck and Wekker, 2015, p. 63).

In the narration of this experience, Gloria and Tania are confronted by the logics of white feminist/lesbian space that also operate alongside the framework of 'white order' discussed in Chapter One. Sexuality in this space becomes organised on the premise of upholding 'white order', which Wekker translates as "the bounds of white lesbian-feminist respectability" (Ellerbe-Dueck and Wekker, 2015, p. 63). In analysing this experience years later, Wekker states, "Only later did I make connections with the Dutch cultural archive, in which black women have been labelled as utterly carnal, as sexual beings who are deemed to be freer in their bodies than white women are" (Ellerbe-Dueck and Wekker, 2015, p. 63). What stands out about this account and Wekker's later scholarship is how the cultural archive she constructs is comprised of her experiences during the BMR movement. Postcolonial feminist scholar Sherene Razack (2002) makes a distinction between

'respectable' white settler colonial spaces and 'degenerate' spaces, where Indigenous people live, which is linked to the construction of masculinity and femininity within a normative framework. The larger point here is the importance of recognising how sexuality is configured within a Dutch colonial framework, which inevitably informs how we understand space.

These experiences shaped the need for Black lesbians to not only self-organise, but to create space outside of the white feminist/lesbian gaze. This becomes apparent in my interview with Tieneke. Tieneke was asked by Gloria to join *Sister Outsider* and also organised with *Flamboyant* and *SUHO*, an organisation for Surinamese gays. Tieneke is still active, in a variety of capacities, within LGBTQ movements of colour. I met with Tieneke on a warm sunny afternoon in Amsterdam and we met for lunch at a café near her work. We sat outside and spoke in between sharing food.

Chandra: What did *Sister Outsider* add to the BMR movement?

Tieneke: From what I recall (...) we wanted to add something to the Black Migrant movement and literature played a central role. (...) I think we created a face for the black, migrant and refugee women's movement, a platform for women who were interested in art, culture and literature. We invited people so it was really a kind of stage, but also to talk, discuss and enjoy each other's

company. In the Caribbean we would say, *to lime*, just have fun with each

other, and flirt, anything. (Sumter, 2016; translation mine)

Tieneke's account provides a multi-sensory reading of place, in which connections between space, kinship and sexuality become apparent. Describing what *Sister Outsider* created, Tieneke places emphasis on what it meant to be able to 'lime' with each other, thereby offering an important non-western reading of how space is sexualised. Liming is understood to be an informal form of gathering and activity across racial and social divides (Maharajh and Ali, 2004). In situating liming as social capital, Ruth Clarke and Reccia N. Charles (2012, p. 303), state, "Liming builds on the common temporal sensibility in the Caribbean as well, with a focus on the present rather than the future". I see this in Tieneke's wording of '*just* have fun with each other, and flirt', where there is an important emphasis on the present. The interview extracts and stories told by members of *Sister Outsider* in *Survivors: A Group Portrait of Sister Outsider,* provide insight into how histories of violence and racism exist alongside manifestations of pleasure. The emphasis on dancing, and Gloria's use of 'bumping and grinding' could also be read as a very deliberate queering of diasporic space. The coming together of queers of colour and their participation in the making of queer social space and history creates an important diasporic geography. Further, in all of these stories the performance of queerness outside of Western white lesbian and feminist spaces is emphasised, which shifts the dominant framework of 'coming out'. The role of art, literature and music within the intimate confines of living rooms and community spaces illustrates how the BMR movement was actively creating and producing feminist

pedagogy. I will further pick up on how these living room circles were part of wider processes of circulations and exchange within a transnational feminist framework.

Transnational Circuits of Exchange

The transnational circuits of exchange that underlie the connection between *Sister Outsider* and Lorde require us to think about what constitutes transnational feminism within a diasporic framework. Earlier, I acknowledged that my use of a transnational diasporic queer framework necessitates a critical interrogation of power dynamics and locality in terms of how we theorise and frame transnational exchange. Drawing on the example of The Body Shop, Caren Kaplan (1995, p. 45) cautions against the use of diaspora in reference to the idea of a "world without boundaries". As such, Kaplan (1995, p. 60) states that, "Binaries of center and periphery, global and local, and other oppositional representations of the world seem to produce fantasies of boundarylessness that only reinscribe essentialized difference". This creates an imaginary in which material differences are not challenged and remain the same. Transnational feminist scholars Jacqui M. Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1997, p. xix), state that, "To talk about feminist praxis in global contexts would involve shifting the unit of analysis from local, regional, and national culture to relations and processes across cultures". Such a praxis, according to Alexander and Mohanty (1997, p. xx), would be "transnational in its response to and engagement with global processes of colonization". This praxis came forth out of the need for women to collectively organise without erasing difference. I am aware that this

discussion on transnational feminist exchange within a Euro-American framework might very well reproduce some of the geographical and epistemological power dynamics that are at work within transnational feminist theory and praxis. I do not aim to resolve these dynamics, but rather offer insight into this particular transnational and queer encounter to probe how *Sister Outsider* and Lorde shaped these conversations.

BMR transnational feminisms never gained much traction within the white feminist movement. Queer of colour theorist, El-Tayeb (2011, p. xlii) argues, "U.S. women of color feminism offered a theorization of interrelated oppressions, creating links to "Third World women" across the globe and thus laying the foundation for post-ethnic coalitions among women of color in Europe within both feminist and migrant organizations". *Sister Outsider* definitely built on the foundation of feminisms coming out of the U.S. and Third World women politics. However, what documents such as the *Survivors: Group Portrait Sister Outsider* show is that the women were situating their experiences in relation to their shared, albeit different, relationships in the broader framework of Dutch colonialism. The relationship between *Sister Outsider* and Lorde shows that the collective had already been organising before Lorde's arrival to the Netherlands. Lorde was, in this sense, not a catalyst for *Sister Outsider* or BMR organising. In this sense, *Sister Outsider* and other collectives had already begun theorising experience through a Black European framework. As referenced earlier, the very use of political blackness came forth out of the exchanges between Black feminists in the U.K. and the Netherlands. However, in locating the exchanges between European diasporic collectives and their Black feminist counterparts,

there is a tendency to read these exchanges through a Black American feminist lens. In an interview on haunting within with feminist and queer formations, Lewis and Hemmings (2019, p. 8) provide one of the most poignant analyses of the tensions that arise here, which is the idea that, "feminist *theory* comes from Europe" and "descriptions of experience come from the USA". Within this configuration, Black European feminisms become erased or solely understood through the prism of Black American feminism. Black American feminism was incredibly influential and important to BMR women. Many accounts in this thesis show that Black American cultural and literary production profoundly influenced the movement. Nevertheless, my overarching goal is to think critically about who or what gets left out in a transnational feminist and queer framework when analysing diasporic European feminisms.

In theorising the exchange between *Sister Outsider* and Lorde, I want to briefly consider questions of class mobility and passport privilege in Euro-American frameworks of exchange. This brings to the fore the power dynamics that are at work in transnational feminist organising and exchange. In a special issue on *Transnational Feminist Research*, Anneeth Kaur Hundle, Iona Szeman and Joanna Pares Hoare (2019, p. 4), posit that transnational feminist research is:

> a radical framework with an ability to speak to connections and inequalities
> between the Global North and South; to confront histories and contemporary
> practices of imperialism, colonialism and nationalism and their effects on
> women, gender and sexuality issues; and to displace Eurocentric and liberal

feminist theories and ideologies.

Transnational feminist research, when it pertains to tracing and mapping exchange, needs to become reflexive and attentive to how we draw connections. Lorde was able to travel across the world to share her work and meet with women in the diaspora (Bolaki and Broeck, 2015). Although Gloria studied in the U.S., the collective did not travel outside of the Netherlands nor did they visit Lorde there. I mobilise the 'transnational' with these complicated factors in mind. I use 'diasporic' and 'transnational' interchangeably here. While these terms have their own genealogies, they are often evoked in the same breath which can erase their particularity. Nevertheless, I recognise the work that both terms do and see the potency for allowing a certain overlap between them when theorising the transnational feminist tenants of the BMR movement. Bringing these terms together pushes for a more inclusive and less static reading of transnational feminism, in which queer of colour theory and Black feminism from Europe have a more prominent place. I will specifically engage with how *Sister Outsider* and Lorde theorised 'difference' and produced a queer diasporic kinship in the following section.

"Travelling Cultural Worker"

The encounters between *Sister Outsider* and Lorde offer important insights into what kinds of transnational exchanges took place. I focus specifically on the letters sent between *Sister Outsider* and Lorde and materials from the two visits that Lorde made to the Netherlands. The circulation of Lorde's work, as set out in the beginning of this chapter, inspired Gloria

and fellow BMR women to reach out to Lorde. I am interested in what the circulation of Lorde's work illustrates about translation practices when it comes to concepts such as solidarity and difference. In analysing Filipino/as queer and trans presence in the Great Lakes region, Kale Bantigue Fajardo (2014, p. 117) uses the term and framework 'crosscurrents' to theorise "alternative maritime or water-based borders where constitutive axes of identity (race, class, gender, sexuality) potentially or regularly get reconfigured through movement, travel, and migration". Fajardo (2014, p. 117) posits, "Crosscurrents also signal alternative racialized and classed genders and sexualities, as well as marginalized trajectories, temporalities, and epistemologies of migration and globalization". While, Fajardo's framework is directly developed to analyse Filipino masculinities within a trans-pacific framework and to queer the Great Lakes, 'crosscurrents' is a relevant framework to theorise transnational exchange through the uses of water. I am reminded of Gloria's very first experience of reaching out to Lorde, where she uses the term 'The Great Divide' to speak of the Atlantic Ocean between Europe and the U.S. Gloria Joseph (1992), Audre Lorde's partner, aptly spoke of Lorde as a 'travelling cultural worker'. In the foreword to *Showing our Colours: Afro-German Women Speak Out*, Lorde (1992, p. xiii) writes, "the essence of a true global feminism is the recognition of connection". Interestingly enough, Lorde has not been firmly placed or read within a transnational framework until recently (see Bolaki and Broeck, 2015). During the same time period in which Lorde came to Amsterdam, she also established a close network with Afro-German women. The documentary *Audre Lorde The Berlin Years 1984 –1992* (2012) directed by Dagmar Schultz,

best captures how she became involved with the Black German women's movement.[29] For Lorde, travelling to different places in the world meant not only connecting with Black women, but thinking critically about modes of solidarity work.

Lorde's writing, speeches, and interviews demonstrate an important transnational analysis of difference. In addressing difference as a necessity, Lorde (1984, p. 99) writes, "advocating the mere tolerance of difference between women is the grossest reformism. It is a total denial of the creative function of difference in our lives. For difference must be mot merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic". During her travels, Lorde (2017, pp. 57) often asked, "Who are we? What are the ways in which we do not see each other? And how can we better operate together as a united front even when we explore our differences?" These questions foreground any analyses of difference as a necessity, and not as an ineptitude. Such a position resonated with *Sister Outsider*, for whom questions of difference were similarly important in how they made sense of their individual and collective identities. In *Survivors: Group Portrait Sister Outsider*, the women noted that the commonalities of the collective are that they are all "Black and lesbian", and apart from that they are mostly different. In reference to solidarity-making, after one of Lorde's visits, the *Sister Outsider* collective notes, "One-Way traffic is not enough. Lorde is doing her work, but she wants us to do it [ours] too. She needs our

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[29] Lorde's conversations with Black German women on organising and the development of the terminology of "Afro-German", were incredibly important for the sharing of specific processes on identity formation in the Germany. Although the racial context in Germany and the Netherlands was different, the meeting of these two groups also ensured a reciprocal exchange of information on experiences of Black, migrant and refugee women.

histories, we need to spit out our swallowed pain and turn it into weapons in the struggle to survive and change society" (Wekker, n.d.; translation mine). Lorde's call to put *Sister Outsider's* histories to work can be read as an extension of exploring differences. Lorde (1988, pp. 282–283) engaged with the use of political blackness in the U.K. and in the Netherlands, and wrote about the pitfalls of the term and pointed women to the possible use of "women of colour", to become more inclusive,

> I see certain pitfalls in defining Black as a political position. It takes the cultural identity of a widespread but definite group and makes it a generic identity for many culturally diverse peoples, all on the basis of a shared oppression. This runs the risk of providing a convenient blanket of apparent similarity under which our actual and unaccepted differences can be distorted or misused. This blanket would diminish our chances of forming genuine working coalitions built upon the recognition and creative use of acknowledging difference, rather than upon the shaky foundations of a sense of similarity.

Lorde cautions against erasing difference; she notes the use of 'political blackness' as producing a false sense of similarity, thus erasing the value and power of difference. This idea of a 'convenient blanket of apparent similarity' could then work against the very premise of the use of the term and expressions of political blackness. In *Sister Outsider's* conceptualisation of political blackness, they stress that while they identify as politically black, there are 'mostly differences'. Difference for the group becomes articulated through geography and colonial histories. From these exchanges between *Sister Outsider* and Lorde

we can gather that the framework of 'cultural work' was made possible through on-going conversations about the use of difference in thinking through transnational modes of solidarity. The exchanges illustrate that the dialogue about difference and its articulations — rather than a clear praxis around difference — shaped this particular relationship between Lorde and *Sister Outsider*. In the following example of one of Lorde's visits, I will further illustrate why these conversations were so incredibly generative ad why they remain valuable.

Famiri Tori

In the literary salons *Sister Outsider* organised, of which several happened in *Flamboyant*, Black lesbian women were encouraged to write, make music and share stories. In one of the invitations, the collective invites their community for the first *Famiri Tori*, which loosely translates (from Sranang Tongo) as telling family stories. El-Tayeb (2011, p. 136) situates the use of this Afro-Caribbean practice as an "alternative to and creolization of the Western coming-out narratives resisting dominant before and after binaries of Western queer identity discourses". I situate the exchanges and conversations between Lorde and the broader BMR community within this spirit of *Famiri Tories*, where community gathers and draws on the importance of oral storytelling traditions. During Lorde's second visit to the Netherlands in 1986, Lorde engaged in conversation with Astrid Roemer, a well-known Surinamese novelist, about being Black women writers and the use of the word 'lesbian' moderated by Gloria. I first read about this encounter in the *Flamboyant* newsletter and later referenced this event in my interview with Gloria. In their conversation, Lorde and

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Roemer spoke about the politics of naming and the tensions that underlie the use of the word 'lesbian' for both women. Roemer felt that the word lesbian was not applicable to women friendships in Suriname,

> In Suriname women have relationship where they can do everything. They can have children. They can fuck if they want to ... They can love a woman. It can be simultaneous, it can be incidental ... but they have more possibilities to experience the complexity of feeling (...) In Holland (...) I find this limiting. (Flamboyant, 1986, p. 7; translation mine).

In this account, Roemer offers insight into multiple readings of being a lesbian across geographical sites. For Roemer, being able to 'do everything', including being with men and having children, allows for a deeper 'complexity of feelings'. For Lorde, naming oneself was understood to be an absolute necessity,

> The vulnerability that comes with naming, socially, politically and economically, is something that I've lived with for a very long time. This vulnerability isn't bigger than the vulnerability of keeping secrets. I'm of the opinion that it is because of this secrecy that we keep on accepting our inferiority. If you name yourself you are a threat to the ruling powers, and that's what I want to be. (Flamboyant, 1986, p. 8; translation mine).

Lorde's response to Roemer shows the importance of considering the processes that underlie the politics of naming, and using the framework of naming as a way to break free from an inferior position. The conversation between Roemer and Lorde illustrates the

importance of incorporating an analysis of place within a queer diasporic framework. Both women show when evoking the term 'lesbian' is useful and why. Roemer's response is on par with the earlier referenced *mati-work*, where being with a woman once or falling in love with a woman does not automatically make one a lesbian. Wekker (2006, p. 173) offers an imperative reading of *mati-work* within the Afro-Surinamese spiritual context, "The mati work is seen by its practitioners as varying, versatile sexual behavior: no real authentic fixed self is claimed, but one particularly strong, masculine instance of the multiplitcitous "I", who loves to lie down with women, is foregrounded". A more comprehensive reading of *mati work* goes beyond the scope of this thesis, however what Wekker's (2006) work and Astrid's account shows is the importance of opening up to modes of queerness that shift our understanding of family, kinship and belonging. Working with the stories of *Sister Outsider* and Lorde outline the importance of the everyday and sensuous in transnational feminist and queer exchange.

The emphasis on the everyday within these stories creates a new set of affective and erotic affiliations that speak to the political conditions of friendship. In my interview with Tieneke she fondly recalls the *Sister Outsider's* parties. Tieneke was just 19 when Gloria had asked to join *Sister Outsider,* and she recalls how the space became an intergenerational place of connection, "(...) I learned to drink wine there, smoke cigars (laughs) and Audre Lorde joined us, Philomena Essed, Astrid Roemer, all these women" (Sumter, 2016; translation mine). Tieneke's stories are told with humour and a sparkle in her eye. In our conversation, which took place outdoors on a terrace in Amsterdam, I am pulled into an intimate world

of *Sister Outsider* taking place in living rooms and community centres. I will close this section, by a *famiri tori*, Tieneke shared with me about one of the famous *Sister Outsider* parties,

> We had organised a party at the COC building, and I had eyed a woman, so I actually didn't feel like spending all this time sitting with Audre (laughs). Audre... my mom who I brought, lesbian woman, passed by now, and Audre and my mom they just had a connection with each other, but my mom didn't speak any English, so Audre was like come sit here and translate for me (laughs). I felt that Audre was interfering with my plans, well they flirted with each other... my mother and Audre. My mother, a real Surinamese woman, and in her generation, during this time you would give something to each other, so I think she gave Audre a handkerchief. And in return...you know. I only wanted to leave (more laughter). (Sumter, 2016; translation mine)

Tieneke's account brings together an important intergenerational aspect of diasporic queer modes of kinship. I kept coming back to this interview extract because of its palpable and unapologetic sense of pleasure. In *Funk the Erotic*, LaMonda Horton-Stallings (2015, p. xii) theorises "sexual expressivity" as a "rejection of the Western will to truth, or the quest to produce a truth about sexuality, and underscores such truth as a con and joke". While Horton-Stallings (2015) writes specifically in reference to sexual cultures in Black America, the importance of flirtation, intimacy and agency in Tieneke's story is notable. Several intertwined threads of multi-generational flirtations co-exist in this account. The connection between Tieneke's mother and Lorde is narrated through a sensuous encounter, in which she notes, 'they just had a connection with each other', which needs

no further explanation. Tieneke, as the youngest and the only person who could translate, was called upon by Audre to sit down with her. This small gesture of 'come sit here' speaks to a gentle intergenerational diasporic summoning. Anthropologist Jafari Allen (2012, p. 215) writes, "To follow the routes of black/queer/diaspora is to interrogate dynamic, unsettled subjects whose bodies, desires, and texts *move*". I recognise, in this extract, how important movement becomes in the understanding of diasporic space. The encounter happens outside of the dominance of English language. Even though Tieneke was the designated translator, the non-verbal exchanges and flirtations, including the transactional gifting of a handkerchief, illustrate an erotic sensibility. In Lorde's (1984, p. 56) *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power,* she addresses erotic subjectivity,

> The dichotomy between the spiritual and political is also false, resulting from an incomplete attention to our erotic knowledge. For the bridge which connects them is formed by the erotic – sensual – those physical, emotional, and psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest and richest within each of us, being shared: the passion of love in its deepest meanings.

Lorde makes a clear connection here between the 'spiritual' and 'political', which both come forth out of the erotic. Black queer studies scholar Lyndon Gill (2012, p. 35) broadens Lorde's conceptualisation, "my articulation of the erotic expands beyond mere euphemism for sexual desire and reaches simultaneously toward a political attentiveness and a spiritual consciousness". Gill (2012, p. 35) proposes the erotic as "the motivation for political action". Tieneke's erotic subjectivity is clear in the narrative, 'I had eyed a woman'. These everyday encounters tell us something about how pleasure is woven into the fabric of queer diasporic

communities. In this case, two Afro-Caribbean women, who do not speak each other's language, draw on sensuous forms of knowing. This encounter points to the importance of adopting methodological frameworks such as 'listening' and 'orientation' to further delve into the stories held by the fragments and scatters of transnational circuits of exchange. Working with archival materials from two different sites further informs how these transnational circuits come alive. In the following section, I will unpack how 'listening' and 'orientation' offer deeper insight into how kinship networks come to be.

Archival Desire Paths: From Amsterdam to Atlanta

In analysing the circuits of transnational exchange between *Sister Outsider* and Lorde, I draw heavily on archival materials from the IAV Collection at Atria and the Audre Lorde Papers at Spelman College Archives. I therefore want to consider the role that archives play in constructing a narrative on this particular exchange. Drawing on Ahmed's (2006) use of queer phenomenology, I question what it means to be oriented towards two specific archival sites and collections, the IAV Collection at Atria in Amsterdam and the Spelman College Archives in Atlanta, and how the archival materials have oriented me in the research process. Chapter Two briefly details how I came to conduct research at two archival sites; in this section I will further unpack how I worked with fragmented and scattered materials across these archival sites. Ahmed (2006, p. 6) argues that "it is by understanding how we become orientated in moments of disorientation that we might learn what it means to be orientated in the first place". Elsewhere, I have argued, "archival

research is inherently a process of 'disorientation' (Frank, 2019b, p. 14). My archival research demonstrates that we are often caught off guard by what we find — or do not find. What does it mean to work with archival fragment and scatters across time and space? So far, the stories in this chapter have been pieced together through drawing on interviews and archival materials. Halberstam (2005, pp. 169–170) notes that, "the archive is not simply a repository, it is also a theory of cultural relevance, a construction of collective memory, and a complex record of queer activity". Following Halberstam (2005), we can then recognise how the archives I engage, produce, construct and hold 'a complex record' of transnational queer and diasporic activity. I do not situate *Sister Outsider's* materials as counter-narratives within the heterosexual or white gay/lesbian archival landscape, but offer new directions to start to read, listen, feel and sense for other modes of being queer.

Image 10. Sister Outsider. From left to right: José Maas, Tania Leon, Gloria Wekker, and Tieneke Sumter. 1984. Amsterdam. Photo by Robertine Romeny. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of Atria.

Orientations: Queer Visualities

The photograph above is an image of the *Sister Outsider* women taken by Robertine Romeny, a white photographer, in Amsterdam in 1984. The portrait shows the women posing, looking and laughing towards the photographer. I am not sure of the name of the canal where the photo is taken, but it looks like the Red-light District in Amsterdam's city centre. The women lean slightly over a pole and are somewhat dressed alike. The photo, which is part of the IAV collection and one of the rare portraits of the collective, does not have a detailed caption besides the name of the group and the year the photo was taken. This image offers a point of orientation in thinking through the visual archive of queer of colour collectives within the European imagination. Roshini Kempadoo (2016, p. 15) conceptualises an expansive Caribbean visual archive as a 'contiguous archive',

> The term contiguous signifies a physical and metaphorical construct created and emanating from the interrelationship made between visual cultural forms, spaces and language. (...) The contiguous archive relates to and arises from materials being explored in close proximity to each other, as adjoining and interlinked, a kind of symbolic *touching* or contact between materials. The archive is considered as contiguous formations that are apparent in multiple locations. It is a proposal to make meaning and knowledge through a connected process. It allows for more contemporaneity and dynamism.

I quote Kempadoo (2016) at length here to demonstrate how relationalities and affinities between different sets of materials arise in the construction of an archive. This 'symbolic *touching*' further speaks to the importance of understanding how archival materials

produce connections. In reference to the Caribbean visual archive, Kempadoo (2016, p. 15) situates this contiguous archive as a "manifestation of creolisation". While this project includes Caribbean materials, I am hesitant to readily use the framework of 'creolisation' here, which I will further unpack in the next chapter. However, this dynamic approach to merging the visual with the textual to underscore the hybridity of the archives is of relevance to my analysis here. In furthering this idea of 'symbolic *touching*' I am interested in unpacking what a visual queer presence in the archive produces. The *Small Axe* project — "Caribbean Queer Visualities" — poses key questions about the relationality between 'queer' and the visual sensibilities in Caribbean art. "What are queer *visualities*? "Do queer sensibilities emerge distinctly or distinctively in relation to the visual?" ('Caribbean Queer Visualities: A Small Axe Project Statement', 2015, p. 120). I extend these questions to the photographs included in this chapter.

The portrait of *Sister Outsider*, and their presence along one of the Amsterdam canals, animates queer visual sensibility for the very reason that their presence is also in question. I am not concerned with identifying what is 'queer' about this image, but what it means for Afro-Caribbean, South African and Indonesian women to be present in this image. The women stand on uneven cobblestones, a classic characteristic of Amsterdam, which in the photograph creates an uneven texture and pattern to how we view them. This motif of the unstable, as seen in the image, creates an important aesthetic space through which we might understand queer diasporic visualities. There is an opening here to rethink our urge to make queer visual images belong. I situate this image within the larger frameworks of

waterways discussed in Chapter Two. The proximity of the women to the canal, even though we can barely see the water, signals a push from margin to centre. Do these colonial and western water infrastructures become sensual here? This very question points to the multiplicity of meanings that geographic sites such as waterways take on when read through the presence of queer diaspora. I argue that these images index queerness within the geographic landscape, in which queers of colour are rendered invisible. In relationship to Black lesbian visibility in South Africa, Kylie Thomas (2010, p. 431) states, "Central here is the question of what the archive itself demands: what are the conditions of entry into the archive of legibility?" In terms of understanding the visuality of these images as a form of queer legibility, the taxonomy of the white feminist and lesbian archive is challenged. Especially because there are so few visual images of *Sister Outsider,* the way that they 'touch' the other materials referenced in this chapter creates a new set of sensuous relations, which I will further illustrate below.

Image 11. Audre Lorde and Sister Outsider at the Albert Cuyp Market in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1984. Courtesy of the Spelman College Archives.

> After our elaborate meal, forging the bond with her [Audre Lorde] and each other, we walk to the nearby market, that I had promised her in letters and over the phone. (...) The colourful population of the market make Audre feel like she is Benin or Kano; Also, after months in Berlin she gets a kick out of the large variety of fresh fish, vegetables and fruit. (Wekker, n.d.; translation mine)

The photograph above portrays *Sister Outsider* and Lorde at the Albert Cuyp market in Amsterdam. The photo, which has a sepia undertone to it, shows Lorde standing in front of a fish stall holding a bag. Gloria, Tieneke and Tania stand a bit further away, with their backs turned toward the camera. In the background, we see a few white people and more stalls with market signs. Where the first photograph is clearly taken as a portrait, this image feels more like an intimate candid snapshot. The photographer of the image is unknown, but the angle and the composition of the image suggest that the photo might have been taken by someone familiar to the women. In Chapter Two, I set out how this photo and the letter exchanges were pieced together. In researching the Audre Lorde papers, I found an unlabelled folder which held a number of photographs inside. I recognised the Albert Cuyp market and was reminded of Gloria's writing, which I had encountered earlier at Atria, and referencing this particular visit to the market. As both archival institutions were unaware of links between their materials, I propose that the very embodiment of this transnational feminist and queer encounter creates a new archival arrangement. In this regard, the thesis offers a new imagination of this previously unknown archival arrangement. Gloria's writing and the photograph produce its own affective kinship across temporalities. We get a sense of how the women landed at the market after sharing 'an elaborate meal' and 'forging a bond'. Affect, in this reading of kinship formation, is also laboured in the description, 'we walk to the market'. The use of the present tense in Gloria's recollection emphasises the quotidian. Lauren Berlant (2011, p. 16) states, "the conditions of life that move across persons and worlds, play out in lived time, and energize attachments". This powerfully encapsulates how affect becomes a "poetics, a theory-in-

practice of how a world works" (p. 16). In situating this photograph and Gloria's writing

together, an affective mapping of kinship and intimacy takes place across geographies.

Food and eating as a shared form of intimacy are an important narrative thread in these

materials. Gloria writes, 'after months in Berlin she [Lorde] gets a kick out of the large

variety of fresh fish, vegetables and fruit'. I am reminded of Lorde's poem *Oshun's Table*,

with which I open this chapter. In it, she purposefully brings food, desire and intimacy

together, shifting away from traditional heterosexual readings of food and desire.

Transnational diasporic exchange, in this encounter, is animated through these everyday

experiences and sensibilities, which are inevitably political. Finally, the concept of

'transnational exchange' becomes lived through these encounters and materials, which

allow us to envision what solidarity might look like.

"Giving each other a home"

I am interested in further probing and illustrating how we can read transnational solidarity

within the archives. Why do these materials matter for the construction of a transnational

feminist and queer narrative? In another extract of Gloria's writing about Lorde's visit these

exchanges continue to take more specific shape,

> At a quarter past nine, Audre, in a colourful African poncho, and I, in my
> turquoise t-shirt, are drinking tea and coffee respectively with apple pie. It
> turns out that Audre has been awake since six and has written in her diary

and read. (...) Audre found books on Suriname in my bookshelf (...) and the next few hours I tell her, while she's making notes in her diary and supports me with sighs such as 'I hear you, woman', and 'say it out loud', about the history of 500 years of Suriname, the different populations and their customs, the languages, and the political situation. (Wekker, n.d.; translation mine)

In Gloria's written account, we get a sense of how Lorde engaged with the specific Dutch colonial histories, in this case, Suriname, important to the *Sister Outsider* collective. Here an analysis on solidarity and difference becomes visible as a transnational praxis. I am reminded of how Gloria first encountered Lorde's work when she found *Zami* in a bookstore. A few years later, Gloria writes, 'Audre found books on Suriname in my bookshelf'. I do not aim to romanticise these encounters, but rather to locate them as important practices of the everyday. Further, this account tells us something about how Lorde listened for diasporic stories. The affirmative use of, 'I hear you, woman', and 'say it out loud' become important markers in Gloria's story, creating a diasporic call and response within the home space. A transnational diasporic sensibility further ensues from how Gloria describes this encounter, 'in the next few hours I tell her, while she's making notes in her diary'. This speaks to the earlier point on the making of feminist pedagogies; here this making becomes part of a transnational queer learning of sorts. In terms of engaging these archival materials as 'queer', I am mindful of not reading the *Sister Outsider* materials through a framework of in/visibility. In other words, while I have put these materials together and allow for new connections to emerge, I trouble the idea that this is solely done to produce visible narratives. I draw on the work of Black feminist theorist Tina Campt

(2017) on 'listening' and Lewis (2017) on 'presencing' to make sense of the visuality within these transnational encounters within the archive. Campt's (2017) work on listening comes forth out of an engagement with lost archives of historically displaced Black people within the Black diaspora. Approaching these images through a multi-sensory lens, Campt (2017) proposes that images can also be 'listened' to. As such, images offer their own frequencies and tonalities, offering a more complex and nuanced reading of what these images register in terms of their quotidian practices of refusal. By "listening to images", Campt (2017, p. 5) proposes "at once a description and method". I am interested in what such an approach to images does; in other words, what happens when the sonic and haptic are engaged in relation to what Kempadoo (2016) calls the 'contiguous archive'. I use this notion of 'listening' in relation to *Sister Outsider* and Lorde's archival materials to tune into the subtle qualities of documents, letters, cards, photographs and ephemera. In the analysis so far, I have shown that each of these fragments and scatters of this transnational exchange hold a sensuous resonance. Listening to photographs and documentation then does not become about 'giving voice', and therefore visibility, to queer diasporic presence, but rather seeks to understand what happens within this process of 'orientation'. As researchers, we are inevitably bound up in this process. I 'listen' for everyday exchanges and the sharing of food and space in this chapter as a mode of thinking through the 'transnational'. In Chapter Two, I discussed Lewis' (2017) 'presencing' to think through questions of absence within the institutional archive. Another way to think through 'presencing' is through an intimate listening to archival materials.

I will further unpack this by coming back to part of my conversation with Gloria, in which she reflects on the Black women who have died prematurely in her life and this not being a coincidence. The ending of the *Sister Outsider* collective was quite organic; Gloria moved to the U.S. to do her PhD at UCLA on *mati* work and the other members also had a variety of other obligations. Gloria, Tania and Lorde all kept in touch and wrote each other frequent letters. I want to use the idea of 'listening' (Campt, 2017) and 'presencing' (Lewis, 2017) to grapple with how death and dying becomes part of transnational stories of exchange and kinship. In the *Sister Outsider* folder, I came across flyers and clippings on the memorial services held for Audre Lorde. Tania also kept cassette tapes of the memorial service held for Lorde in Amsterdam. These materials speak to how death, mourning and loss cause a sense of rupture in the archive. In my archival research diary, I note down:

> I am moved by how Leon's archive presents the anticipation of loss – the small exchanges on homeopathic medicine for the cancer diagnosis with Lorde [they used the same medicine]. Yet, I don't read this an archive of just "loss". The connections that appear make me think of what it means to exist transnationally. Some materials are not so different from my own family archives – letters with South African

stamps, photographs of family members and friends, a copy of a South African ID book. (Frank, 2017b)

As mentioned earlier, both Tania and Audre had been diagnosed with breast cancer, and much of their letter exchanges are about a tender checking in on health status, the homeopathic medicine they both used, and their everyday political lives that they were still fully emerged in. After Lorde became considerably more ill, Gloria and Tania travelled to Berlin to pay their respects to Lorde. In conversation with Ellerbe-Dueck, Wekker describes this final meeting that took place in Berlin, where she gave Audre Lorde a ritual bath. During their time together, Audre Lorde recited the poem 'Today is Not the Day' — which contemplates her death — with tears streaming from their eyes (Ellerbe-Dueck and Wekker, 2015, p.61). Wekker states,

> Tania, by then, knew she had breast cancer. We were all grieving but also immensely connected, knowing how much we had given each other as black lesbian women of different generations and different transnational sensibilities. We celebrated the knowledge that we had given each other a home. (Ellerbe-Dueck and Wekker, 2015, p. 61)

In this account, there is a coming together — a gathering — of Black lesbian women who developed an intimate relationship with each other between 1984 and 1992. The intimacy in this account comes from a connection that grapples with the anticipation of death. And

yet, dying itself is not necessarily centred in Gloria's account. Gloria's words, 'we celebrated

the knowledge that we had given each other a home', become an important resting place.

Ahmed (2017, p. 17) speaks of feminism as a "fragile archive, a body assembled from

shattering, from splattering, an archive whose fragility gives us responsibility: to take care".

In using the archival materials from *Sister Outsider* and Lorde, I think of this notion of a

'fragile archive' here, and contemplate ways in which this fragility becomes embodied in

the exchange between the women. There is a palpable fragility in terms of grief, dying,

mourning and loss. Gloria's words resonate when I encountered the image below, which I

found in the *Sister Outsider* collection. The image portrays an intimate transnational

gathering of transnational diasporic women.

Image 12. Photograph Ika Hügel-Marschall, Audre Lorde and Tania Leon. Archive Ruth Naomi (Tania) Leon. Photographer unknown. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of Atria.

On the left we see Ika Hügel-Marshall, who is part of the Afro-German women's movement, in the middle we see Lorde with her hand raised, and with her face turned, and on the right we see Tania Leon. Behind Lorde, we see another person, likely Gloria Joseph, Lorde's partner. While I am not sure when this image was taken, I think of the 'liveness' of a fragile archive here. Both Lorde and Ika are wearing glasses and the image was likely taken close to Lorde's death. There is an important 'presencing' in these materials and images. Lewis (2017, p. 3) considers how 'the black woman', as "both representation and embodied sentient being is rendered visible and invisible and to link these to the multiple and competing ways in which is made 'present' and declares her presence otherwise". I use Lewis' (2017) conceptualisation of 'presence' in relationship to archival materials. What does the 'presence' and trace of *Sister Outsider* and Lorde's connection mean when the archives that hold these materials also 'absence' their stories? Presence and absence in tracing this transnational circuit of exchange work hand-in-hand with each other. In working with archival materials, I actively made materials 'touch' to probe new relationalities, in which visual sensualities play a key part. The sense of fragility that Ahmed describes reverberates, and picking up on these vibrations, however slight, might inform and disrupt future orientations and possibilities of archival practice. Perhaps here, in between the 'shattering' and 'splattering' lies an invitation to listen to how archives speak.

Conclusions

In the *Sister Outsider* archival materials, I came across a couple of typed newsletters with handwritten corrections conveying the formal end of the collective on paper. The repetition of the same document in different forms signified that one end is not the ending, that somehow this ending is continuous. The archival materials of *Sister Outsider* and Lorde are an important point of departure for thinking through the politics of queer diasporic formations. While their connection and exchange with Lorde was fundamental to the collective, the analysis that *Sister Outsider* produced through writing, cultural work, parties and gatherings, shaped BMR feminism within a wider diasporic European framework. What becomes clear from the interviews and conversations is the importance of political kinship and intimacy, which contours this transnational relationship between the women. The transnational then, as this chapter shows, manifests through everyday diasporic and intimate encounters. These encounters and gatherings as the archival materials and interviews show, bring about a more nuanced reading of Euro-American modes of exchange within the diaspora. Nevertheless, I am aware that the overarching narrative of this exchange is still privileged through mobility, physical movement and Lorde's stature in the world. Thinking with these modes of exchange as circulation informs the role of how we engage these two archival collections. Through following and tracing fragments and scatters within the Atria and Spelman Archival Collections, I was able to piece together an intricate network of exchange and kinship, which re-arranges our understanding of where queer diaspora reside. Finally, through incorporating photographs of *Sister Outsider* and

Audre Lorde, I start to map the visual presence of a queer diasporic aesthetic, which I will

further unpack in the next chapter.

SLIPPAGE

Image 13. Rusty Staples. Strange Fruit Archives. IHLIA. Courtesy of the author.
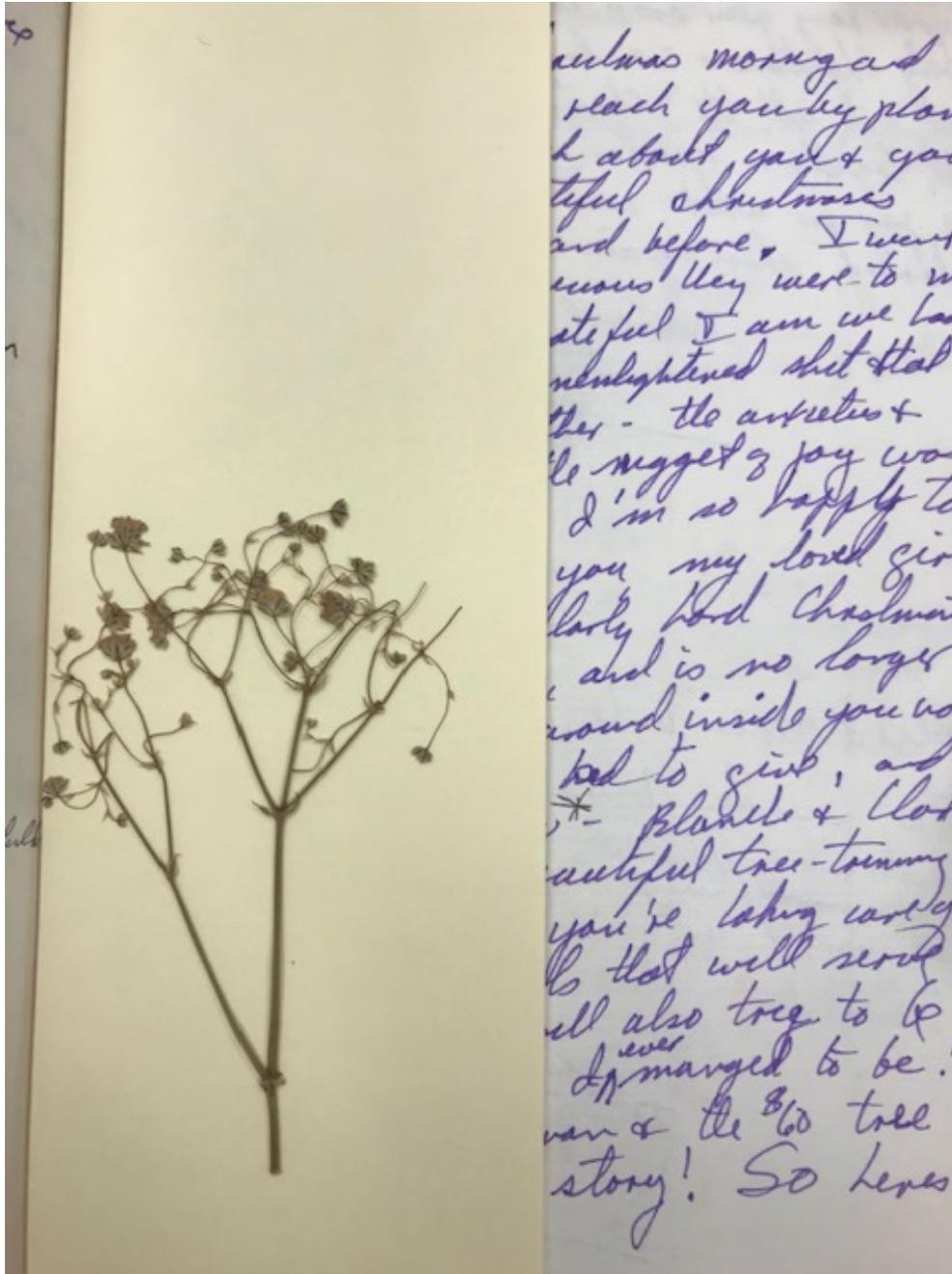
Image 14. Dried flower in Audre Lorde's diary. Audre Lorde Papers. Spelman College Archives. Courtesy of the author.

Chapter Five. *Strange Fruit*: Multi-Sensory Explorations of Queer of Colour Organising and Cultural Production

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"The funny thing is, I knew the four boys who had founded Strange Fruit (…) It was in '87 that 3 boys came to the JAK and were looking to connect with other gay men of colour (…) And in 1989, when Sook and I were doing our cultural stuff at COC[30] we heard steel drums. COC and steel drums… that's not a band.. so we figured we should go have a look. We packed our things and went downstairs. It was the first evening of Strange Fruit in public. We were, I believe, the only two women, maybe there were 2 or 3 other women, besides that lots of young boys, 16, 17, 18 and a few older… very few white men because they quickly told us they didn't want that… they were like "this needs to be a place for us". (Krul, 2017b)

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[30] *Cultureel- en Ontspannings Centrum* (Cultural and Relaxation Centre). The COC was founded on 7 December 1946 under the name *Shakespeareclub*. In 1949, the name changed to COC.

Introduction

Strange Fruit operated from 1989 until about 2002, making it one of the longest running organisations of the BMR movement. *Strange Fruit* was as a self-led organisation that provided care and organised cultural events. As I contemplated how I would tell *Strange Fruit's* story, two factors influenced its direction: I could not stop thinking about the role of the steel drum in Anne's narration as, I struggled to access the actual *Strange Fruit* archives. What would happen if I had to write a chapter about the collective without actual archival material? I learned from long-time *Strange Fruit* member, Anne in 2017, that the archives were based at IHLIA, but were not quite ready for public.[31] While we had agreed to visit the archives together this had not materialised. Anne housed her materials at two archival institutions, Atria and IHLIA, but was not pleased with how the *Strange Fruit* materials were handled. IHLIA's categorisation did not march Anne's organisation and had done very little to make the collection more accessible. To complicate matters further, many members of *Strange Fruit* are still alive and naturally, have a right to give their input into what should happen with the materials. This led me to ask: What happens when archives are not fully (publicly) accessible? In Chapter Three, I offered a reading on 'access' in relationship to the efforts of Flamboyant to make existing archival materials more 'accessible' for BMR women. Using *Flamboyant's* efforts to render their archives more accessible, I argued in Chapter Three that 'access' to BMR materials was related to the

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[31] The *Strange Fruit* materials are part of the IHLIA collection. Due to the limited depot space at IHLIA, which is located at the main public library in Amsterdam, the materials are physically present at IISG.

racialised structures of the archive, rendering BMR women illegible and simultaneously 'ungeographic'.[32] I find a similar problem here as Anne was responsible for, but not in control of, the collection.

Here I am particularly interested in reading access and legibility through the use of a multi-sensory conceptual framework, situated within the wider conceptual framework of the circulation and waterways that underlie BMR movements such as *Strange Fruit*. The 'waves' and 'echoes' produced by Anne's encounter with the steel drum provide another mode of reading and locating BMR collectives. I draw on a set of multi-sensory practices and experiences in working with *Strange Fruit's* stories and materials to read their queer of colour organizing and cultural production. First, I engage with the *Strange Fruit* archives as sensory site; second, I situate *Strange Fruit's* organisational politics as an affective site through centring the role of the roundtable; and finally I discuss how the organisation's diasporic visual aesthetic practices created a multi-sensory queer politics. Overall, I argue that a multi-sensory reading of *Strange Fruit* yields a methodologically richer and more layered account of queer of colour organising, which breaks with normative readings of queer of colour subjectivities and experiences.

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[32] In Chapter Three, I tuned into the idea of the *wild* as a way of disrupting normative readings of the archive (Halberstam, 2014; Singh, 2018a).

Reverberations of the Archive

In lieu of being able to access the physical archives of *Strange Fruit,* I started my research into *Strange Fruit* with the sound of the steel drum. I came back to my conversation with Anne about the steel drum several times, pressing play and pause on the recording of our interview. What does it mean to start with this sonic experience of listening? I am interested in probing how sound, the sonic and the haptic become a form of contact with the *Strange Fruit archives*. In working across different archival institutions, I encountered materials that hold an ephemeral sonic presence in the archive: tape recordings, radio shows, oral interviews, and audio-visual materials from the 1980s. Additionally, the archive also produces its own multi-sensory qualities, the idealized silence of the engaged scholar paying homage to text, practically broken by the sounds of the rolling cart, boxes and folders opening and closing, papers rustling, and hushed whispering. These sensory experiences produce meaning and shape our engagement with archival spaces. To further tease out how multi-sensory qualities might underlie *Strange Fruit's* presence within and outside the archive, I engage the work of scholars who interrogate sound as a body of knowledge (Henriques, 2011), and who address the relationship between sound, listening and race (Stoever, 2016) through drawing on haptic modes of experience (Bradley, 2014). In writing about sonic bodies in relation to reggae sound systems, Julian Henriques (2011, p. xvi) makes a distinction between how sound is experienced through sound systems vis-à-vis earphone listening. Situating sound to be both 'receptive and expressive', Henriques (2011, p. xvi) draws on the "sonic *invasion* of the body" and the "sonic *extension* of the body"

to explain auditory saturation. I use this idea of 'invasion' and 'extension' to think about the multisensory nature of the archive. *How does the sonic enter the body of the archive? How is the sonic contained? And how does the sonic become an extension of the archive?* These questions further situate sound as a process and epistemology that is intertwined with knowledge production of the archive.

Sound as Contact Zone

Tracing the sensory fabric of the *Strange Fruit* archives becomes another way to enact a practice of 'mapping', 'listening' and 'orientation', as set out in Chapter Two. Ethnographers Steven Feld and Keith Basso (1996, p. 91) posit that "as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place". As such, archival sites have a multi-sensual nature, in which space, materiality and bodily senses interact. The archive produces a set of sensory experiences which mediates our experiences in the archive itself. In the special issue of *Senses and Society*, Adams and Guy (2007, p. 134) write about the senses and the city, in which they posit a multi-sensory experience as "mediated through sound, smell, tactility, taste, as well as sight". These "sensescapes", as Adams and Guy describe them, are experienced as well as produced within the archive. As such, the vibrations and digital waves become part of how we frame questions of cultural production and transmission. I draw on Henriques here (2011, p. xvii) who argues, "thinking through sound is a *way* of thinking, a process of knowledge, and a gnosis". In this sense, following and tracing sounds can be understood as a process of knowledge formation. When we read of Anne's

compulsion to follow the steel drum, we can read an embodied sensory experience, a sensuous experience, that I too experience as I follow her story.

While I did not actually hear the sound of the steel drum that night, I use the echo of the steel drum as a guiding frequency and vibration. Brandon LaBelle (2018, p. 2) speaks of sound as a "structural base as well as speculative guide for engaging arguments about social and political struggle". Drawing on a variety of sonic cultures, the BMR movement in general, and *Strange Fruit* in particular, connected the use of music to social and political struggles. The multi-sensory, such as sound, becomes another medium through which people, objects and movements travel and connect. *Strange Fruit's* organisational history illustrates the creation of a sonic diasporic lifeworld in multiple ways. *Strange Fruit* frequently collaborated with South African artist Raymond Vuyo Matinyana, who performed as drag artist Miss Thandi, Moroccan and Turkish members of *Strange Fruit* initiated belly-dancing gatherings, and the collective hosted the radio show *Global Perspectives* on the local gay and lesbian radio station MVS, in which social commentary was combined with diasporic music. All animate the importance of dance, music, and performance in the creation of diasporic space. Upon Anne's request, IHLIA agreed to loan me two MVS tapes. Listening to the shows while writing on the collective provided a lively soundscape. *Poetry by Storme Webber. Aretha Franklin. Miriam Makeba. Erotic stories of queer men.*[33] All demonstrating that both textual and non-textual accounts produce

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[33] While this is beyond the scope of my project, I want to note the importance of sonic technologies that made the movement and exchange of, for instance, cassette tapes possible, which created an affordable

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important social experiences and meaning. In Anne's account, which I have used to open this chapter, she describes feeling like the sound of steel drums were out of place in the building of the majority white COC organisation. I am reminded of Chude Sokei's (2008) articulation of diaspora as 'distance' and the role of the steel drum as echo, which pulled Anne to a diasporic site, the first meeting of *Strange Fruit*. LaBelle (2018, p. 2) poignantly describes the work that sound does: "sound works to unsettle and exceed arenas of visibility by relating us to the unseen, the non-represented or the not-yet-apparent". As such, I situate the sound of the steel drum as a sound which produced something that was 'not-yet-apparent'.

Before meandering into the multi-sensory world of *Strange Fruit*, I want to pause with the very sonic memory that the name *Strange Fruit* holds. Holiday's 1939 protest song *Strange Fruit* speaks directly to the Red Summer of 1919, a national epidemic of lynching, bombing and riots across the U.S. that marked one of the most vicious anti-Black interruptions of violence. In unpacking the haunting layers in Holiday's *Strange Fruit*, which Farah Jasmine Griffin (1995) points out could be either a Black man or Black woman, Jennifer Lynn Stoever (2016, p. 419) describes it as, "...the sonic renderings of lynching, creating representations that sound its affect, aftermath, and the way it shapes – and is shaped by – listening". When I first heard about the Dutch collective a couple of years ago, I became curious how this name, clearly resonating deeply with Black American culture and history,

mode of exchange between diaspora. Evidently then, both textual and non-textual accounts produce important social experiences and meaning.

made sense within the Dutch context. For the collective, the idea of 'Strange Fruit' translated to a notion of out-of-place-ness – shaped by the sexualisation of the other which produces the figure of the exotic – in the Netherlands. This is what the words 'Strange Fruit' connote encapsulate within the Dutch context — being 'strange', 'other' and 'outside' of white heteronormative bounds. Gianmaria Colpani and Julian Wigbertson Isenia (2018, p. 218) argue that a politics of translation undergirds the formation of queer of colour collectives in Europe, and references to Black American culture becomes "rerooted in the European context, taking on new meanings". Collectives such as *Sister Outsider* and *Strange Fruit* interpret Black American concepts, themes and visual cultures into a Dutch context.

I would argue that this politics of translation is first and foremost informed by a practice of listening. Henriques (2011, p. xxix) argues that "listening concerns depths rather than surfaces", which in turn requires us to think what sound offers for archival registers. Circuits of transnational exchange are often shaped by these listening relationships, which makes place for translation practices. That the Black American audio-visual and literary imaginary inspired, informed and shaped the BMR movement, is palpable throughout interviews and archival materials. Intersecting with this imaginary are the various Dutch diasporic currents that simultaneously contribute to a politics of translation. It is here that the formation of queer of colour work in Europe starts to take form. In this case, the echoes of *Strange Fruit*, the song, reverberated for queers of colour in the Netherlands

Embodied Archives

The use of the music rendition, *Strange Fruit*, as set out above, for Dutch queers of colour came forth out of an embodied experience. As such, I recognise the importance of situating the multi-sensory encounters discussed above in the larger context of embodied archives. The objectification of the other was a familiar experience for queers of colour in the Netherlands, embodied as a result of ostracism by white gay circles and facing exclusion from their own communities. In the early years of the collective, it was mostly comprised of young Turkish, Moroccan and Afro-Caribbean men, predominantly welfare recipients and sex workers. The queerness and out-ness of members was primarily understood through the prism of sexual objectification in Netherlands. In the well-known essay *Eating the Other*, bell hooks (1992, p. 21) aptly states, "Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture", a notion attested to by Anne during our conversations, when she noted that queers of colour in this time were mostly seen as a "delicious piece of candy". Black, Turkish, and Moroccan men are all sexualized through a specific historian lens, shaped by colonialism, orientalism, and sexual desire that foregrounds how white commodity culture sees these bodies as objects to consume. Remaining mindful of this lens as we turn our own lenses on the work, provides a much closer examination of how sexuality is engrained within the Dutch colonial imagination.

white elder brother of my primary school best friend stands in the kitchen and looks me up and down. he starts calling me an "eastern delicacy" at 8 years old and does not stop.

white parents of a high school friend take me to the south of france. the father puts a bowl of cherries on the table. They taste like summer – he tells me I have the perfect mouth to eat them. I am 14 years old.

Delving into the *Strange Fruit* archives orchestrated an encounter with different parts of myself. I am inevitably bound up with what these archival excavations produce: as researcher, as listener, as participant, as a brown queer woman. To be affected by the materials and stories coming out of the *Strange Fruit* collective lays bare the reverberations of the archive. How do I read myself in relation to this idea of being 'strange fruit'? My own experiences of being exoticised at a young age speaks to how desire and history become part of an embodied archive. Julietta Singh's (2018b) publication, *No Archive Will Restore You*, draws on personal history, desire, and bodily presence and matter to map the archive of the author's body. Writing openly through a mix of prose, theory and memoir about eating disorders, pregnancy, sex, desire and love, Singh (2018b, p. 55) probes the reader to think and feel with the senses:

> We are always taking in and refusing, incorporating and setting limits, on what we allow into our bodies. The same can be said for other bodily practices, for how we grow into our desires, for how we select what parts of the world we will and will not take in, for how the world passes through us.

The notion of 'taking in and refusing' speaks to the porous nature of the embodied archive. In this sense, the archive as institutional site is limiting; we must more closely explore how the body itself is produced as archive. In relationship to embodiment in trans archives, Cifor (2015, p. 647) states, "Language has a limited capacity to represent the corporeal". The archives of *Strange Fruit* illustrate this through their production of a sensuous lifeworld.

Overall, in interacting with *Strange Fruit* materials and stories demonstrates how there is not one *Strange Fruit* archive, but how the presence of various iterations of strange and other, becomes necessarily scattered across sensory sites.

Multi-Sensory Collaborations

Following several email and text exchanges, Anne and I agreed to start the process of accessing the *Strange Fruit* materials. Over a period of two years, between 2017 – 2019, Anne and I stayed in touch. During the summer of 2019, Anne picked up the conversations with IHLIA to think about the future of the *Strange Fruit* collection, which was in part inspired by the *Nos Tei* exhibition at IHLIA. Earlier in 2019, the exhibition *Nos Tei*, Papiamentu for "we are here" or "we exist", curated by Wigbertson Julian Isenia and Naomie Pieter, opened at the IHLIA. The exhibition, developed in response to the *With Pride* exhibition on show in Amsterdam in 2018, in which IHLIA showed various themes related to forty years of LHBT activism and archiving in the Netherlands (IHLIA, translation mine).[34] However, the *With Pride* exhibition received staunch criticism due to its exclusion of the Black LGBT community. In a roundtable conversation, former *Strange Fruit* member Andre Reeder shared his response to the exhibition, as written on his Facebook page:

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[34] A description of the exhibition can be found here: https://www.ihlia.nl/portfolio-items/nos-tei/ (Accessed 12 June 2020).

[In the preparatory meetings, IHLIA] wanted to pay attention to the struggle of the black LGBTI movement as part of the general struggle for LGBTI people in the Netherlands. [...] Activists brought material to these meetings, and shared countless experiences and stories about those decades of black LGBTI movement in the Netherlands. [...] Furthermore, NOTHING about 38 years of LGBTI activism of the black and people of colour community. Not in picture or text, not even on the website or printed texts on paper. A terribly uncomfortable, almost nauseating feeling of whiteness crept over me (Colpani, Isenia and Pieter, 2019, p. 176–177).

I am struck by how plainly visible the racial taxonomies of the archive are in Reeder's account. The failure to include visual narratives from *Strange Fruit*, and queer of colour organizing more broadly, is evidently not contingent on the actual availability of those materials. To read this erasure through the prism of exclusion would thus be too simple. Rather, I argue that IHLIA here constructs and reproduces whitewashed archival fabulations. I specifically use 'fabulation' here in reference to what stories are produced by the archive constructed by IHLIA. I engage with 'critical fabulation' (Hartman, 2008), which is a distinctly methodological approach, in which Hartman deals with the violence in the archive of Atlantic Slavery, which is bound up with omission and erasure.[35]

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[35] Chapter Six will specifically engage with 'critical fabulation' (Hartman, 2008), which is a distinctly methodological approach, in which Hartman deals with the violence in the archive of the trans- Atlantic

In the archival representation of IHlIA, the conditions of white gay liberalism are upheld through which queers of colour become illegible. As noted in the introduction of this project, white gay presence has long been linked to the project of Dutch liberalism. The fierce protection of this liberalism became visible in the right-wing politics of the late Pim Foruyn and more recently with Geert Wilders, who propagates that Islamophobia is justified considering the so-called "homophobic" stance of Muslims.[36] Wekker (2016a) reminds us that herein lies the implicit bias that gays are white and the racialised threatening other is straight. The very existence of *Strange Fruit*, founded by majority Moroccan and Turkish queer men, addresses this dichotomy.

These mainstream perceptions are further enforced within the public domain where white gay men are prevalent within the media, popular culture, the news, and entertainment industry (Wekker, 2016a, p. 117). The white gay movement is largely depoliticised, predominantly focused on equal rights, and concerned with heteronormative and domestic liberal values (Mepschen, Duyvendak and Tonkens, 2010). Mepschen, Duyvendak and Tonkens (2010, p. 971) argue that "Dutch gay identity does not threaten heteronormativity, but in fact helps shape and reinforce the contours of 'tolerant' and 'liberal' Dutch national culture". Within this schema, gays of colour

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slave trade, which is bound up with omission and erasure. I do not want to conflate this history with the whitewashing of queer history that IHLIA does, as it addresses a set of different histories and erasures.
[36] While further analysis falls outside the scope of my project, it is important to note how questions of migration have increasingly been bound up with the constructed and harmful opposition between Muslim migrants and LGBT people, white gay men specifically.

are only rendered visible through objectified desire. For instance, in the Surinamese gay newsletter, SUHO, it was white gays who placed ads looking for men of colour. These ads are explicit in their language: '*WHITE CALLING BLACK*', and *'looking for serious and muscular coloured'* (SUHO, n.d.). A close analysis of these materials is beyond the scope of my project, but suffice to say that these examples call for a deeper interrogation of anti-blackness and racialised desire. These visual, fabulated narratives of the white LGBT movement are deeply engrained in the making and selling of the Dutch nation-state. Including archival materials of the queer of colour movement in the *With Pride* exhibition would have necessitated dealing with the question: who is worthy of pride? While the *Nos Tei* exhibition is an important intervention, it is questionable whether an exhibition curated in response to exclusion can interrogate the racial taxonomies IHLIA reproduced. Finally, what is most poignant about Reeder's account is how embodied this violent erasure is, indeed a visceral creeping whiteness.

sensing the archives

After the exhibition catastrophe, Anne was even more determined to ensure the *Strange Fruit* archives would be accessible to the public. Since our conversations in 2017, Anne had slowly been sorting through her materials in relation to some of my remaining questions. I agreed to help Anne bring the remaining materials to IHLIA with a cab and in turn she would accompany me to IISH to look at the *Strange Fruit* materials.

I arrived at Anne's home in the early afternoon. She sees me walking from the tram stop and waves me over. In front of the door stand two suitcases and a black sports bag.

In the living room, the afternoon sun shines on a box with materials. A Bright pink post-it reads: Queer. Chandra Fr. Blk Queer Archives. IHLIA. New destinations.

Anne speaks about the emotional labour of sorting through her materials; putting things in order, re-reading notes, newspaper clippings, meeting again people from previous lives. Archival Purging. (Frank, 2019c)

Anne and I set off with our archival luggage to IHLIA, located on the third floor of the public library in Amsterdam. In the cab, Anne talks about the process of letting go of archival materials and what it means to leave them behind at IHLIA. She expresses her gratitude for having company in this process. Within the *Strange Fruit* collective, Anne was the one who kept, gathered and ordered the archival materials. Before bringing the majority of material to IHLIA, her home was filled with boxes. These materials are part of Anne's multiple identities and lives within feminist and queer organisations and other schemas. Anne's stories, and our shared experiences in the archive together, becomes a kind of recontextualisation of *Strange Fruit* in relation to the BMR movement. On the second day of our archival collaborative research endeavour, we meet at IISG in the East of Amsterdam to delve into the *Strange Fruit* archives. I am amazed to learn these archives are 2.75m long, and that the majority of these materials have come from Anne's home. With a trolley full of boxes, we disappear into a small cubicle in the silent reading room. The room is made of glass and even though we are told to be quiet we can hardly contain our excitement.

Image 15. Photo of Strange Fruit Archives at IISG. Courtesy of the author.

We laugh at the use of "lesbianism or lesbiana" for folders and speak about the politics of categorising. While we sat in this small cubicle looking out on the artwork *Floating Garden the Ocean*[37], we managed to get into a rhythm. Anne and I browsed through boxes and folders engaging in a process of exchange. Sometimes Anne would exclaim in excitement or just a confirming "*umm hmm"* sound, and would set aside materials for me to look at. Listening, as research methodology, becomes especially poignant here because of the reciprocity of unspoken meaning that developed between Anne and I. This, as Henriques (2011, p. 102) points out, makes the dynamic between "listening subject and object, or listener and listened-to" rather different from "the dichotomies of viewer and viewed, or reader and text, on which major cultural and social scientific debates in recent decades have pivoted". Archival research is often understood to be about "reader and text" even though recent work by Hartman (2019) and Campt (2017) shows how listening to archival materials blurs fiction/non-fictional worlds through engaging with the multi-sensory. Within this schema, "listening emphasises the sensual world of actual embodied presence, corporeal performance, matter, energies, intensities, relationships, flows and affects" (Henriques, 2011, p. 102). I draw on these theoretical insights to further tease out how these multi-sensory practices come to life in my exchanges with Anne. I registered Anne's care in her recollection of organising with young queer men of color, noted her excitement in talking about films that the collective screened, and I took in her gestures describing round table sessions.

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[37] The Ocean is a fertile and unsinkable ship of 24 by 8 meters conceived by Robert Jasper Grootveld, where apple trees, strawberries, berries, grapes, garlic, and other plants and flowers grow.

My experiences with Anne in the archives contour how the multi-sensory is evoked as method. Film studies scholar Laura Marks (2000) describes the *tactile* as a means of seeing, which is particularly apt in working with archival materials. In this sense, "tactile epistemologies conceive knowledge as something gained not on the model of vision but through physical contact" (Marks, 2000, p. 138). For Anne, the tactile within our archival room became a visceral exploration. We noted the impact of time on the collection. Rusty staples fell out of the blue archival folders leaving behind debris on our table (see Slippage). Sometimes we would fold the bended ear of a paper back into place, trace our fingers over a DIY *Strange Fruit* flyer. All of these gestures were unspoken ways of responding and engaging with the materials. The physical contact that is made goes beyond the actual archival materials. In 'touching' materials and moving materials between us, we are also purposefully producing an archival methodology rooted in a collaborative approach. In this sense, Anne and I are both re-arranging the space by creating out own archival frequency.

We typically do not think about the sound of archives due to the imposed silence equated with archival institutions. However, when we expand the idea of sound as Henriques (2011, p. 20) suggests, "to include not only sound-making and listening, but also the entire frequency range of the vibrations that are involved", it becomes possible to tune into sonic presences within the archive. Henriques speaks specifically about Jamaican auditory sensibility, which seems quite far removed from the institutional white archives I work in. And yet, after spending intimate time with the *Strange Fruit* archives, I realised that vision, touch, temperature, and smell are all transmuted as part of a sound(ing) experience. The

Strange Fruit collection produces a sensory 'diaspora space' (Brah, 1996), which I discuss in Chapter Three. As argued earlier in this project, archival collections from collectives such as *Strange Fruit*, provide a "confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes" (Brah, 1996, p. 205). Notably, the archival collection of *Strange Fruit*, held by white archival sites also speaks to the need to understand how the "diaspora space" complicates who is understood to be "insider/outsider" (Brah, 1996). In this sense, the archival collection and site can be understood as a "diaspora space", in which the power relationships between the *Strange Fruit* collective and white Dutch stakeholders becomes visible. Much of my conversations with Anne and our engagement with the archive speak to these competing power dynamics. These collections reflect the multiplicity of identities and border crossings, and throughout time, offer the possibility for new cultural and political formations.

Situating the *Strange Fruit* archives as 'diaspora space', allows us to explore how these materials are 'sensed' as diasporic. Circling back to Henriques' (2011) conceptualisation of 'sonic invasion' and 'sonic extension', I see how the sonic is mediated through a set of interrelated processes that exist within and outside of the archive. While it is hard to argue and illustrate how archives produce sound, my overall aim in this discussion was to show how the use of multi-sensory methodologies offers layered readings on notions of 'access'. In this sense, my engagement with sound as contact zone and multi-sensuous collaboration is about tuning into other forms of knowledge production that decenter a solely textual

analysis of materials. In the next session, I will extend this reading through addressing how *Strange Fruit* organised.

From the Roundtable: Queer of Colour Entanglements

Having set out how a multi-sensory approach to the *Strange Fruit* archives allows for a different kind of legibility, the chapter now turns to the organisation's cultural work and activism. I use Brah's (1996) notion of 'diasporic' entanglements to situate the activist and cultural work of *Strange Fruit*. My analysis is an extension of the reverberations of Anne's first encounter with *Strange Fruit*, in which she details walking into a space with mostly young men of colour. Anne and her friend Sook were the only women in the space and decided to join the collective after that very first meeting. Anne's stories and archival materials provide insight into an affective, intimate, and sensuous understanding of space. I will demonstrate this by discussing *Strange Fruit's* intergenerational praxis, and how it manifested its queer diasporic politics and imagined their presence within a multicultural framework.

Strange Fruit operated for over a decade and their activism and cultural work contributes heavily to our understanding of queer of colour politics in Europe. *Strange Fruit* is one of the few BMR collectives that actually received scholarly attention due to its long-standing position as a transnational queer of colour hub (see El-Tayeb, 2011; Colpani and Isenia, 2018). El-Tayeb (2011) firmly places *Strange Fruit* within the wider trajectory of queer of

colour scholarship in Europe and challenges dominant conceptualisations of queerness and Europeanness that contribute to the ongoing neglect of queer of colour collectives in Europe. Similarly, Colpani and Isenia (2018) situate the work of *Strange Fruit* within the framework of postcolonial queer formations in the Netherlands. However, where Colpani and Isenia (2018, p. 214) focus on the *"dialectic* between political collectives and activist intellectuals" as an inherent part of the intellectual work that social movements do, I am more interested in what animates *Strange Fruit* as a queer of colour collective through a multi-sensory lens. I take *Strange Fruit's* weekly roundtables as an entry point into the formation of queer of colour politics. My very first interview with Anne took place on 7 May 2017, we met at a café close to her home in the East of Amsterdam and spoke for three hours. Anne identifies as Afro-Dutch, has a Ghanaian father and a white Dutch mother, but was adopted and raised by a Dutch family. Anne tells me she had been politically active since the age of 19. Anne already had a wealth of experience in BMR organizing by the time she became involved with *Strange Fruit.* I was struck to see that *Strange Fruit* was in many ways continuing the work of the BMR movement.

> Chandra: What I find interesting about *Strange Fruit* is the diversity of topics, could you tell me more about this?

> Anne: Where did it start (...) Every third Tuesday of the month was used as a stage for expression; music, dance, spoken word (...) everyone would climb on stage, people really cared of each other ... put something nice on, you are allowed

to shine.. (...) it was a space where you could share announcements, there was an information table with condoms (...) Because we were with so many backgrounds, we really encouraged people, what makes you happy? Because we were all kind of family, and a couple of people were truly friends, we called this the roundtable. On the hand these were gatherings to discuss things, but it could also be an action or policy meeting. Sometimes someone had ran away and wanted to come by that evening to get support. Very diverse topics. (Krul, 2017b; translation mine)

In Anne's account, the diversity of topics is not necessarily as important as how *Strange Fruit* gathered and conducted their meetings. Anne describes how every third Tuesday of the month the organisation would come together to "perform, shine and have fun". At the same time, Anne narrates this was also a space where announcements were shared with the group. The *Strange Fruit* roundtables construct a sensuous site, in which performances, safer sex promotion, and policy-orientated work were all combined. The format holds a similar resonance to the kitchen table in queer and feminist organising. Kitchen tables hold affective and theoretical resonance in relationship to how complex histories of class, race, and gender manifest within and from this political site (Smith, 1989; Bennett, 2006; Shange, 2019). Within these intimate spaces, queer strategies, epistemologies and pedagogies come into being. Performative expressions were not seen as secondary to policy or action meetings, but rather situated as an important part of the overall work *Strange Fruit* did.

Intergenerational Praxis

Similar to other BMR collectives such as *Sister Outsider, Strange Fruit's* politics focused on the intricacies of race, gender, class and sexuality. *Strange Fruit's* emergence is indebted to the proliferation of queer and feminist collectives that paved the way in the 1980s. Even though non-political ethnicity-centered collective organisation was encouraged and subsidised by the Dutch state, collectives such as *Sister Outsider* and *Flamboyant* as discussed earlier, defied government attempts at depoliticisation. *Strange Fruit* was thus able to continue this shift away from ethnicity-specific organising by building on a strong feminist and queer tradition of BMR organizing. This was, in part, indebted to Anne and Sook, who were the first two women to join *Strange Fruit* after being active within the BMR movement. When I asked Anne how *Strange Fruit* had come about, she told me about a group of young men of colour, mostly sex workers, who had felt like they had needed more structural support. After attending the first meeting Anne and Sook felt the collective had similar ideas to theirs, despite that it had been set up by young queer men of color. Below is an excerpt from our conversation which explicates how Anne became involved with *Strange Fruit*.

Chandra: How did *Strange Fruit* come about?

Anne: (...) It was nice to work internationally, but after a while it felt my feet were not reaching the ground. I really wanted to connect with the here and now.

And I felt *Strange Fruit* was a very good place to do this. Also, because it was very possible to just do things with women, just like I felt that the boys had to sort out some of their stuff. This was also to prevent that Sook and I would become the big sister and mother, we were aware of our age difference and our experience. (Krul, 2017b; translation mine)

In this excerpt, Anne offers a couple of significant insights into how she came to organise with *Strange Fruit.* Anne told me she was organising with the International Lesbian Information Service (ILIS) on an international level during the time she had followed the sound of the steel drums. In Anne's account she narrates international lesbian and feminist organising through an interesting metaphor when she notes, 'my feet were not reaching the ground'. *Strange Fruit* as an Amsterdam based collective thus offered a political home grounded in local diasporic politics. Another important point that Anne makes here is about age difference and gender. Anne emphasises the need for "the boys" in the collective to "sort out some of their stuff". The very idea that queer men of colour could organise themselves collectively was a novel phenomenon; the men brought their own methods and strategies along with them. Anne shares,

We went to the *Strange Fruit* meeting, just to hear how does that work here… they were calling it [their work] peer-to-peer education. Well what's that? Is that similar to women's work? Or do we have to educate all these boys again, also about sexism? We didn't feel like that at all. (Krul, 2017b; translation mine)

Anne's account details some of the practical considerations in queer of colour organising. Anne's questions stand out in the way that she narrates this experience. Whilst she does not provide answers, it is her questions which do important work here. Anne questions what peer-to-peer education is from a feminist point of view. Anne's final statement 'we didn't feel like that at all', is a clear indication of her resistance to doing "women's work", where the onus of education would fall on Anne and Sook. This extract particularly stood out to me because of the dynamics and potential dangers that are addressed by Anne within intergenerational queer organising. During our interview, Anne further suggests moving away from reinforcing heteronormative family structures within queer organising, whilst at times she lovingly refers to herself as the bigger sister of younger queer men. *Strange Fruit* did not use terminology such as 'younger' and 'older' generation even though they actively engaged in meta-generational exchanges. Besides bringing experience, Anne and Sook had already established connections from their outreach work with Black lesbian women. Anne follows up her earlier concerns about peer-to-peer education by sharing the following:

> I think because Sook and I joined, with of course a lot of experience, and also with our contacts within health care, for instance, Black lesbian women knew at a certain point ... there are good gay psychiatrists, who don't just say to boys, you just need to adapt. I think because we brought our networks and also networks when it comes to special interest groups, residence permits, rights of *foreign*

young people, we could make it [*Strange Fruit*] broader; the personal story…the political side…and not even like we're going to march the streets (…). (Krul, 2017b; translation mine)

In this account, Anne very clearly details how Black lesbian women, who gained experience during the BMR movement, had already established networks, which allowed for a broadening of *Strange Fruit*. Anne does not narrate her positionality through the prism of 'giving voice' to younger queer men, but rather shows how Black lesbian women allowed *Strange Fruit* to focus on the political side of personal stories and experiences. As such, Anne details what a Black lesbian praxis brought to *Strange Fruit*. These reflections of Anne's, on intergenerational organising, brings together a multidimensional lens, in which political commitment, practice and lived experience form the basis for collaboration. This is also where multiple genealogies come together: BMR feminisms, queers of colour organising, and the transnational currents therein. Alexander and Mohanty (1997, p. xvi) state that the "use of words like 'genealogies' or 'legacies' is not meant to suggest a frozen or embodied inheritance of domination and resistance, but an interested, conscious thinking and rethinking of history and historicity". The confluence of intergenerational organising and politics within *Strange Fruit* was thus very much alive.

'I love gay sex, but I'm not gay'

The very first *Strange Fruit* founders were predominantly young queer Moroccan, Turkish and Surinamese sex workers who were keen to self-organise. Sex work had always been a

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contested issue within BMR circles, and the movement had not built a solid infrastructure to support sex workers of colour. The precarious conditions of sex work for gay men led to informal networks of care, where men would warn each other not to take on certain clients (Krul, 2017b). Being isolated within the white gay scene and often not being able to find a home within their own communities, sex workers of colour found themselves in need of more structural support. Life shifting experiences, such as a friend coming out as trans and another friend being deported to Turkey, motivated a small group of friends to start organising more formally (Krul, 2017b). I am interested in how these specific conditions at the beginning of the '90s shaped *Strange Fruit's* queer political agenda, and how this materialised within language, feelings, and iterations of queer expressions as an extension of the multi-sensory. Analysing the shifting self-identifying language of *Strange Fruit* provides insight into how queers of colour worked through questions of belonging. In the following interview extract, Anne shares some of the process and underlying thoughts with me related to the politics of naming:

Chandra: How did you all describe *Strange Fruit* as an organisation?

Anne: Every year this discussion came up, new people would ask us (...) I believe the very first was, *allochtonous* youngsters or maybe foreign youngsters, before the word *allochtonous* was introduced, foreign youngsters with homosexual feelings. Because some of them said, "yes, but I'm not gay". I love gay sex, but I'm not gay". So, they were like at least as we can speak about those desires and

feelings. That needs to become central. And not whether you name yourself [gay] or not because that was absolutely out of the question for some of them. But also, because the boys who were sex workers knew there could be dangerous situations, so they said, 'we need to be able to speak about sex'. So, sex education was a normal thing at our kitchen table or trans feelings. How do you deal with that, how dangerous is it to buy hormones on the illegal market? (Krul, 2017b; translation mine)

Anne produces an insightful analysis of *Strange Fruit's* practice, one inevitably tied up with her close proximity to and distance from the group, particularly as an older Black lesbian woman. Anne's narration of how *Strange Fruit* identified themselves in terms of sexuality brings to mind the discussion between Astrid Roemer and Audre Lorde in the previous chapter. Queer of colour collectives were evidently trying to find a language that would best suit their iteration of queerness. Anne's narration provides a sensuous and lively account of *Strange Fruit* gatherings, where she brings the conversation back to the kitchen table. In doing so, Anne normalises these conversations as part of their "everyday" collective experience. The use of a multi-sited ethnography, as referenced in Chapter Two, is imperative to put to work here. Marcus (1998, p. 240) argues that multi-sited ethnography is not just tied to multiple locations, but about how we read cultural formations in relationship, as "local and in circulation". I thus recognise how in this interview with Anne, there is an interaction and shift between micro and macro sites within a multi-sited framework. On a macro level, Anne ties in the politics of naming with larger

political debates. Anne references how the use of *allochtonous* replaced 'foreign', which indicates an important policy shift that affected how people started naming themselves.

The term *allochtonous* was in fact officially used and implemented by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) in 1989,[38] the year that *Strange Fruit* started organising. The adoption of these terms, however brief, also speaks to the limited possibilities of identity-formation within the Dutch landscape. Most likely under the influence of their feminist members, *Strange Fruit* adapted their language to, "black/migrant women and men who have lesbian or respectively homosexual feelings" (Krul, 2017b). On a micro level, Anne enacts the voices of young, queer *Strange Fruit* members to illustrate for me what kinds of conversations happened on queerness. For instance, Anne's explanation of 'homosexual feelings' is a reflection of a deliberate opaqueness to hold space for a range of queer articulations. Further, these self-descriptions show the importance that sexuality played in the formation of citizenship. In part, the caution to identify as gay might have been fueled by the long-standing belief that "gayness and sexual tolerance" are associated with "whiteness and indeed with *Dutchness*" (Mepschen, 2016, p. 159). However, I am mindful here to not situate *Strange Fruit* queers of colour as being without agency in their choice in looking for alternate models of identification. El-Tayeb (2012, p. 86) argues that "healthy and desirable LGBT identity" is "centered around 'coming out' and represented by the white, western gay subject". With the emphasis on "coming out" as a condition of being

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[38] At the same time, the Central Statistical Office (CBS) starts using the term in official statistics. While the WRR included the term up until the third generation, the CBS did so until the second generation.

gay, *Strange Fruit* actively proposed new ways to think through queer visibility and presence. Toward the end of this excerpt, Anne brings the conversation back to the kitchen table, which underscores the importance of these everyday interactions.

There is little trace of trans stories within the BMR archives, and *Strange Fruit* was the first organisation to name trans people as part of their queer collective. I asked Anne a follow up question to get better understanding of how *Strange Fruit* created space for trans people within queer organising.

> Chandra: Did you hear less about trans experiences at other organisations?

> Anne: Hardly, this was very new. (…) New people [at *Strange Fruit*] sometimes had to get used to it, but it wasn't like Cilla as trans woman who would have to school them, you'd do it together. Just like Marlon would address the new boys if they decided the world is man-like…enter feminist Marlon, and he'd educate you. Almost actually like in a family, the one is uncle and teaches you this, the other is aunt and teaches you that. (Krul, 2017b; translation mine)

What is notable in Anne's narration are the familial structures set in place within *Strange Fruit* to grapple with trans experiences. The shared learning and familiar approach speak to how *Strange Fruit's* roundtable kitchen politics shaped the internal culture of the group. I see the use of the kitchen table and the roundtable evening as important political and everyday sites where the sensuous becomes intertwined with diasporic presence. By this I

mean that *Strange Fruit* offered an important model through which to incorporate modes of creative and cultural expression and political action.

Multicultural dreams

Closely intertwined with *Strange Fruit's* intergenerational praxis and queer explorations, is the collective's embrace of its diasporic and queer entanglements. *Strange Fruit* recognised the need for queers of colour from multiple ethnic backgrounds to organise together. In my conversations with Anne she references the importance of the group's multiculturalism. The extract below is another part of the answer to my question on how *Strange Fruit* came into being.

> Anne: You know, there was a multicultural group, it really was the dream, you know. We wanted to do things with the Moroccan community, in the Surinamese community, but we felt this was important because all five of us felt yes we already live multiculturally [...] That was really special because for the rest you had all these categorical organisations because it was Surinamese for Surinamese, Moroccans for Moroccans and even young Turks for young Turks. I think also because of our backgrounds but also because the boys said 'yes we have been living multiculturally', we have been to school with each other, and because they found it really interesting... like how do you deal with your parents, for instance within the Surinamese culture, and maybe I can use some of your strategies for my Hindustani parents. It also provides a kind of protection, but

because we had a kind of platform, and that multicultural element was

something that was in development for yourself. (Krul 2017b; translation mine)

I find that Anne offers an important reading of 'multicultural' here. First, situating

multiculturalism as a lived reality, and second understanding multiculturalism as a means

of self-development. Multiculturalism here is conceptualised as an affective diasporic queer

state. In Anne's narration, there is a potential to see how multiculturalism is read through

queer kinship, which holds the cultural and affective dimensions of space. *Strange Fruit's*

use of multiculturalism should be situated in relation to what Botman, Jouwe and Wekker

(2001) describe as an increasingly multi-ethnic society in the 1990s. For the collective, who

actively moved away from ethnicity-centric organising, it was self-evident to reflect their

lived reality in their organising. Practically, this meant that *Strange Fruit* emphasised

shared experiences and goals rather than providing ethnic-specific advice (El-Tayeb, 2011,

p. 130). In doing so, *Strange Fruit* ensured that these exchanges were geared towards self-

development. Anne's example illustrates how multiculturalism was used to make sense of

the multiplicity of identities within the group. Creating space for these inter-cultural

exchanges was also possible due to the non-hierarchal nature of the group. The use of

multiculturalism by Anne is distinctively different from how the Dutch state's use of the

term as policy, which was geared toward the non-political integration of minorities. I will

draw out these above-mentioned points on multicultural organising through providing

more insight into *Strange Fruit's* organisational politics. Without any funding, the founders

of the group were not able to access the resources necessary to be fully self-efficient. In

search for a home base, the collective had first become a working group within the Amsterdam COC organisation.

Image 16. Strange Fruit Flyer. Courtesy of Anne Krul.

Operating under the guise of a majority white gay organisation, however, posed several problems. One of these tensions was that *Strange Fruit* was expected to work within the COC's organisational structures, which according to Anne also meant "shaping their anti-racist policies without receiving additional funding" (Krul, 2017b). The group increasingly felt it was important to hold on to their principles of self-organisation and support. Further, as El-Tayeb (2011) sets out, changes within the COC management required *Strange Fruit* to adopt a more formal way of working in terms of budgets and accountability. Eventually *Strange Fruit* officially separated from the COC and constituted itself as a foundation in 1997. Colpani and Isenia (2018, p. 216) argue that the relationship between the COC and *Strange Fruit* was more than just a "transactional" exchange. In this sense, the authors explain that the trajectory of *Strange Fruit* "is characterized by a closer, if conflictual relationship, with the mainstream LGBT movement" (p. 217). This close proximity to mainstream LGBT organising meant that *Strange Fruit* was put in a compromised position when the COC started targeting "ethnic minorities" in their policy work. Anne describes the overall sense that the collective was used as an "informal informant" to cast light on the specific issues queers of colour were dealing with. El-Tayeb (2011, p. 130) states that *Strange Fruit* had become a main contact "for the press and politicians after (a) 1996 study on migrant – and in particular Muslim – antigay attitudes". This led to the group's outright refusal to be situated as native informants. *Strange Fruit* had become the main contact point for press and politicians after the 1996 study on migrant — and in particular Muslim — antigay attitudes.

White liberal gay organisations such as the COC play an important role in upholding Dutch liberalism and tolerance. Wekker (2016a) notes that the COC publicly supported the right-wing political party PVV[39] in 2010. The PVV is known to proclaim the homo-nationalist rhetoric that Moroccan boys posed a threat to the freedoms of white gay men, thereby strategically situating white gay men as the victims of Islam due to mass migration to the Netherlands. *Strange Fruit's* operational years collide with significant political and cultural shifts with regards to multiculturalism. Generally speaking, the consensus in the '90s was that the "integration policies of the 1980s were not effective enough because migrants were never forced to integrate" (Ghorashi, 2010, p. 80). In part, this had come forth out of the government's rationale that so-called guest workers would return to their home countries, and thus should maintain their (cultural) identity. However, after it became clear that this was an unattainable expectation, more restrictive immigration policies were implemented, which included labour and family migration. In 1991, Fred Bolkestein, political leader of the Conservative Liberals, declared that the "integration of minorities should be handled with guts"[40]. Baukje Prins (2002, p. 4) explains how Bolkestein's statements,

> involved a determined defence of the achievements of European civilization such as the universal values of secularization, freedom of speech, and the principle of non-discrimination against "the world of Islam" in which these values did not flourish.

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[39] PVV (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*) is the Party for Freedom, founded in 2006.
[40] These comments were made by Bolkestein (1991) in the Dutch newspaper *The Volkskrant*.

One of the major criticisms of Dutch multiculturalism was that the government had been too liberal and had allowed for ethnic minority groups to be hugged to death. This would eventually lead to what Prins (2002) termed 'the new realism', a shift defined by the need to say, think and express everything you feel.[41] The focus on self-emancipation had led to dependence on the welfare state and allowed minorities to "withdraw in their own group rather than to try to integrate into larger society" (Prins, 2002, p. 368). I provide this context here specifically because *Strange Fruit's* trajectory mirrors these important political shifts. I argue that Anne's earlier conception of multiculturalism as a lived reality and a means of self-development, in fact offers a subversive model of resistance within this wider framework. This is not to say that such a framework was feasible then or that it is now, but the re-articulation of a multicultural politics through a queer diasporic kinship model generates an important discussion. In reference to the concept of queer assemblage, queer theorist Jasbir Puar (2005, p. 135) illustrates how the queer diaspora is "cohered through sensation, vibrations, echoes, speed, feedback loops, and recursive folds and feelings, coalescing through corporealities, affectivities and ... multiple and contingent temporalities". As such, *Strange Fruit's* embrace of a multicultural politics becomes animated through different affective sites, for example, through making use of the roundtable format, an intergenerational praxis, and through listening to the needs of queers of colour. This includes centring performativity such as movement, music and

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[41] Leftist author and member of the labour party, Paul Scheffer (2000), later reiterated these views in a front-page newspaper article entitled 'the multicultural drama'.

dance, which then indeed allows us to see how 'sensations' and 'echoes' are articulated in the organisation.

For the collective, the embrace of multiculturalism meant that members with a range of diverse experiences were able to mobilise in very specific ways. The non-hierarchal structure of the group allowed for members to start-subgroups related to their interests and needs. In this sense, *Strange Fruit* also operated as a catalyst to strategically organise with and for queers of colour who did not have the means with which to self-organise. Other examples of specific focus sub-groups are ALOA (Asian Lesbians Outside Asia), the youth group A & M[42], and Together we Live!, which focused specifically on Aids education. Important to note is that *Strange Fruit* took on the unrecognised political and cultural work of providing support and guidance for queer refugees. An important sub-group, IPOTH — the Foundation Independent Platform of Turkish Homosexual Men and Women — came into being as part of *Strange Fruit* in 1995. IPOTH (n.d.) catered to Turkish gay men who were oppressed, threatened, prosecuted and tortured in Turkey, and focused on the needs of gay Turkish men and women in the Netherlands. In the description of the group they state,

> Various times members from the group were assaulted and arrested by the police since they became more public. They were tortured and from the five

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[42] The A&M group was specifically focused on improving connections between Turkish and Arabic young people, and non-Dutch young people more generally, between the ages of 16-25.

activists, two were murdered. Two members from I.P.O.T.H. are hiding in villages (in Turkey), and a third one could escape to Amsterdam and is sitting at this table, to continue the work of I.P.O.T.H. (IPOTH, n.d.; translation mine).

I raise this example to show how, in effect, multicultural organising, for *Strange Fruit*, was driven by the need to respond to the transnational lived realities of members. The round table thus also became a place to mobilise around the precarious lives of queers of colour. The work of the round table can also be read as a form of labour, affective and emotional as well as material. For members with a Muslim background, this support was particularly important, as they were seen as the very manifestation of the failure of multiculturalism. Dutch scholarship typically undervalues the political work the BMR movement undertook, specifically initiatives spearheaded by queer people of colour who actively opposed 'happy multiculturalism' narratives. This brief deep dive into the politics of organising space and people by *Strange Fruit* shows how, amidst national political shifts, the collective was able to uphold its self-support praxis as a means of survival.

Politics of Liveness

In my discussion of *Strange Fruit's* intergenerational praxis, queer diasporic expression, and multicultural modes of organising, I wrestled with the evasiveness of queer diasporic politics. The conjunctions between sexuality and migration within the post-colonial Dutch imaginary produce a set of diasporic entanglements. Eithne Luibhéid (2008, p. 171) argues that scholarship on queer migrants often results in the need to "foreground and challenge

regimes of power and knowledge that generate structures of impossibility where particular groups are concerned, and to examine how individuals negotiate them". This resonates in particular when we think through *Strange Fruit's* dialectic positionality in relation to white gay mainstream culture. Indeed, the presence of queers of colour is rendered illegible within the Dutch imagination, but what are other models with which to think through a queer of colour presence? This is a particularly compounded question when we take into account the role of the *Strange Fruit* archives. The discussion surrounding the *Strange Fruit* archives is rooted within a larger debate of the erasure and inclusion of BMR narratives. However, this project is driven by the need to acknowledge that there are other schemas through which to approach, analyse, and present BMR archives such as *Strange Fruit's*, which come forth out of a sensuous reading of place. I therefore situate queer of colour entanglements here as unruly. *Strange Fruit* does not produce unruliness because it falls outside of the western queer imagination but because the collective produces its own affective politics of 'liveness'.

The confluence of Afro-Dutch, Asian, Caribbean, North African, Middle Eastern, and a few white queer people within the collective was, in many ways an experimental collaboration but was also a mode of existence. The lineages that emerged from this collective organising provide a multi-sensory and haptic landscape in which diaspora and diasporic hybridity is likely more experienced than formulated. The round table, as a material object and meeting place, is narrated as offering a foundation to queer of colour perspectives. I thus argue that an experimental and sensorial reading of unruliness starts here. The use of 'entanglements'

to analyse *Strange Fruit* allows for multiple sets of relationalities to emerge. I do not use 'entanglement' here in the sense of Barad (2007) where it pertains to "new materialism", but rather situate 'entanglement' as an embodied multi-sensory understanding of how queer diasporas produce knowledge. What does it mean to approach these entanglements through embracing the haptic? Rizvana Bradley (2014, p. 130), in the introduction for the special issue *Other Sensualities*, situates the haptic "as a specific set of material negotiations between bodies, spaces, and objects". I have drawn on *Strange Fruit's* organisational politics to demonstrate how *Strange Fruit* navigated these 'material negotiations', by situating the roundtable as an important entry point into unpacking *Strange Fruit's* organisational politics. In the next section, I will specifically address how *Strange Fruit's* diasporic visual aesthetic practices created a multi-sensory queer politics.

Diasporic Visual Aesthetic Practices

In this section, I explore *Strange Fruit's* diasporic visual aesthetic practices to illustrate how the organisation produced a multi-sensory queer existence. In doing so, I am particularly interested in how *Strange Fruit* strategically used cultural production to further the goals of the organisation. Colpani and Isenia (2018, p. 217) write, "Strange Fruit embraced culture in its broadest sense, integrating the cultural background of its members – religion, language, vernacular culture, and so forth – as a core aspect of its approach to homophobia and racism, sex work, and HIV/AIDS, amongst other issues". *Strange Fruit's* cultural production, from flyers to audio-visual work and film, offer insight into what media and

culture theorist Couze Venn (2010, p. 323) situates as "the registers that transcribe, or transcript, the making and remaking of identities in the context of plural belongings". I am particularly invested in probing how, for *Strange Fruit*, these sensorial registers articulated a queer diasporic aesthetics.

The Strange Fruit Machine

The collective had a specific arm for its visual productions ranging from posters to educational materials. The *Strange Fruit Machine,* the cultural production arm of the collective, was responsible for a wide range of diasporic and queer visual representations. In an unpublished chapter on the *Strange Fruit Machine*, which I found in the archives, Anne writes,

> The Strange Fruit Machine is birthed out of a shared interest in visibility; from the need for non-stereotypical, positive ideas from/about ourselves and our preferences, loves, passions, friendships and (safe)sex, where everyday representations with twisted, limited stereotypical ideas in the media are not taken as a point of departure but as a challenge. (Krul, n.d.; translation mine).

Anne's written analysis places an emphasis on creating visibility from a non-stereotypical place. What is particularly poignant in Anne's description, which takes on an important analytical tone here, is that the need for visibility is not just about representation. Rather, visibility is framed as a liberatory politics, in which 'love', 'passions', 'friendships and (safe)

sex' play an important part. These politics become 'alive' in the flyers designed by the *Strange Fruit Machine*. At the IISG archives, Anne and I came across a folder titled, 'card designs', which held about ten similar sized small flyers each with a different design. Below is an example of two flyers from this folder.
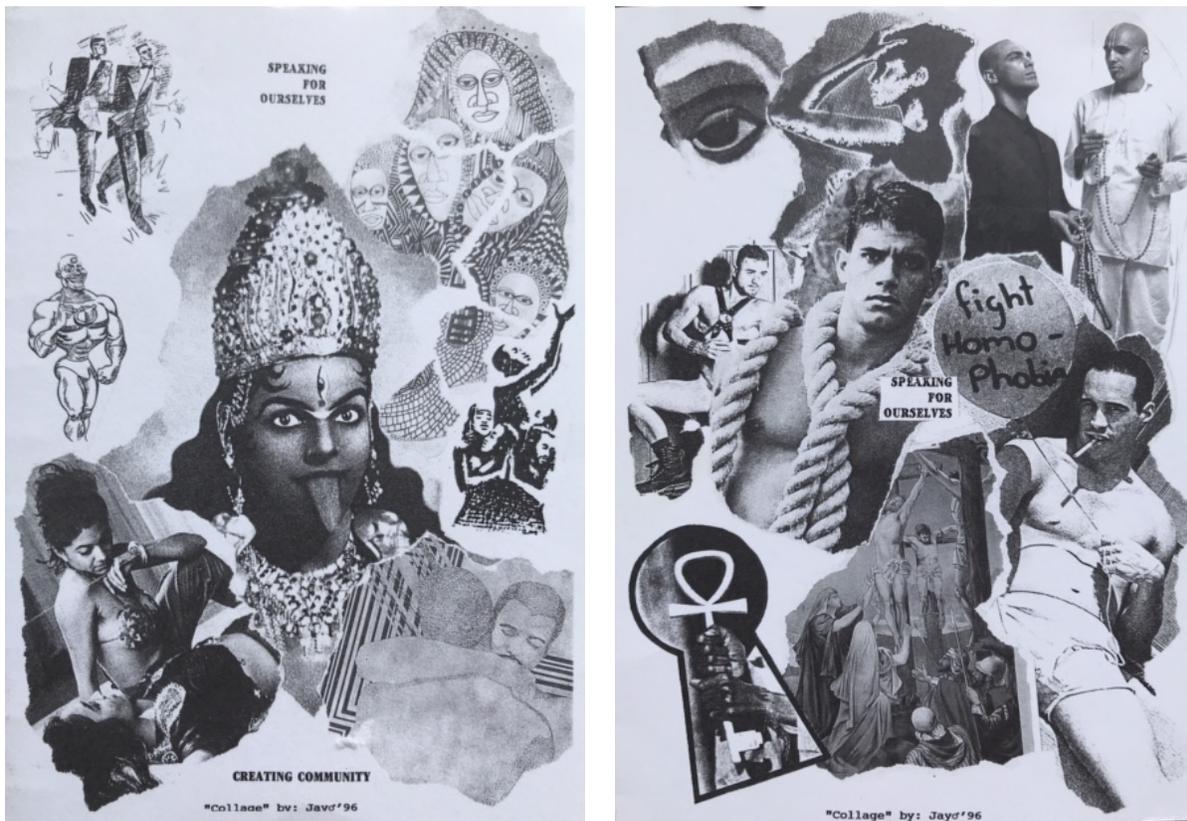
Image 17. Strange Fruit Flyers. Courtesy of IHLIA.

According to Sujata Moorti (2003, p. 365), "The transnational circuits of popular culture permits immigrants to construct a community of sentiment that is articulated in the domestic idiom, one that emphasizes kinship and affective relationships based on shared

affiliations and identifications". The collages create new connections and affiliations within a transnational framework. Take for instance, the still of Pratibha Parmar's *Khush* (1991) in the flyer on the left; The identification of kinship appears vital in this example. In *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora*, Gopinath (2018, p. 5) states: "queer visual aesthetic practices function simultaneously as archival practices that suggest alternative understandings of time, space, and relationality that are obscured within dominant history". Further, these aesthetic practices become queer archives producing "a queer regional imaginary" (Gopinath, 2018, p. 5). Gopinath's work is concerned with South-South relations and the visual aesthetics of queer South Asian artists. The framework of a "queer regional imaginary" is particularly useful to think through visual queer expressions within *Strange Fruit*. For example, the collaged images are a disruption of white heteronormative representations of queerness, and they combine visual imaginaries of intimacy, kinship, and desire. Layering the images which have been cut and pasted onto board or large paper, as a form of method, in itself, offers a conglomeration of histories, bodies, spiritualties, and sexualities.

The collages play with found and fragmented imagery thereby exploring different stories and symbolisms. I argue that these images offer a visual and sensorial interruption that ties together South-North diasporic notions of temporality, in which the personal and collective, loss and lust, and the regional and transnational emerge simultaneously. In lieu of a vast presence of queer of colours in the Dutch public domain, these collages function as a point of reference in what constitutes as queer diaspora. The written text in the images,

'*Speaking for Ourselves*' and '*Creating Community*' further encapsulates *Strange Fruit's* mission to create their own space.
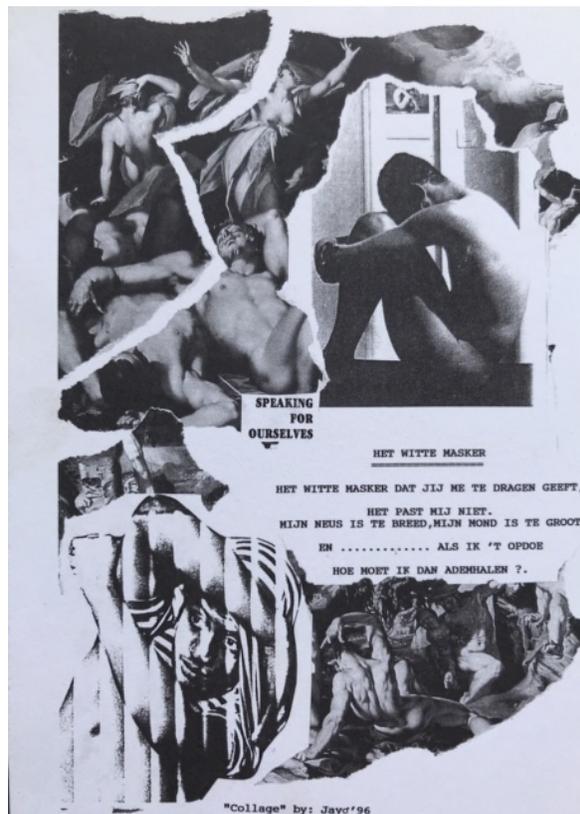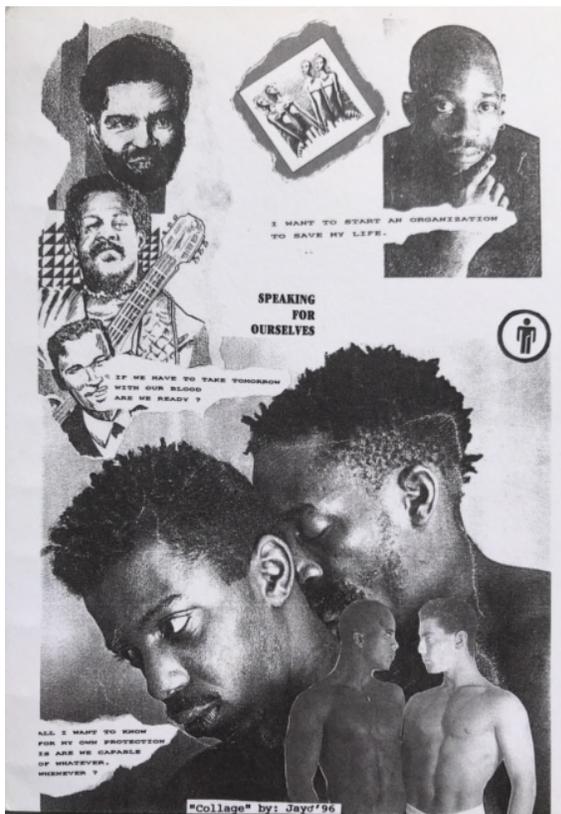
Image 18. Strange Fruit Flyers. Courtesy of IHLIA.

In the two collages above, a geographic mapping takes place through pulling in diasporic queer visual and sensorial references. The flyer on the right states in Dutch,

The white mask you have given me to wear, it does not fit me.
My Nose is too wide, my mouth is too big
And .... if I wear it
How would I breathe?

The emphasis on the breath is particularly visceral and poignant to me. I am reminded of the affective and political use of the word "breathe" here on the flyer and its implications for diasporic Black life. In response to the violent murder of Eric Garner on July 17, 2014, who repeated "I can't breathe" eleven times, ethnic studies scholar Ashon Crawley (2017, p. 2) writes, "If he could not breathe it was because of the violence of white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy". There is a possibility here to think more deeply about how the breath becomes part of the registers of diasporic visual aesthetics and circulation. The white mask, in the text on the flyer, might signify dominant white gay culture, which to many queers of colour is experienced as suffocating. The torn fragment of Abraham Bloemaert's *Apollo and Diana Punishing Niobe by Killing her Children* (1591) makes for a compelling commentary on the history of sexuality and whiteness. The flyer on the left includes an image of Essex Hemphill, Black American poet, essayist and performance artist, and references lines from his poem *For My Own Protection*, written directly in response to the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS in Black American gay communities. *I want to start an organization to save my life* — the first line of the poem is a call to Black men in the US

and beyond — to mobilize, to ensure they do not become *the living dead*. Joseph Beam, a close friend of Essex Hemphill's, writes in the first edited anthology of Black gay men's writing, *In the Life*, that the anthology is meant to be "the beginning of that organization". *Strange Fruit's* specific focus on HIV/AIDS, could be equally be read as a picking up on the call to organise from within a wider diasporic framework. The collective contributed to the making and conceptualisation of 'the First European Conference on HIV/AIDS for the Muslim and South Asian Communities' in September 1992 in London. *Strange Fruit* added the *Safer Sex Promotion* pillar to ensure young queers of colour would have access to Aids prevention, with an emphasis on behavioral changes related to safer sex (*Strange Fruit*, 1993). The images below are an important example of how *Strange Fruit* used sayings in *Sranang Tongo* combined with imagery to provide safer sex promotion. The use of fragments in these flyers take a deliberate approach to deploying a visual aesthetics and language situated outside of white Dutch queer frameworks of safer sex.

Image 19. Strange Fruit Flyers. Courtesy of IHLIA.

Cause of Death: Nothing

The focus on HIV/AIDS within *Strange Fruit* is noteworthy because of the pioneering work the collective undertook. One of the *Strange Fruit* members, Andre Reeder, who studied film in Amsterdam, produced a documentary *Aan Niets Overleden* (*Cause of Death: Nothing*) in 1996, of how Dutch Surinamese communities responded to the AIDS/HIV epidemic. The film provides an account of how AIDS affected lives by drawing on personal interviews and highlighting intimate interactions between HIV/AIDS victims and their families. Colpani and Isenia (2018, p. 221) set out Reeder's longstanding trajectory in terms of his anticolonial activist and intellectual work. I want to think about *Cause of Death:*

Nothing here, as an expression of queer diasporic visual aesthetics. Reeder made the documentary after his close friend Morales died, and intended to lift the taboo of HIV/AIDS within the Surinamese community. In the final scene, Reeder comes into the screen, visiting Morales' grave, and shares a personal reflection,

> Another friend of mine also had AIDS. I knew he had AIDS. One day his brother told me he died. Then it suddenly occurred to me to ask: did your brother die of AIDS? The brother hurried to say: No, No, No, he died of nothing. (*Aan Niets Overleden*, 1996; translation mine)

The last sentence holds the poetics and politics of the AIDS/HIV crisis. *He died of nothing* renders visible the invisibility and silence surrounding those who died with AIDS. Throughout the film, this *nothing* becomes filled with memories, reflections, fears, and hope. The documentary starts with a soundscape of *Evon Geffries & The Stand*, after which we see Reeder walk to the radio cassette deck to turn the music off. This small gesture marks a vibrational diasporic relationality between domestic spaces and sound systems like the cassette deck. Morales had given Reeder the record as a keepsake before he transitioned. Speaking into the camera, Reeder tells the viewer that they had planned to make the documentary together, but his friend was too sick. Reeder decided to photograph Morales instead and shows two photos, one of when he was still healthy and one two weeks before his death. While incredibly painful to watch it is important to note how rare visual documentation is of people of colour with HIV/AIDS. Reeder creates a multi-sensory and haptic archive of his own, in which "new modes of affiliation, relationality, and connection

between bodies, times, spaces, objects of study, and fields of thought" become apparent (Gopinath, 2018, p. 16). Interviewing multiple people from the Surinamese diaspora, Reeder weaves together spirituality, food practices, kinships and sound. We see the Surinamese-Hindustani family of Shanti Parag seated in the living room, eating *roti*, and engaging in conversation. After telling his family he had AIDS, Parag recalls his sister asking, *What do you need to eat? What do we need to do?* The camera lingers on Shanti's hands eating *masala* with *roti*. Intimacy here, after Gopinath (2018, p. 8), becomes about "micropolitical spaces of the body, the family, and the domestic as key spaces", especially within the wider context of coloniality. This provides not only an aesthetic point of reference, in which domestic places become subversive, but also speaks to how this portrayal of intimacy ruptures taboos on Aids. *Aan Niets Overleden* purposely includes a pedagogical approach, which becomes most visible through the inclusion of Marlene Ceder, an Afro-Surinamese, winti practitioner, who shares:

> You shouldn't think that if you believe in winti that you will never be sick, that winti will protect you. Winti does not cure Aids. And winti also does not warn you if other people have Aids. The best thing you can do is protecting yourself and others. The only way is: you always need to have a condom. People often say men need to take charge, but these times are over. Now everyone has to take charge of their own lives. This means that women also need to have condom with them. This means you can have pleasure, but you know you are protected. You don't bring yourself and others in dangers. You don't break the balance. If you break that, the winti's leave you too. (*Aan Niets Overleden*, 1996; translation mine)

Through referencing winti — a Creole Surinamese spiritual practice — as an entry point into larger questions of sex education and protection, Reeder deliberately offers new ways to engage regional spatiality. I think of regional spatiality as a diasporic imaginary as a site able to traverse the assumed separation of colony and metropole in the Netherlands. In *Cause of Death: Nothing,* this is done through layering of images, references, and stories that reside within a Surinamese diasporic space. I agree with Gopinath (2018, p. 76), that queerness becomes a "conduit for seeing and sensing the intimacies of these disparate stories". While the documentary moves away from focusing solely on queer participants, the intimate aesthetics, I argue, are part of a diasporic queer visual presence. This, to me, speaks to the need to foreground culture and cultural production as a means to unpack the complexities of diaspora, nation, sexuality, and race. I draw on a range of examples coming out of *Strange Fruit's* cultural production to think through the materiality of queer diaspora aesthetics. I specifically use this framework, introduced by Gayatri Gopinath (2018), because it leaves room for multiple aesthetic practices to be read as *diasporic*. While El-Tayeb (2011) draws on *creolité* as a framework through which to discuss the hybridity of *Strange Fruit,* I feel mindful of the critiques made by Caribbean scholars. What does it mean to approach and situate the work of *Strange Fruit* through this lens? And how does it interact with using a queer diasporic analysis? A comprehensive discussion of *creolité* falls outside of the scope of this project, however, I do want to briefly address what kind of potential this framework might have for *Strange Fruit*.

In *Creole in the Archive*, Roshini Kempadoo (2016) specifically uses creolisation as a means to render visible the (in)visible figure of Caribbean in its multiplicity. Kempadoo (2016, p. 40) describes the term *creole* as follows:

> It is an allusive term and association, slipping, sliding, eliding and morphing across contentious terrains of knowledge about people, ethnicities, languages, political ideologies, spaces, buildings and terrains.

Kempadoo (2016, p. 43) warrants against the overuse and generalisation of the use of *creolisation*. To apply more thoughtfulness to the use of the terms would inevitably necessitate a consideration of the convergence of temporality and the making of specific geographies and histories (Kempadoo, 2016). Most notably, creole practices emerged out of their relationality with the plantation space, and encapsulate language, culture and expression. Evoking and using the language of creolisation should therefore not be "a symbolic search for a person, community or thing" (Kempadoo, 2016, p. 34). Applying the framework of creolisation to multicultural and transnational spaces in Europe incurs the risk of flattening geographic specificity. This, however, does not mean that due to Dutch colonial history, forms of creolisation have not slipped into the Dutch diasporic imaginary. An example of this is the Afro-Caribbean practice of *toris,* a form of storytelling used frequently by the BMR movement, and *Strange Fruit*, to create a space in which new forms of conversation on feminism and queerness could emerge outside of a Western framework. The notion of *toris* is very much palpable in the cultural production of *Strange Fruit* as an experimental form of visual narration.

Conclusions

Strange Fruit's work over a period of twelve years provides an important cartography of its own within the history of queer of colour organising in Europe. *Strange Fruit* was a transnational hub and meeting point. Queer people of colour from Germany, the US, the UK, and South Africa joined *Strange Fruit* for short or longer periods of time. Needless to say, there are many stories to be told. In this chapter, I used Anne's perspectives and the archival materials as a guiding tool to think through the work of *Strange Fruit*. By drawing on the multi-sensory and haptic, the multiplicity of *Strange Fruit's* organising emerges. Moreover, what this chapter shows is the importance for developing analytical frameworks that account for the materiality and affectivity of archival research as well as the subsequent queer diasporic visuals they produce. Overall, I argue that it is this type of work that makes queer of colour critique and scholarship specific to its various local contexts. Instead of trying to encapsulate all the work that *Strange Fruit* did over the years, I have worked with themes and questions arising from interviews and materials to provide an affective and sensuous portrait of *Strange Fruit*, thereby paying specific attention to how this queer of colour collective navigated the Dutch political landscape. Finally, by foregrounding the archives and the ongoing questions on presence, access and visibility for *Strange Fruit's* collection, I have touched on two key themes, care and futurity, which will be discussed in the next two chapters.

PATHWAYS
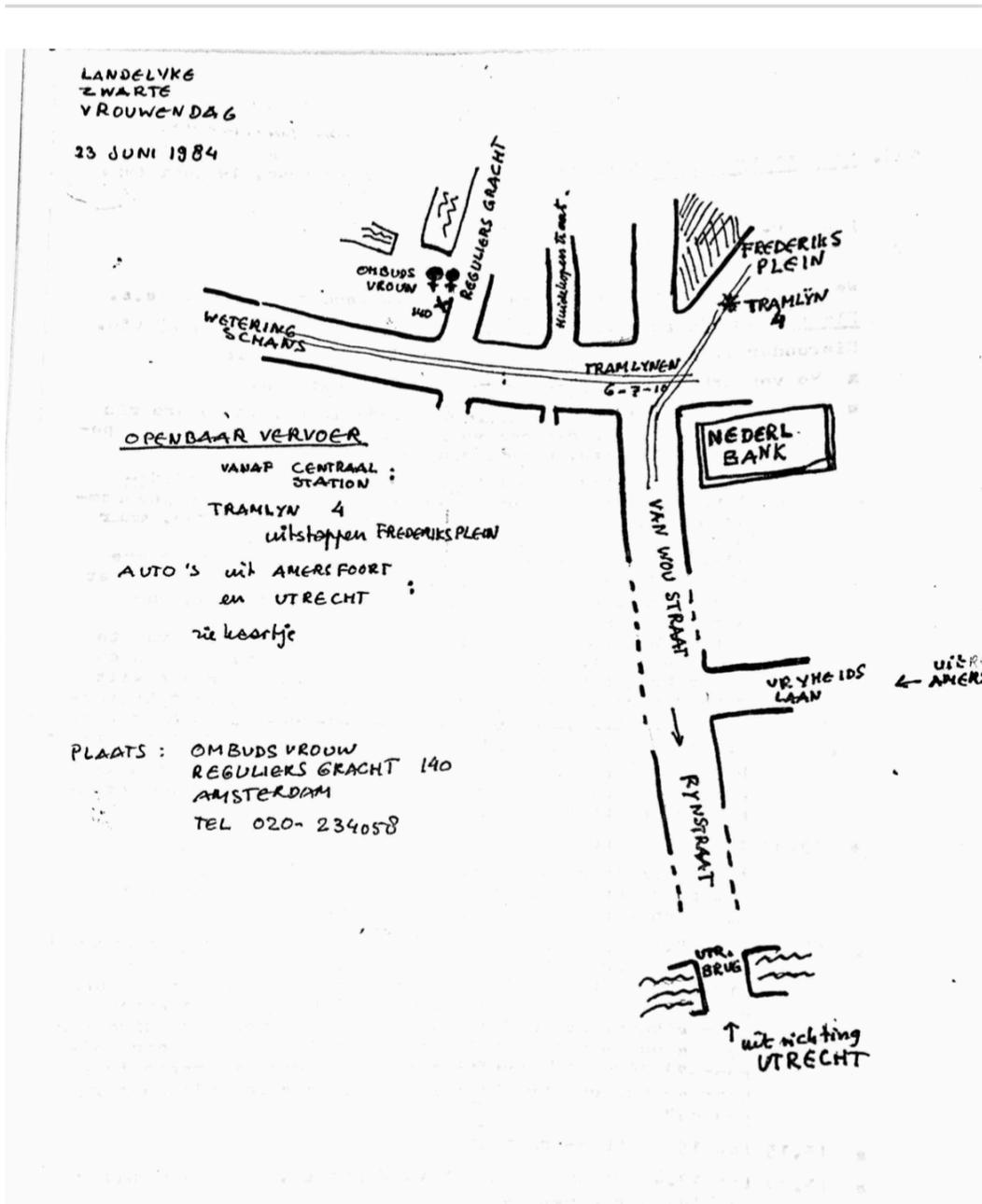
Image 20. Map for the National Black Women Days. Personal Archive Anne Krul. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of the author.
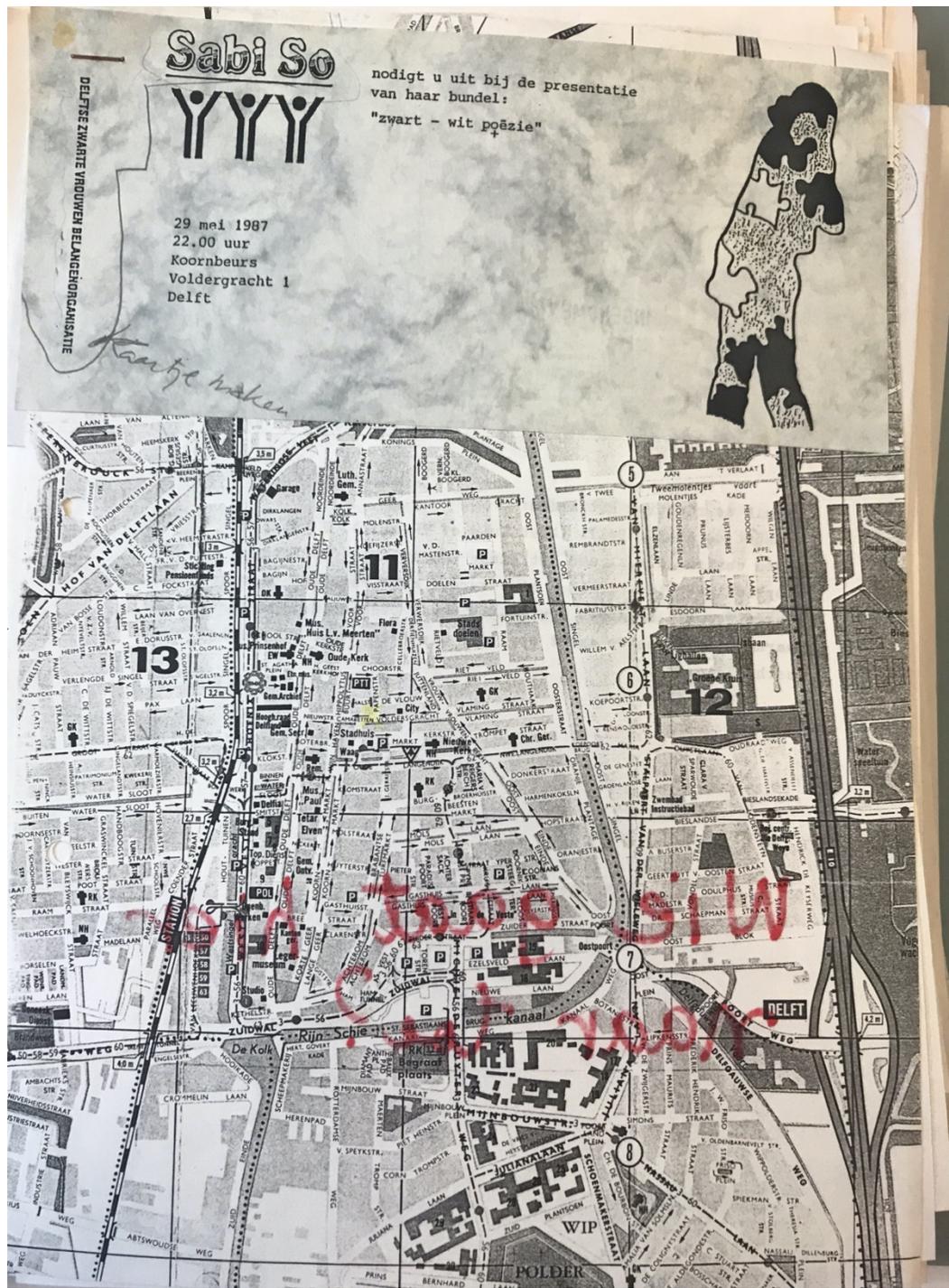
Image 21. City Map. Anne Krul's Personal Archives. IAV-Atria. Collection. Courtesy of the author.

De zender

Hoe kom je er:

Via trappenhuis en tussendeur (sleutel hangt in zendstudio naast de deur)
naar 3e verd. Recht tegenover trap WC in, ladder op, luik door kruipen
Gelyk rechts zitten stopluchtaltien voor licht.

Wat zie je:
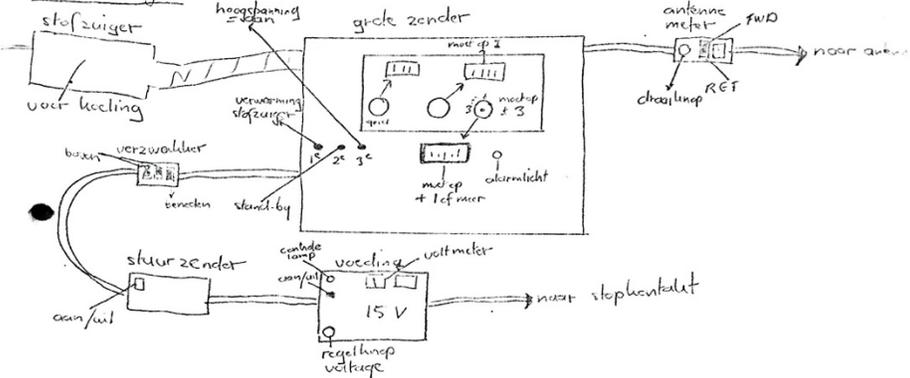
Wat moet je doen by aanzetten:

1. Kontroleren of alle verbindingen goed zitten, vooral letten op de stofzuigerstang
en het snoer naar de antenne.
2. De voeding aanzetten. Kyken op de voltmeter of deze 15 V is, anders bystellen met
de regelknop voltage
3. stuur zender aan zetten
   De verzwakker (zender) hoef je niet aan te zetten, staat altyd goed
4. 1e knop, verwarming/stofzuiger aanzetten, naar beneden.
   zo niet eerst zorgen dat dat gebeurt, naar beneden. Luisteren of de stofzuiger aanga.
5. 2e knop zender aanzetten, stand by
   15 minuten wachten!
6. 3e knop zender, hoogspanning, aanzetten. Gaat het alarm licht uit? By nee en
   de meters op de zender kontroleren en zorgen dat de middelste meter op +1 of niet staat,
   de antenne meter kontroleren: knop op FWD zetten en de meter op ∞ zetten, knop op REF
   zetten, de meter moet dan teruglopen naar minder dan 2 (zo niet zender uit, of uitzoeken
   Gaat als je alles gekontroleerd hebt het alarmlicht niet uit, dan de zender uitdoen en
   iemand erby halen.
7. By lang zenden af en toe naar boven om de meters te kontroleren.

Gaat er iets fundamenteel mis dan eerst de stekkers eruit trekken en dan
nergens aanzetten (zodat even van de spanning weg is)

By de zender hangt ook een gebruiks aanwyzing.

Uitzetten:

Chapter Six. Beyond the Archive: On Care, Ghosts and Weathering

I am between lives, time periods, now and there, and in between the void and expectation. I am extending my arms, my hands, my fingers – I trace lives and time, and then and now. There are light years between your arrival and mine, and yet we arrive here at the same time. I arrive curious, open, connected, and as vessel. You welcomed me, pulled me in, and I stayed, and I stayed. This is beyond what they call archive, this is beyond information – this is memory yet to come, this is making, dreaming, future, and the before before. This is before what we knew to be before. What did they make of us then? (Frank, 2019a)

Introduction

Throughout this project, I wrestled with notions of loss and abundance that are so clearly interwoven with the BMR movement and its archives. While the movement, as discussed in the previous chapters, was prolific, transnational and ground-breaking, there is an inevitable sense of loss tied to BMR movement work. This loss is tied to the limited knowledge production that came out of the BMR movement, the general lack of attention paid to the BMR archival collections, and the presence of loss within archival materials. In this chapter, I locate both loss and abundance as a site of haunting (Gordon, 2008) and as points of (re)orientation to the archive. Specifically, I am interested in the slippage between loss and abundance and what these two concepts tell us about working with and in the archive. My aim is not to resolve this sense of 'loss' or 'abundance' that are part of the BMR archives, but rather to think *with* their presence in the archives. The simultaneous existence of loss and abundance haunts what we think we know and can know about the archive. This chapter and the following chapter are both conceptualised as thematic chapters, in which I pick up on 'care' and 'futurity' as broader overarching themes relevant to this thesis. Specifically, these two chapters offer insight into theoretical and methodological approaches and implications of working with BMR archival materials. In this chapter, I argue that developing a radical praxis of care is necessary to attend to the ghosts within the BMR archives. I frame this radical praxis of care as a feminist and queer approach to working with archives. Care is a broadly discussed theme within feminist and queer literature. There is a vast body of scholarship that demonstrates the widely acknowledged

role of care, including and beyond ethics, within social, health and welfare work (Lewis, 1998; Gunaratnam and Lewis, 2001; Yeates, 2009; Erevelles, 2011; Benjamins and Whitman, 2014), education (Essed, 1991; Thompson, 1998), mothering (Collins, 2005), and food politics (Abbots, Lavis and Attala, 2015). I recognise the multiple ways in which care can be used and framed in working with archival collections and queer and feminist stories of colour. Feminist archive scholars Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor (2016) propose "radical empathy" as a necessary framework within archival relationships. This chapter weaves together several uses of care in relationship to the BMR archives, ghosts and haunting to think through the complexity of developing a care-based practice and approach in working with archives.

There is a constant reminder of loss. Lingering loudly. Loss can be abundantly wild. Pushing against folders, boxes, and spilling out and over and over. Necessarily disruptive. Ghostly entanglements. Loss can be quiet, too. Pulling you in. Demanding your attention. Not your regular archival quiet, but the quiet that makes you shift in your seat, clench your pencil, and purse your lips - kind of quiet.

The necessity of a politics of care is in no way limited to the concept of haunting. However, in terms of offering a theoretical and methodological analysis on care within and for BMR archives and stories, haunting provides an important point of reference. I argue that it is the subtle and not so subtle haunting of BMR archives and stories that pushed me towards care. I purposefully draw on the concept of 'haunting' (Gordon, 2008) here, to stay, as Donna Haraway (2016) states, "with the trouble". Gordon (2008, p. xvi) uses 'haunting' to "describe those singular yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done- with comes alive, when what's been in your blind spot comes into view". The 'haunting' that the work of the BMR movement and their archives do is temporal and alters our understanding of what becomes legible as archive. I recognise multiple forms of haunting at work in this thesis, which create a relationality in this thesis. The haunting of the 'ungeographic' within the archive (Chapter Three); the 'outsidership' of Black lesbian women (Chapter Four); and the haunting of queer diasporic cultural production (Chapter Five). I posit that the BMR movement is a site of haunting for white feminist and LGBTQ discourse. Gordon (2008, p. xvi) argues that haunting "is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly sometimes more obliquely". This "repressed or unresolved social violence" is not limited to the erasure of BMR feminism within white feminist discourse and archival practice. However, the racialised and gendered experiences of racism indexed by BMR women in interviews and archival materials should be read alongside the institutional neglect of feminist and LGBTQ archives. In this sense, BMR materials demand a different form of archival care. In this chapter, I work with the ghosts

in the BMR archives to navigate stories of 'weathering'. I use the idea of 'weathering' to speak both to the racialised experiences BMR women had and to the weathered state of BMR archival materials. I further draw on Gordon's (2008) notion of "Ghostly Matter" to grapple with the materiality of ghosts in the archive. Ghostly matter, here, is also about what Cifor (2015, p. 6) refers to as "bodily remains and stains in the archives". Attending to these forms of matter expand what we come to understand as archive. This chapter has three sections, which link the concepts of ghosts to weathering and finally to care. First, I will set out how and why the BMR archives are a ghostly archive. Second, I will draw on the concept of weathering to provide insight into how haunting manifests within the BMR archives. Finally, I will demonstrate how the notion of (other) mothering can be used in developing a radical praxis of care in working with archival materials and stories.

Ghostly Archives

Why does the BMR movement produce a feminist and queer haunting? Haunting provides a useful framework to critically think about the loss and abundance that shape the BMR archives and its stories. The BMR movement, as shown in previous chapters, is an important starting point to rethink not just existing archival structures but also how feminist stories are told. In stating their intention about writing about lesbian ghosts and haunting, Ilana Eloit and Clare Hemmings (2019, p. 352) state, "We wanted to read with those ghosts backwards and forwards in history, challenging what counts as feminist theorising from the perspective of those lesbian ghosts". Following Eloit and Hemmings

(2019), we might then ask what the BMR ghosts tell us about feminist theorising across temporalities? This question is directed towards undoing the idea that BMR feminism and movement work is solely rooted in critique or response to white feminism. How else might we read BMR feminism and its hauntings? I situate these modes of 'haunting' as waves and ripple effects that materialise within BMR stories and archives. Needless to say, these modes of haunting also manifest within the stories that BMR women told me. I pick up on these modes of haunting and the ghosts that reside within the BMR archives here because they are embedded in the very circular structure of the design of this thesis. I started this project with detailing how the geography and structures of the Amsterdam canals are a lingering colonial remnant. These very canals and histories of these water infrastructures bring forth a haunting. To read BMR collectives within these infrastructures has offered an important rupture of this landscape. In imagining BMR collectives and stories within this landscape, I purposefully tie together feminist, queer and colonial histories. However, as Ann Cvetkovich states, "LGBT archives are still not always actively considering their relation to the racialized histories of colonialism" (Arondekar *et al*., 2015, p. 228). In lieu of this critical reflection and accountability of archival institutions these histories become flattened and continue to belong to the 'Other'. In this regard, the haunting of the BMR movement is an important reckoning with what feminist and queer organising leaves behind and conjures. While a larger, in-depth engagement with the haunting of water and Dutch coloniality falls outside of the scope of my project, I want to return briefly to the use of circularity here to more broadly contextualise the discussion on haunting as a societal phenomenon. I do not aim to repair or address the haunting of the Dutch colonial past by

foregrounding BMR perspectives. Tracing haunting here is not about the recovery of the past, but rather about what role haunting plays in configuring the temporality of colonial history which is also feminist and queer. Reading haunting as a circular phenomenon within this project allows for a broader reading of how hauntings operate across multiple temporal and geographic sites. I see this circularity as a form of messy and uncontrolled rippling. My intent is therefore to demonstrate how haunting manifests within and beyond the BMR archives. The previous chapters have indicated the ways in which the BMR materials within the institutional framework constitute an actual archive as well as an archive made up of affect, the quotidian, the multi-sensory and imaginative. The 'ghosts' within the BMR archives index modes of haunting that are inherently part of the Dutch climate and shift our very understanding of what this climate is. In the following section, I will more closely examine how haunting manifests in the BMR archives.

Haunting in the Archive

Tracing haunting within the BMR archives expands the notion of the archive. Jacques Derrida, most notably in *Archive Fever* (1996), argued that archives are inevitably haunted by what they exclude.[43] Indeed, whatever is excluded within the archive presents a form of haunting. However, these exclusions take on multiple forms. Haunting, as suggested

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[43] I acknowledge the profound influence of Derrida on the field of archives, spectrality and haunting. In this project, I aim to frame my discussion of ghosts, haunting and spectrality through situating my analysis within a queer and feminist framework.

earlier, is not just about textuality and the ghosts that reside within written documents. Haunting within archival research is an affective experience. I incorporate my archival research notes to provide insight in these experiences.

I returned to Ashanti Magazine today. All the issues are collected in a thick red binder. Ashanti offers such rich political and cultural context to the BMR movement. The way that everyday experiences are narrated particularly speaks to the importance of BMR magazines as a site of knowledge production. There is something ghostly about these stories too. A whole army of BMR women who wrote, protested, danced, resisted, and gathered is forgotten. I wonder who or what are the ghosts of the BMR Movement? How do ghosts emerge in the archive? And how do we recognise, feel and touch their presence? What do these ghosts ask of us? In which ways do our relationships with ghosts get shaped over time? I don't have answers to these questions yet, but I feel

unsettled by this haunting – not just the indexing of racism and acts of violence – but by the apparent neglect of a more complex subjectivity of BMR women. Stories about sexual liberation, freedom and pleasure. Even the smallest intervention – how to enjoy sex, matters. Haunting is so much more expansive than forgetting or memory. (Frank, 2019d)

In my research note included above, I refer to *Ashanti* magazine, run predominantly by Hindustani and Afro-Surinamese women. The multiplicity of stories within the magazine hold ghosts and produce haunting within a specific geopolitical location. The haunting of these materials tells us something about the genealogy of BMR women, predominantly from Suriname, who document their experiences in the Netherlands. Whether these stories are about mothering, childcare, racism, world politics, sexuality and culture, they are written with an understanding that is framed beyond the Euro-American experience. Gordon (2008, p. 8) states, "the ghost is not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life". In this case, BMR materials such as *Ashanti* Magazine offer insight into "social life" that is inevitably intertwined with Dutch coloniality. The tracing of ghosts can thus lead to understanding the power systems embedded within the archive. Similarly, Maria del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (2013, p. 9) speak to how ghosts become a site to question the way that knowledge is formed:

(...) the ghost also questions the formation of knowledge itself and specifically invokes what is placed outside it, excluded from perception and, consequently, from both the archive as the depository of the sanctioned, acknowledged past and politics as the (re) imagined present and future.

The "sanctioned" and "acknowledged past and politics" of white feminist and LGBTQ archives does not typically recognise the importance of addressing histories of slavery and colonialism as pertinent to their collections. BMR ghosts do not just index how these histories are still alive but also continue to haunt the acceptable modes of knowledge production within the archive (see Chapter Tree and Chapter Five). Ghosts occur in many forms, shapes and ways. This is not just a methodological question — on how to account for and research ghosts — but also on how to acknowledge and present ghosts in our writing as a form of feminist and queer politics. This is crucial as not all ghosts provoke the same affective response (Blanco and Peeren, 2013, p. 35). Further, as Blanco and Peeren (2013, p. 1) describe, the role of ghosts in narratives is multifaceted and appear to us in a variety of modalities:

Ghosts, spirits, and specters have played vital roles in oral and written narratives throughout history and across cultures, appearing as anything from figments of the imagination, divine messengers, benign or exacting ancestors, and pesky otherworldly creatures populating particular loci to disturbing figures returned from the dead bent on exacting revenge, revealing hidden crimes, continuing a love affair or simply searching for a way to pass on.

I quote Blanco and Peeren at length here because they make clear how the figure of the ghost can emerge within the archives through oral, and written narratives, as well as through the imagination and ancestral messaging. I argue that ghosts tend to reside and communicate through the materiality and 'debris' of the archive. Steedman's (2011, p. 17) book *Dust* offers a compelling and slightly troubling description of a historian in a hotel room on an archival research journey contemplating how the dust of others leaves debris behind in beds, rooms and carpets. Becoming aware of the dust that gathers across time and place directs our attention to the materiality of the archive. The 'liveness' of the archive becomes apparent through these encounters. In the introduction of this project, I included images of coffee stains, scribbles in the margin of a document and a dried flower. The BMR archives and their materiality thus linger in the IAV collection. Motamedi Fraser (2012) does not speak of dust but of "rust", to characterise the archive she worked in. While working with the *Irradiant* archives, based on a story and correspondence from a tribesman in Iran located at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, Fraser describes when the archive started to 'materialise' through learning about the different papers and ink. Tending to the materiality of the archive allows for the noting of a ghostly presence we might have dismissed otherwise. The ghostly material traces can be subtle and hardly noticeable. A reminder that the 'liveness' of archives is tied to human and non-human worlds. The dried flower that still sticks to the page thirty years later tells us something about how the past is kept. The flower becomes a keeper of a past as much or perhaps even more than the written words on the page. The very presence of ghosts thus brings about questions on how

space and temporalities are constructed, what underlies the making of memory, and how we can attend to what the BMR movement has left behind.

Haunted Time

When I started working with the BMR collection, I realised that the ghosts I encountered shifted my understanding of temporality. The BMR Movement is often temporally marked by stories of 'arrival'.[44] This idea of arrival subsequently becomes equated with the start of BMR feminism within white feminist and queer discourse in the Netherlands. Haunting and ghosts within the archive disrupt these linear readings of time and trouble the very notion of arrival, or arriving somewhere, making the place from which one has come seem like nowhere or somewhere else, thus always other. As researchers working with archival materials and stories of the past, we do not just encounter haunting we also become enmeshed in the work that haunting does. I am reminded of Chude Sokei's (2008) "echo chamber" and how haunting reverberates across temporalities. In grappling with the notion of time in the archive, I do not seek to resolve factual questions about when the BMR movement started or to account a historical trajectory. However, I do use the notion of temporality to question why it matters to think about arrival, whether this is the arrival of BMR women or the arrival of materials in the archive. The presence of ghosts, as Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (2004, p. 63) states, "interrupt the presentness of the present". In other

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[44] Chapter Four details the 'arrival' stories of *Sister Outsider* to trouble static understanding of migration from the colony to the metropole.

words, BMR ghosts disrupt what we the think we know about the present. In a similar vein, Elizabeth Freeman (2010, p. 63), in the context of queer time and performativity, speaks to the *past*-ness of the past, which is opaque and illegible. Both these notions, the present becoming present and the past becoming past, speak to the temporal schema in which ghosts operate, which informs their emergence. The tension between past and present in archival research becomes generative when we direct our attention to the processes that underlie these dynamics. For instance, Freeman (2010, p. xi) conceptualises queer time through thinking "against the dominant arrangement of time and history". Moving away from linear and straight time in archive means interrogating who becomes invisible in these dominant arrangements. Freeman (2010, p. xi), tracks "nonsequential forms of time", which provides insight into that which becomes invisible, as subjects often reside within alternate structures and temporalities. This play with time, the deliberate slowness and attentiveness to historical moments in time that might be read as failed, requires a rethinking of what Freeman (2010, p. xxi) describes as "our way of becoming and being historical". Queer time and haunting in the archive, in this sense, is linked to non-narrativity (Cha, 2001). The presence of ghosts requires a "writing practice that stumbles over rather than smoothes out the uneven textures of raced and gendered memory" (Wong, 1994, p. 45). Stumbling over and with archival and interview material is a necessary slowing down. I think here too of the watery metaphors of waves and ripples, each moving to their own temporal schemas. In using the term 'temporal drag', Freeman (2010, p. 62), evokes "all the associations that the word "drag" has with retrogression, delay, and the pull of the past on the present". This 'dragging' of time is generative because the delays and interruptions of time offer insight

into how queer and feminist genealogies are made and remade. Any genealogy of the BMR movement is inevitably an unfinished and future orientated process that requires a close examination of the ghosts that are present in its retelling. I use the concept of weathering to explore how haunted time pulls on archival materials, which I will set out in the following sections.

Weathering

The climate weathers us — people, stories, and materials. I think of weathering here as an inevitable outcome of living in the Dutch climate. While, I will not be delving into the geology of the Netherlands, I will briefly note that there is an important material element to weathering in the Dutch context. About one-third of the country is actually below sea-level and the land is sinking. This framework is imperative to keep in mind whilst discussing how the social climate weathered the BMR movement. Arline Geronimus (1992) coined the term "weathering" to address the eroding effects of constant stress factors in the lives of Black people, and Black women specifically, as a result of racism in the U.S. In Chapter Four, I include an excerpt from Gloria Wekker noting the premature deaths of Black women in her life, "it is no coincidence that so many Black women die this early…" (2016b). Gloria's brought this up because I had asked her to tell me where she was in the 1980s. Narrating her experiences in the municipality, feminist and anti-racist work brought up several names of close Black women friends who died at a young age. In revisiting this narrative, I realised that Gloria's accounts of anti-racism, loss and premature death

constitute accounts of weathering. Weathering is durational in that it continues or even drags on. In this respect, weathering could be seen as a 'temporal drag' inherent to a racist climate (Freeman, 2010, p. 62). I pay specific attention to weathering as a site of knowledge production in my archival research. In my conceptualisation of weathering, I do not only consider the eroding effects of Dutch racism and coloniality, but also the breaking down of these structures. Within geology, it is understood that plants can cause weathering as their roots grow. For instance, plants or trees can grow inside rock cracks or under pavements making the cracks wider, eventually spitting the rock formation. I am interested in how the use of weathering in engaging with archival stories and narratives can transform the overall ecology. This breaking open of cracks also offers a possibility to incorporate and imagine pleasure, desire and intimacy as part of the concept of weathering. In this regard, these experiences do not become counter or opposing narratives, but become part of the overall BMR genealogy. The following section considers archival accounts to further contextualise what it means to trace weathering in the archives.

Weathered Stories and Traces

ONE. Inday Roquillo

> *In one of the Flamboyant newsletters I come across the story of Inday Roquillo. Her story is part of an article about Filipino women in the Netherlands. Inday Roquillo. Inday Roquillo. She lives in the Philippines until a cab driver from The Hague selects her from a catalogue filled with*

Filipina women. The words under her photo say something like she isn't picky and she just wants a man to love her. After she arrives in the Netherlands it turns out she isn't allowed to leave the home and the husband becomes abusive when she does. When Inday became pregnant and brought a daughter into the world, the baby was taken from her. The ex-wife of her husband took her baby away and Inday was only allowed to see her baby for feedings. Inday manages to run away to a women's shelter in The Hague. During her two weeks there she showed no signs that she was considering suicide. Still, three days after she left the shelter to repair her marriage, Inday died. The police report stated it was death by suicide. A couple of Filipina women who she confided in are sure that Inday didn't want to end her life. They wonder whether Inday was forced to "kill herself".
(Flamboyant, 1986; translation mine)

I offer Inday's story here to think through how we encounter and engage weathering in the archives. Inday's story haunts and brings about questions about violence and documentation in the archive. I encounter Inday's story in a BMR newsletter in a white feminist archive. Does this change the conditions of the documentation of violence? We don't know much else about Inday, and it is doubtful if her case was ever investigated, even though the broader Filipino community advocated for this. The organisation *Bahay Pilipina* was specifically set up to learn more about Filipina women's needs in the Netherlands and reported on their events and conferences in the *Flamboyant* newsletter. Inday's story is without doubt one of many stories that index violence, death and the disappearance of migrant women. In 1986, when the story was included in the *Flamboyant* newsletter, small organisations such as *Bahay Pilipina* were doing invaluable work to cater to the specific

needs of Filipina women in the Netherlands. The question of so-called 'mail-order' brides

was an important point of action for the organisation. The article in *Flamboyant* notes that

women were lured to the Netherlands under false pretences and forced into sex work.

While I am not able to provide a more cohesive reading of BMR women and trafficking

practices, it is important to recognise that the BMR movement does comprise of these

stories. This is critical because it shifts our perception of who or what the BMR movement

was and the different ways that women arrived in the Netherlands. Needless to say, this

group of women was particularly vulnerable. *Bahay Pilipina* recognised the necessity of

bringing Filipina women together, for instance, by setting up a series of conversations with

Philippian nurses and midwives who came to the Netherlands as migrant labourers in the

1960s. These histories of different BMR groups are important because they reveal the

infrastructures that organisations such as *Bahay Pilipina* put in place in lieu of adequate

government support. In situating Inday's story as a weathered account, I am mindful of the

implications of doing so. What questions do I ask of Inday's story? I draw here from Tiffany

Page's (2017) work on vulnerable writing in the context of stories of self-immolation of

refugees and the violence that underlies their journeys. Incorporating a vulnerable writing

practice is imperative in recounting weathered narratives from the archive. Page (2017)

draws on global media archives to trace how these narratives disrupt dominant modes of

time and linearity. In doing so, Page (2017, p. 16) moves away from the spectacle of self-

immolation through looking at "the layers of stories that come to be transposed unevenly

across different bodies and within different locations and conditions". In this regard, the

spectacle does not become the focal point in the story. Inday's story brings together the

complex multi-existent socio-economic and political conditions in the Philippines and the Netherlands that informed *her* presence in the Netherlands. What we know about Inday remains limited to one short article in the *Flamboyant* newsletter. Inday's experience as a migrant in the Netherlands is marked by abuse, safe houses, pregnancy, birth and death. We have no information about Inday's life before she emerges in the article as a 'post-order bride'. It is challenging to not read weathering through the prism of spectrality in this respect. Even though the story is narrated by BMR women in a BMR magazine, the focal point in Inday's story is about the violence she experienced in the Netherlands. In telling vulnerable stories, Page (2017, p. 18) suggests that "it can help to make visible the discontinuities and instabilities of narratives that change meaning when approached at varying tempos, when the story is moved not only forwards but also backwards, and slowed and quickened within each space". The idea of moving stories not only forward but also backward is generative as it proposes a new way to engage with archival materials. The idea of tempo, put forward by Page (2017), allows us to see that narratives play out in different tempos, irrespective of the tempos we, as witnesses might apply to them. How can we make visible the different tempos in Inday's story? And how do I shift with different tempos and time zones without further entrapping Inday's story? Slowing down the tempo with Inday's story means embracing the limits of knowing while working with what we do know. At the same, going backward does not mean we can actually go back. Page (2017, p. 18) states this aptly through how embracing the "epistemological uncertainties" that are part of how stories are told, and acknowledging how "the story remains open, incomplete and discordant in its layers". We can incorporate backward movements and indeed, as Freeman

(2010) suggests, 'drag' time, without being orientated to a narrow definition and place that we call 'back'. In returning to Inday's story, I do not aim to go back to the spectacle of her unknown death or to resolve how she died. Peeling away the layers of this story means slowing down the tempo in which it is told. In changing the tempo of the story, the spectral markers through which the story is told also shift.

The relationality between spectacle and textuality is imperative to consider in Inday's story. Scholars who look at textuality as a form of haunting argue that it's not merely about who produced the text and when, but that the actual text and its traces produce forms of haunting (Wolfreys, 2013, p. 72). Re-reading this very short article about Inday makes me aware that the haunting is not necessarily in the unknown or unresolved nature of her death. The haunting resides in what the text does to us. The haunting in the text continue to unsettle. In this respect, our experience of reading texts relies on blurring "categories such as the real or imaginary" (p. 73). In discerning the space between the real and the imaginary we are not searching to validate these categories within the story, but rather to look more closely at how haunting, textuality and time are intertwined. Weathering, in this respect, speaks to the climate and overall ecology in which these stories of BMR women are set. The limitation of knowing and the impossibility of going back makes time come to a halt. I grappled with the sense that reproducing Inday's narrative here would hold the narrative still and trapped in time. I do not work with, nor did I have access to any of the official documentation that might have detailed the specifics of Inday's case. Instead, I encountered Inday's story because *Flamboyant* felt that documenting stories like Inday's

would bring to light the experiences of women lured to the Netherlands under false pretences. There is a sense of care woven into *Flamboyant*'s decision to include Inday's story in the publication. Working with archival snippets and scraps of the BMR archives does not however alter that this story but it does document its violence. It asks us to consider what we make of the documentation of violence and whether we situate these forms of documentation as still or closed or over. In other words, what happens when we do not allow these stories to exceed their documentation? The shifting of the tempo in reading Inday's story allows for the possibility of a different kind of existence.

Annotating the article holding Inday's story offers a way to shift the way we think about indexing and cataloguing weathered narratives. Juxtaposing Inday's story with the stories of well-known BMR women incorporated in this thesis produces a necessary tension. In working with the BMR archival materials, I had to confront my own pull towards materials of women I either already knew or had interviewed already. I am thus interested in how weathering as a methodological framework calls us to work. Attending to the figures in the archive that are unknown and in flight brings about important conversations on the intimacies we create in the archives. I argue that tracing weathering is an intimate durational practice in archival research. Spending time with unknown and fugitive figures is not about a factual exchange or an endeavour to verify their stories. Using weathering as a methodological approach to trace and tell narratives forces us to abandon our attachment to the archive proper and dwell instead in the limitations of knowing, lean into possibilities of the uncertain and tune into registers previously unimaginable.

TWO. Tania's Garden

Tania Leon's personal files include a folder about her garden. In the inventory, the folder is titled: "Documents concerning her garden in the Bijenpark in the Eendrachtspolder. 1993-1996". The blue folder is thin and only holds two documents. The first is a note, perhaps written by the archivist or whoever disclosed Tania's materials. The document is handwritten and the heading reads, "Gardening Tania Leon". The note states that in the course of 1993, Tania experienced a narrowing of the coronary arteries as a result of chemo after her breast amputation (in 1990). Eventually she had to reduce her teaching (at the Women's Vocational School in Amsterdam) to two days. She decided in her (forced) free time to focus on gardening and bought a garden plot in the "Bijenpark" (Amsterdam). The other note is from the board of Zami, Flamboyant's successor, sending Tania well wishes and gifting her with a gardening book. (Leon, 1993–1996)

The handwritten note about Tania offers no mention of the writer. I read the note several times to discern why exactly it bothered me. There is typically a lack of annotation, in my experience, in archival research. Annotation might be limited to a few descriptive words in the inventory or the digital catalogue, but hardly have I come across notes to provide context or details to existing folders. The note is distinctly distant and yet extremely

personal. Tania's presence, health and body are narrated by an anonymous third person. This materiality of Tania's body and pain becomes (involuntarily) part of the archive here. Archives do not just hold traces and materials of lives but also enact and produce a sense of 'liveness'. In Chapter Five, I discussed the politics of 'liveness' in relation to the multi-sensory. The annotation in Tania's personal archive here speaks to materiality and embodiment as a mode of 'liveness'. These questions of 'liveness' speak to the on-going debates about the conflictual relationship between new materialism and feminist studies. Scholars engaging with new materialism critique feminist scholarship for its "flight from the material" (Alaimo and Hekman, 2009, p. 3). At the same time, there is an important pushback to this materialist stance by scholars (Ahmed, 2008; Bruining, 2013), who argue that feminism never moved away from the material. I do not seek to necessarily resolve or build on this theoretical debate, but I am invested in thinking about what this implies for feminist and queer of colour archival collections. In my view, the material has always been an important part of queer and feminist of colour writing. The role of nature, spirituality, the duality and multiplicity of situating bodies and embodiment within Black, women of colour, indigenous, trans - and disability feminism (Anzaldúa, 1987; Raha, 2017; Schalk, 2018) speak to a long genealogy of how bodies are living and real. In response to the critiques made by scholars working on new materialism, Ahmed (2008, p. 36) writes, "In claiming to return to matter, we might then be losing sight of how matter matters in different ways, for different feminisms, over time". Indeed, "matter matters in different ways" depending on who engages, theorises, critiques or researches matter. Therefore, I do not centre the question on why 'liveness' matters and to whom. Rather, I wonder what it

means to come back to my earlier discussed methodology here on listening, orientation and mapping to see where 'liveness' and materiality in the archive might take us. I thus do not posit a return to the matter, but propose to tune into the continuous haunting that the material does.

Circling back to Tania's garden folder, I am struck by how the note brings Tania's bodily presence into the blue archival folder. As I engage with the text, scan the document and jot down notes in my archival research notebook, I become aware that the note provides a timeline. Anthropologist Sarah Lochlann Jain (2007) uses the concept of "living in prognosis" to explore the relation to time. Jain (2007, pp. 80–81) writes, "living in prognosis severs the idea of a time line and all the usual ways that one orients oneself in time: one's age, generation, and stage in the assumed life span". Within this notion of the "assumed life span", Lochlann Jain (2007, p. 81) states, "This relation to time makes death central to life in prognosis, death as an active loss – as if there were some right to a lifespan – rather than just something that happens to everybody at the end of life". Working with Tania's materials after she died, and examining what the note details in terms of her medical history, seems to chart a prognosis timeline for Tania. The note quite clinically details Tania's turn to gardening through the bodily markers of arteries, chemo and a breast amputation. The distant tone I picked up on, which speaks to how we are affected by materiality in the archive, feels like a deliberate flight away from the real and lived body. It matters that Tania Leon was a South African queer woman and that her archival materials are part of a white feminist archive. I situate this encounter as a weathered account because

of what it tells us about the premature deaths of BMR women. Theorising crip-of-colour critique, Jina Kim (2017) draws on Lorde's work on the interconnectedness between cancer and racial justice as a point of entry in bringing together women of colour/queer of colour and disability studies. Kim (2017, n.p.) states,

> For Lorde, cancer is not an individual property limited to and contained by her body's boundaries, but an extension of the state-sanctioned and extralegal systems that seek to delimit, contain, and exploit black life. This, to me, is a critical disability methodology: a mode of analysis that urges us to hold racism, illness and disability together, to see them as antagonists in a shared struggle, and to generate a poetics of survival from that nexus.

In this poignant quote, Kim (2017, n.p.) draws on Lorde to make a set of larger points about the weathering effects of "racism, illness and disability". This brings me back to the earlier referenced conversation I had with Gloria Wekker about the premature deaths of Black women in her circle of friends. Gloria's words and affective response to speaking about the women who had died stayed with me in the writing process. In our conversation, Gloria refers to herself as the "last Mohican", as one of the few Black women left behind. As Gunaratnam (2014, p. 84) explains, "racism's paranoia, socially produced and culturally variable, is not annexed from disease". Listening to the reverberation of Gloria's words, I come back to the importance of understanding weathering as a mode of critical interrogation of the systems of power that underlie the Dutch racist climate. For Gloria, this is inherently about embodiment and how race, illness and death contour the stories coming out of the BMR movement. Time, in Gloria's statement, is marked by being one of

the last Black women left. To me, this is not about chronicling linear time, but about Gloria making sense of how time has shifted her orientation to the world due to these premature deaths and her own (existing) life. Kim's (2017) crip-of-colour critique becomes particularly valuable here in terms thinking towards a poetics of survival from a place that understands time to be constructed through the interconnectedness between racism, illness and disability. Finally, contrasting the archival annotation and Gloria's response to the Black women dying at a young age demonstrates how the materiality of living and dying resonates and therefore matters differently depending on the narrator.

In spending time with Tania's personal archives and this note in particular, I specifically wanted to analyse why this note was distressing. Allowing for affective engagements with materials in the archive to become a central part of the research is imperative. In reflection on practice on theory in relation to archival research, Ann Cvetokovich (2015, p. 224) states that "we can't know what a radical or queer archive is in theory and instead need to work it out in practice". I do this by spending time with my own affective responses to the materials. For me, another form of archival practice is using these affective investments to generate relationalities across archival materials that might steer us into other ways of thinking about knowledge production. The folder on Tania's garden does not hold any images of the garden or any personal reflections on gardening. However, when I looked through the other folders and read through typed out interviews conducted with Tania, I noticed the recurring theme of land and nature. In one of these interviews, for the magazine *Vrij Nederland* published in 1986, Tania is interviewed with her white partner at the time

about their trip to South Africa. Tania had not been back since she had left and the interviewer asks her what makes her decide to visit again,

> I wanted to see my family, but equally important, I wanted to see my country. I longed to see those mountains and the Karoo and Wellington, and those things, I just wanted to see it again, and just to taste it again. (Leon, n.d.; translation mine)

In this short excerpt, Tania describes a sense of diasporic longing through a multi-sensory experience. Avtar Brah (1996, pp. 188–189) speaks to the possibility of home connoting the "lived experience of locality", by pointing to the "sounds and smells" or the "varying experiences of the pains and pleasures". This encompassing sense of locality pushes us to untangle what it means to be part of the climate across temporalities and geographies. In expanding the imaginary of the archive, I follow E. Cram (2016 p. 113), who states that "queering archives beyond legible LGBTQ spaces is an important task to the rhetorical history of gender and sexuality". In this respect, queering the archive becomes about the question, "what forms of desire are generated in landscapes beyond the already legible and metropolitan archive?" (p. 113). Weathering thus offers a different geographic imaginary that takes us outside of the confines of the official archives. Herein lies another mode of annotating and augmenting the archive. Tania's personal archive hold another typed out interview conducted for a research report of two students studying migration. The conversation was held in 1993 and speaks to Tania's reading of questions of land and home. I include the following two excerpts to provide insight into the conversation.

I.m: [...] How long have you been here? [In the Netherlands]

TL: 19 and a half years, in July it will be 20 years

I.m: And what is the reason you left?

TL: Sometimes when you made important decisions, the reason why you leave only becomes clear later. [...] There was a pull, unrest, I felt like, "This country is too small for me".

I.m: But the country is big right, are you from a city or village?

TL: Yes, South Africa is a geographically big world, definitely very big. [...] But the country was too small for my mind. I had the feeling, "I can't grow here".

I.m: And coming back to what you said about South Africa: is the country not too small here?

TL: Yes and no. The climate is terrible, and it's small but in 3 hours you can be in the Ardennen or Paris. It is small, and the nature is not spectacular, but the climate is very terrible...

I.m: Does it bother you?

TL: Yes, I miss the mountains. You know, the Dutch think they have created the whole world, with *dijken en polders* and stuff. I always say: "They should have ravines here then they would be more modest, they would have more respect." [...] I told this to a friend from America, and do you know what she said? "Oh, it doesn't matter, because they would cut off the mountains and put them in the ravines, right". (Leon, 1993; translation mine)

What stands about these extracts is how Tania situates herself vis-à-vis the Netherlands and South Africa. I did not conduct these interviews, but my sense is that the interviewer and Tania both had different ideas and connotations of how longing, belonging and home were configured through the land. In the middle of the interview, Tania was asked when she would return to South Africa and she states that she would not be returning. In Tania's engagement with these questions, I do not read a longing for an idyllic sense of home or even landscape, but rather a more complex engagement with space and place. Tania pushes against literal understandings of geography and instead offers a sensorial engagement with the notion of land. Tania's words offer a palpable intimacy with the land and point to the multiple ways that notions of home lure, but also haunt. Tania's personal materials hold several ghosts within the weathered narratives on illness, health and land. In charting the presence of ghosts in these narratives, I follow Blanco and Peeren (2013, p. 2) in understanding that ghosts can be an actuality, metaphor and concept. There is something necessarily ghostly and haunting about the ways in which the South African and Dutch landscape come together here.

Inday and Tania's archival materials invite a speculative reading of weathering. I draw on Hartman's (2008) well-known essay *Venus in Two Acts*, in which she proposes the idea of "critical fabulation" as a form of working with archives. Hartman brings together archival material on the deaths of two young African girls who were violently killed in the Middle Passage. Engaging with official documents and records detailing these brutalities, Hartman

(2008, p. 2) writes, "The archive is, in this case, a death sentence, a tomb, a display of the violated body". Grappling with the violence in the archive and the violence in the limitations of the archive, Hartman (2008, p. 11) states that,

> By advancing a series of speculative arguments and exploiting the capacities of the subjunctive (a grammatical mood that expresses doubts, wishes, and possibilities), in fashioning a narrative, which is based upon archival research, and by that I mean a critical reading of the archive that mimes the figurative dimensions of history, I intended both to tell an impossible story and to amplify the impossibility of its telling.

In offering this critical reading of the archive, Hartman uses a method called "critical fabulation", which is a speculative play with the basic elements of a story. I read Hartman's approach to the archive as an important intervention that simultaneously pushes against the limits of the archive and re-arranges the structure of how stories within the archive can be told and (re)imagined. By tuning into the fictive as narrator accounts of violence become unsettled. By this I mean that, analysing stories and accounts of violence should not solely become about restoration or reparation. Rather, we can allow these accounts to orientate us. I recognise that Hartman very specifically offers this method of "critical fabulation" in reference to Black American history, and I do not seek to argue that this concept can be readily applied to reading forms of violence in the archive that emerge from different histories of empire. Yet, I suggest that thinking with Hartman's "critical fabulation" in conducting archival research offers important insight into the ways in which we narrate and use scatters and fragments of archival materials. By creating new relationalities

between Tania's archival materials, I am not moving away or trying to escape from the inherent violence in dealing with racism, illness and disability. However, the scatters and fragments in Tania's archives speaking to the role of nature and land, offer another possibility to read the archive beyond the institution. In the following section, I will further unpack the praxis of archival care that I began to set out in working with Inday and Tania's stories.

Care as Radical Archival Praxis

Stories of weathering, haunting and the presence of ghosts demand a specific form or care. I wish to amplify questions around care by taking a step outside of archival materials to ask: What does it mean to care for the archive? What forms of care are needed? Does the futurity of the archive rely on care? Care has been theorised from many perspectives, which demonstrates the need to think critically about how care is used in this project. My argument in this chapter points to the tension that exists between care and the lack thereof for archival collections. I am interested in the trouble this tension causes and how it might be generative. Often care is understood within the relational schema of the caregiver and care-receiver. However, this relationality is often romanticised when it comes to queer and feminist archival practices. Therefore, I explore the notion of (other) mothering as a way to conceptualise care.

(other) mothering

The haunting that the BMR movement and archives do brings up complicated questions about care. I am ambivalent about the use of the concept of care in relation to archival research because 'care' has such broad connotations and implications depending on the stakeholders involved. Exploring care as a radical praxis, I take into account the racialised dynamics that are at play for queer and feminist of colour materials within white feminist and LGBTQ institutional archives. I draw from Black feminist and queer scholarships to consider whether a form of 'mothering' (Anim-Addo, 2014; Gumbs, Martens and Williams, 2016) is possible for the BMR archives and how this translates into a radical archival practice rooted in care. Joan Anim-Addo (2014, p. 46) proposes the framework of (other) mothering as a "strategy to support a Black British feminist re-visioning". This necessary re-visioning is related to the presence and absence that permeates Black British feminist activism and discourse. Black British feminism is rooted within systems of care and kinship and these models, amongst others documented in magazines from the 1980s, provide an important blueprint for a continued politics of care. This maternal intervention is not just about charting a genealogy of Black British feminism and challenging the erasure of Black British feminism within the academy, but also about how the presence of Black British feminism is nurtured (Anim-Addo, 2014). In so doing, Anim-Addo (2014) makes use of Françoise Lionnet's (1991) cultural 'mettisage' to resituate and frame autobiographical stories of Black feminists as a mode of recuperation of Black British feminist history. Similar to Black British history, and arguably even more so, BMR feminism is not part of feminist public history or

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academic knowledge production. Further, within present-day feminist debates, BMR feminism is hardly referenced as a point of departure for an anti-racist and anti-sexist politics of care. Comparable to Anim-Addo's (2014) approach, I draw on BMR magazines and interviews to discern what a politics of care looked like for BMR feminists. BMR magazines and newsletters were used as an educational platform. Considering that many BMR women had recently migrated to the Netherlands, these magazines were a good way to reach a wide range of BMR women. For instance, *Ashanti* magazine centred an educational feminist approaches particularly when it came to sexuality, body issues, relationships, and political activism. *Ashanti* actively addresses shame and taboos around sex — both in relation to having it and enjoying it — being gay or lesbian, menstruating and cultural differences. The magazine also takes a purposefully intergenerational approach by interviewing elders in the Surinamese community about their experiences. One of the editorials reads, "We must not forget our elders, who work the hardest and who, without ever hearing about the word feminism, are feminists of the first hour" (*Ashanti*, 1981, p. 2). Here the geopolitical underpinnings of care become evident as part of a diasporic feminism.
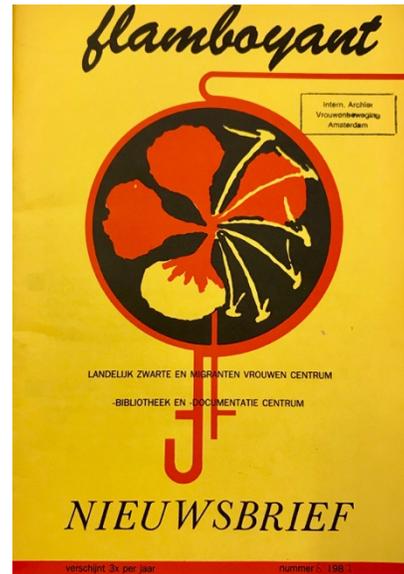
Image 23. Cover of Ashanti and the Flamboyant Newsletter. Courtesy of the author.

A similar observation about care as a mode of (other) mothering and political organising is evident in the stories from Ernestine Comvalius and Ida Does. I spoke with Ernestine and Ida in 2016 at Ida's office in The Hague. Both women are active in the cultural sector and were part of various Surinamese student and resistance organisations. Surinamese women started organising as early as 1975, with the *Stichting Belangenbehartiging Surinaamse vrouwen* (Foundation Advocacy Surinamese women) (Botman, Jouwe and Wekker, 2001, p. 100). Since Ernestine and Ida were lifelong friends and organised together, it made sense to do a dual interview. This allowed for a rich interaction, in which their friendship and intimacy was palpable. They finished each other sentences; recollected old protest songs; and offered contrasting viewpoints. On the tape, just before I started asking questions, Ida jokingly laughed that they were used to setting the agenda and then Ernestine told me to start the interview. This moment set the tone for the rest of the conversation. Ernestine

and Ida shared they met during the 1970s in Utrecht. Their political organising was informed by the aftermath of the military coup in Suriname in the 1980s and the anti-racist movement in the Netherlands. In the following excerpt, I ask Ernestine and Ida to share more about their organisational structures.

Chandra: Where did most of the organising take place? Informal spaces or … ?

Ernestine: In a small room in my home, we made stencils. A big stencil machine standing there. I later asked my elder daughter, because she was raised like that, with newspapers being made in the front room sometimes... (laughter) Later, I asked her like how did you experience this, I didn't get a conclusive answer, but it would have been... you do need to constantly share... your mother or parents.

Ida: But why did you ask whether we had access to space?

Chandra: I was curious because I understand during this time there was little funding available for organisations to have a permanent place.

Ernestine: So, we were held by the people we met in different neighbourhoods, who sympathised with us, and they paid for stuff and the sales [of papers]. Yes, and that allowed us to be independent and we didn't have to be accountable to whoever, the whole funding world is terrible, later we had to... And much later, after 1989, just like the Black Panthers, in addition to the struggle they fought against the police and the system, they were also involved with strengthening their own community. They made sure there was bread and schools, and I don't know how Ida would formulate it, but that's how I would formulate it. We felt responsible for the lives of our community. So when there was a plane crash in 1989, where 200 ... so many... and all Surinamese people, it happened in Suriname, but they would all be coming

back to the Netherlands and we felt like the Dutch government didn't do enough, so we set up (a) Solidarity Committee (on) 7 June. (Comvalius and Does, 2016; translation mine)

There are multiple narrative threads that come together in the excerpt above. I purposefully include a longer section of the interview because it reflects the dynamic of our conversation. Ida's follow up question about space allows me to further clarify. I use Ernestine's accounts here to show how a practice of (other) mothering was ingrained in the organisational work. Ernestine's experiences speak to balance of activist work and motherhood. Moments later in the interview, Ernestine says, "We felt responsible for the lives of our community". Inspired by the Black Panthers, Ernestine and Ida purposefully focused on strengthening the Surinamese community, to which they give an example with the tragic plane crash in Suriname. I was struck by how this multi-layered account brought together mothering and community work. The transition from the interior home space, a room with a big stencil machine, to going into the neighbourhoods shows how central (othering) mothering was. Ernestine was a single mother during this time, and I do not want to romanticise these iterations of mothering. However, my overall objective here is to read mothering outside of white heteronormative patriarchal constructions of 'mother'. What Ernestine's account shows, by reflecting back on her daughter's experiences, is that mothering brings about questions of temporality. An (other) mothering praxis is thus also geared toward the future collective wellbeing of the community.

These political modes of organising should be placed and understood within the wider framework of the contested histories of slavery and colonialism that underlie (other) mothering. Ernestine's account speaks to the need to organise for the Surinamese community impacted by the tragic plane crash. The temporal and geographic underpinnings of (other) mothering become clear here. Caribbean literary scholar Suzanne Scafe (2013) beautifully analyses Donna Hemans' (2002) *River Woman*, and notes how maternal love is made out of a complex set of affects situated within Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. Often, as described by Scafe (2013), the becoming of a mother and the practicing of (other) mothering is tied to the histories of those who could not mother or who had to mother for others. Colonial and migratory power relationships make for an ambivalent understanding of mothering. Here 'other' mothering becomes read "as labour, absent mothering and child-shifting" (Scafe, 2013, p. 70). Anim-Addo (2014) suggests that a feminist project in turn is one that becomes nurtured. This sense of (other) mothering and nurture is geared toward the collective. At the heart of Anim-Addo's argument is a question of knowledge production, and the absence of Black British feminist women in academic institutions. For Anim-Addo (2014, p. 44), a feminist intervention should be "premised upon a politics of care, addressing through activist mothering the urgency of Black absence from prestigious institutions". The care within feminist interventions are thus geared toward safeguarding the past for the future. Alexis Pauline Gumbs writes, "Mothering is a queer practice of transforming the world through our desire for each other and another way to be" (Gumbs, Martens and Williams, 2016, p. 115). Queering motherhood similar to (other) mothering exists outside of reproductive and heteronormative ideas about

motherhood. Desiring new ways to be — to mother — is an important endeavour as notions on mothering have long been policed and controlled. Often as Gumbs points out, the "labour of mothering is done without the luxury status of "motherhood" (Gumbs, Martens and Williams, 2016, p. 155). In this sense, the idea of queer mothering is firmly situated within a Black feminist and queer framework that understands that 'mothering' vs. 'motherhood', are racialised and classed categories, that determine who is deemed fit to mother informed by state politics.

archival care

Extending these ideas of (other) mothering and queer mothering to queer and feminist archives, and the practice of archiving is a feminist intervention. Gumbs argues that many people who do the labour of mothering, "would never even dream of identifying as mothers, even though they do the daily intergenerational care work of making a hostile world an affirming space" (Gumbs, Martens and Williams, 2016, p. 115). Keeping the materials and traces of the BMR movement is an important form of intergenerational care work. What does (other) mothering and queer mothering have to offer the archive? I will draw on an example from my archival research to think further about this question. While researching the personal archives of Anne Krul, I came across a draft version of an unpublished article called "Searching for Avengers". The article references the *Lesbian Avengers,* a New York City based direct action group, and how their presence had spread to England, Australia

and Germany. In the article, the author asks lesbians whether they'd want a Lesbian Avengers constituency in the Netherlands. The piece about Anne reads as follows:

> Anne Krul can definitely imagine an Avenger group in the Netherlands. She is very active in the Black lesbian community and runs into all sorts of limitations. In particular, the whole new way of working that the Avengers do and the possibility of taking your wishes into your own hands speak to her. She already exactly knows what she would want to do. We'll go with a whole group of women to the IIAV (International Information Centrum and Archive for the Women's Movement) and in one go we will borrow everything about Black lesbian women, and we will make that accessible in our own library. Or we will start travelling with it, read at schools for example. (Tuinman, n.d.; translation mine)

This example illuminates how we might be able to connect a practice of care to archives and feminist work. I read in Anne's answer, the need to liberate archival materials from a white feminist archive as a form of collective feminist intervention. The *Lesbian Avengers* that was started in 1992 inspired Anne because of their way of working and what she describes as 'taking charge'. For Anne, the idea of direct action included going into the archives, which further demonstrates the political nature of archival sites. The liberating of materials thus also becomes a collaborative effort envisioned as a modality of care. There is always a set of complex dynamics that undergird the notion of care, and how it is enacted. A feminist intervention here is related to the lack of care offered to the materials within a white archive. In this sense, Anne offers a model of care that includes materials having their own library, travelling with materials and making them accessible at schools.

In Anne's intervention lies a question on what it might mean to mother the archive. Here we need to acknowledge how the archive is also produced as a site in need of care and liberation, in which archival materials hold a certain passive quality in terms of their non-human agency. I want to briefly address this notion of passiveness as this too becomes a form of 'orientation', particularly in Anne's story. In Chapter Five, I extensively detail how Anne is involved in disclosing and ordering the *Strange Fruit* archives. This temporal mode of mothering of the archive is also in part due to the passiveness of materials. This does not take away from the 'aliveness' of the archive, but it does further complicate where we locate this 'liveness'. The act of liberating archival material from a white feminist archive needs to be read in conjunction with Dutch colonial history. In this articulation of mothering resides a colonial echo. Here I am specifically interested in how coloniality haunts the archives. How do contemporary white archival ordering systems become a result of haunting? In Chapter Three, I address this specifically in relationship to the "ungeographic", where BMR women were not 'mapped' because 'Blackness' was understood to be situated only in the Third World. Stoler (2002, p. 87) describes "archives as epistemological experiments rather than as sources". Methodologically, this poses questions for the care we are able to extend to the archive.

Care in relationship to the archive necessitates taking action. Mariá Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, p. 5) proposes thinking of "care as a concrete work of maintenance". However, simply offering care through incorporating BMR materials in a collection does not ensure the-use of these materials. The maintenance of stories, ephemera, people, and things left behind

requires care. But what does this care mean in practice? How do you take care of stories? Smith (2012, p. 143) states, in reference to indigenous storytelling, that "the point about the stories is not that they simply tell a story, or tell a story simply". This in turn, troubles what kind of care we lend to stories and archival materials in general. There is what I call an anticipation of care woven into the way that the BMR archives are framed by Anne. This anticipation is also noticeable in the experience of Andre Reeder in relation to the *With Pride* exhibition discussed in Chapter Five. I disrupt this anticipation of care by critically engaging the notion of maintenance. What in the archive do we maintain with our care? How does care do maintenance work in the archive? Lisa Baraitser (2015, p. 21) situates maintenance as "durational practices that keep 'things' going: objects, selves, systems, hopes, ideals, networks, communities, relationships, institutions". This provides an important framework to start and read forms of care and maintenance in and for the archive. What is particularly poignant about Baraitser's (2015, p. 21) work is the argument that maintenance is framed by "the conditions of vulnerability" and the "excesses and internal logics of capitalist cultures that make maintenance so necessary". This framework helps move the conversation on care away from a more simplified notion that easily (and often) becomes romanticised in the feminist labour that archives and memory work require. Moreover, care and mothering are often read within a normative reproductive framework. Following Anne's accounts, from the *Lesbian Avengers* story to her current involvement with the *Strange Fruit* archives, shows us how maintenance exists as a temporal arrangement. Baraitser (2015, pp. 27–28) argues that maintenance holds two temporal forms which are about "trying to keep something going" and to "maintain to keep

buoyant". Within these practices are also "temporal modes of maintenance that reach towards the future" (p. 28) In this sense, Baraitser (2015, p. 28) locates "maintenance as the temporal dimension of care". Circling back to the question of how to mother the archive and how to take 'care' of the archive thus becomes more complex. Maintenance work does not produce straightforward affective relationships especially because different forms of maintenance are applied to the archive. These different forms are inherently racialised, gendered and classed according to who has a stake in the maintenance applied to the archives. The overall point here is that these forms of maintenance indeed produce different temporal arrangements of care that are at odds with each other. What happens when these registers clash? For example, maintenance work to disclose the *Strange Fruit* archives or to implement new coding systems might also be harmful because of the conditions in which this maintenance work is produced. In Chapter Five, I provide an example of the *Nos Tei* exhibition that has taken 'care' to represent queer of colour histories, however as I argue, this kind of 'care' work also produces potential harm because it is based on representation as maintenance. Care as archival praxis thus requires a critique of normative modes of maintenance and representation. The praxis of (other) mothering offers a radical approach to extend care to the ghosts and hauntings that exists within the temporal arrangement of the archive.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I work with scatters and fragments of the archive to think through the role of care as a mode of radical archival research praxis. I used the concept of haunting and weathering to trace and converse with the ghosts in the archive. Taking on 'care' as a broader thematic allowed for an exploration of weathered accounts and how they might be read differently. This alternate reading practice is aimed at unsettling fixed narratives that recount violence and suffering. Through understanding and situating weathering as an ecology, I argue that care for the archive needs to exceed basic ideas of maintenance. Radical care for the archive must go beyond representation or even engagement of materials. I used the specific examples of care from the archive to propose how care for the living, the death and the material might manifest. The concept of (other) mothering within the archive is an intergenerational and future oriented practice. In the following chapter, I will further these out what the futurity of the BMR movement and the archive looks like.

Chapter Seven. The Futurity of the BMR Movement:

Constellations, Technologies and Refusal

For the last time, I return to the water here.

Without proper water management of the Dutch canals, the city of Amsterdam would drown. Water circulation. Three times a week the city closes up the water locks to allow clean water to be pumped in from the IJsselmeer lake. This creates a current which pushes the dirty canal water out through the open locks at the other part of the city.

Gay Pride. Water. Canals. Every year the Gay Pride takes place on the canals of Amsterdam. Adorned people and boats circulate the canals while being cheered on by crowds of people standing on bridges and the canal streets. Amsterdam. The Gay Capital of the world.

In February 2018, Orlando Boldewijn, a 17-year-old Black queer boy was found dead in the small lake in The Hague. Orlando had been missing for a week and didn't come home after a Grindr date with a white man who lived near the lake. In his statement, the man declares he saw Orlando in the water with his arms in the air until he suddenly disappeared. After he didn't see Orlando again, the man went back to bed and didn't come forward when Orlando's family and the police were searching for him.

Introduction

In the previous chapters, the subversion of the Amsterdam waterways and grids allowed for a different way of reading and writing about the movement, kinship, exchange and feminist and queer politics. Water, in the history of the Dutch empire, created a complex intimacy between the metropole and colony. Water was used as a form of defence and a means of control and continues to shape our spatial awareness of the Netherlands today. Moreover, water continues to inform constructs of white Dutch national identity and global entrepreneurship. The selected vignettes each tell their own complex stories about water, desire, personhood and place. These vignettes do not come forth out of the archives or interviews I conducted but each of them is in conversation with the BMR research I conducted. The first vignette speaks to the technical mechanisms and infrastructure of the Amsterdam canal systems. In thinking about futurity, I am guided by these circular technologies that force clean water to come in and dirty water to be pushed out of the canals. I refer back to this infrastructure to rethink the ways in archives are structured and to re-imagine the institutional grids of the archive. The second vignette refers to the Gay Parade in Amsterdam, which is a key example of a white liberal and homonationalist manifestation of a queer presence. The canals, and the role of water during the Pride, become embedded with the national identity of the city, and by extension of the Dutch nation state. The parade traditionally includes boats of organisations and political parties, and over the years included a Turkish and Moroccan boat, each a proverbial tipping of the hat to 'ethnic' inclusivity. Gay Pride remains a white manifestation of progressive and

inclusive politics. I juxtapose this sense of liberal, progressive and white visible gay politics with the violent death of Orlando Boldewijn, who died in a lake in the Hague. Considerably far away from the Gay Pride in Amsterdam, but as the story was unfolding, I could not help but think about the experiences of BPOC queer young people who fall outside of the imaginary of this liberal safe haven. The fact that Orlando, a young Black queer boy, was left to die in this lake alone by a white man speaks to the larger total climate of anti-blackness (Sharpe, 2016). This chapter considers these engagements with the water, the colonial climate, and archival infrastructures to be part of the futurity of the BMR movement. As discussed in the previous chapter, I read futurity outside of the normative concept of reproduction. Archival futures are often understood alongside the lines of intergenerational safekeeping. However, as this thesis demonstrates, the processes of safekeeping are not straight forward. I thus situate futurity in this chapter as a mode of experimentation, vision and refusal.

Beneath the Radar

The canals are a complex site, where both joy and misery collide.[45] The controlled circulation of the canals makes the water quiet and silent; you hardly see it move. While walking and biking alongside the canals to Atria I could not help but think about these parallels between the canals and the archives I worked in.

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[45] The words 'joy' and 'misery' do important work together. I am inspired by DJ Lynnée Denise's term 'misery resistance', which she employs in reference to Black music, to connote the dance between Black excellence and Black suffering (personal communication, 18 January 2019).

Today when I biked alongside the Prinsengracht, on my way to Atria, I was struck again by the silence of the water. A slight ripple, but these canals and their histories feel quiet and silent. Unstirred. I've felt this silence growing up here – a quiet and oppressive silence. A warning. Do not make the water ripple. When I arrive at Atria, I still feel this silence – the physical space feels permeated with silence – not just the silence where you have to speak in hushed whispers but the kind of silence that becomes part of a catalogue, a structure, a building, a people. The kind of silence that makes quiet and polite gestures toward histories of racism and colonialism.

But as I continue to read more and more stories of BMR women, indexing violence, racism within schools and the work-place, the lack of attention for BMR women within the healthcare

systems, and the ongoing presence and effects of white supremacy, colonialism and racism, I feel like these materials are loud and stir up currents, right beneath the radar. (Frank, 2019d)

I use this fragment from my archival research notes to contemplate the structures of archives and their taxonomy and question how they might be imagined differently. I could not shake the feeling that much of my research was happening beneath the radar. I realised that there was an active presence right beneath the official infrastructure of the archive. I engage with the idea and notion of futurity of the BMR movement from this place. Throughout this project, the archive has appeared as an unstable place, collection, genealogy, concept and practice. Following Diana Taylor (2003), each chapter has illuminated the performative quality of the archive. In exploring what happens beneath the radar of the archive and its official mechanisms, I again turn to the notion of performativity.

Let's start with glimmers.

Image 24. Gay Pride Mermaids. 1999. Photo by Marian Bakker. Courtesy of Marian Bakker.

Glimmering Paths

How do we arrive at what resides right beneath the radar of the archive? What kinds of glimmers invite us in? In the foreword for the 10th anniversary edition of *Cruising Utopia*, Joshua Chambers-Letson, Tavia Nyong'o and Ann Pellegrini (2019, pp. 24–25) write,

> Throughout *Cruising Utopia*, Muñoz mines the past for glimmers of utopian potential that are rich with the possibility of a past that "could have happened differently from the way it actually did". He invites us to put these glimmers to work, both as we cast a negative or critical picture of the insufficiencies of the present, but also as we undertake the work of hoping for, rehearsing, dreaming and charting new paths toward different and queerer futures.

In this project, I have put "glimmers to work" through a practice of mapping, listening and orientating to BMR materials. These glimmers have appeared through the flamboyant tree (Chapter Three), picking up a Black feminist book (*Zami)* (Chapter Four), and following the sound of a steeldrum (Chapter Five). Glimmers provide direction towards new paths without abandoning the politics of the past or present. In each of these explorations, futurity glimmered and re-directed my path. Likewise, with the image above of the two Black queer men on a boat during Gay Pride. I first saw the image during the earlier referenced *Nos Tei* exhibition in IHLIA. The image called my attention, and I returned to it when writing about the canals and the Gay Pride. I offer this image here as an entry point to guide my conceptualisation of futurity. The image is compelling; the two men each sit one side of the boat, one of them with an impressive scaled mermaid tail on a bed of

seaweed. During the exhibition, the image was referred to as the 'Black Ariel'. To me, the presence of the men on the boat in the canals link to notions of futurity, but also pastness(ess). The water and the waterways as a mode of transportation reminds of the multiple routes that brought Black people to different and new colonial localities. The figure of the mermaid became prevalent in Western culture during the time (c 1600–1800) that Europeans "began to explore, claim and colonise areas of Africa and North and South America" (Hayward, 2017, p. 9). The Trans-Atlantic slave trade subsequently led to the interweaving of mermaid figures (p. 9). Phillip Hayward (2017), who studies mermaids in audiovisual culture, calls on figure (and deity) Mami Wata as a variation of the mermaid, with fish-tail and serpent-tail variations. The purpose here is not to delve into an in-depth historical exploration of the figure of the mermaid, but rather to consider the mermaid as an important figure within folklore and fiction, typically represented as being highly feminine. Western representations of the mermaid play into heterosexual fantasies, in line with Euro-Christian creation narratives and the construction of the temptress. Hayward (2017) argues the ambiguous appeal of the lower half of the mermaid constitutes 'queer activity'. This queerness relates both to the 'queerness' of the mermaid figure and the desire underlying the attraction (p. 15). What then do we make of the presence of a Black queer mermaid in the canals during Gay Pride?

I pick up on the queerness of the image to further tease out the notion of queer futurity. Muñoz (2009, p. 111) argues that queerness is, "not an identarian formulation but, instead, the invocation of a future collectivity, a queerness that registers as the illumination of a

horizon of existence". Queer futurity is thus not about an identarian vision of the future, but relates to a broader collective imagining. In this sense, glimmers are a disruption of the past and open up the imaginary of the future. To dwell beneath the radar in the archive calls for an interplay with the material and visual. Muñoz (2009, p. 48) locates queerness as a longing that we can sometimes sense and glimpse within "the realm of the aesthetic". The aesthetics of the 'Gay Pride Mermaids' image disrupt the normative white connotations of Amsterdam Gay Pride. This image and the ambiguity of the mermaid benefits from a queer and trans analysis. Susan Stryker (2006, p. 3) argues that trans studies is "concerned with anything that disrupts, denaturalizes, rearticulates, and makes visible the normative linkages we assume to exist". This approach can also be applied to queer aesthetics,

> The aesthetic, especially the queer aesthetic, frequently contains blueprints and schemata of a forward-dawning futurity. Both the ornamental and the quotidian can contain a map of the utopia that is queerness. Turning to the aesthetic in the case of queerness is nothing like an escape from the social realm, insofar as queer aesthetics map future social relations. (Muñoz, 2009, p. 48)

Even though I was immediately struck by the 'Gay Pride Mermaids', the photograph ended up in a folder <pleasurescapes> alongside a couple of other images, waiting for a 'home' in the thesis. When I browsed through the images that lived in this folder, a relationality between the photos began to emerge. I had set aside multiple images that did not neatly "fit" into the chapters, but I had not previously thought of them as a collection of 'misfits'. I include a selection of the images in this chapter as a visual exploration of queer futurity.

There is an important interconnectedness between the archive and queer aesthetics. Gopinath (2018, p. 7) states, "A careful tending to (and attention to) the aesthetic — and to queer visual aesthetic practices in particular — enables and demands that connections be made between fields of thought, geographic areas, and temporalities that would otherwise not be grasped through standard disciplinary approaches". In a similar vein, I use queer aesthetics to make connections with larger conversations about the futurity of the BMR movement. The following sections are each structured around a selection of images from my <pleasurescapes> folder.

There is a *lot* of love
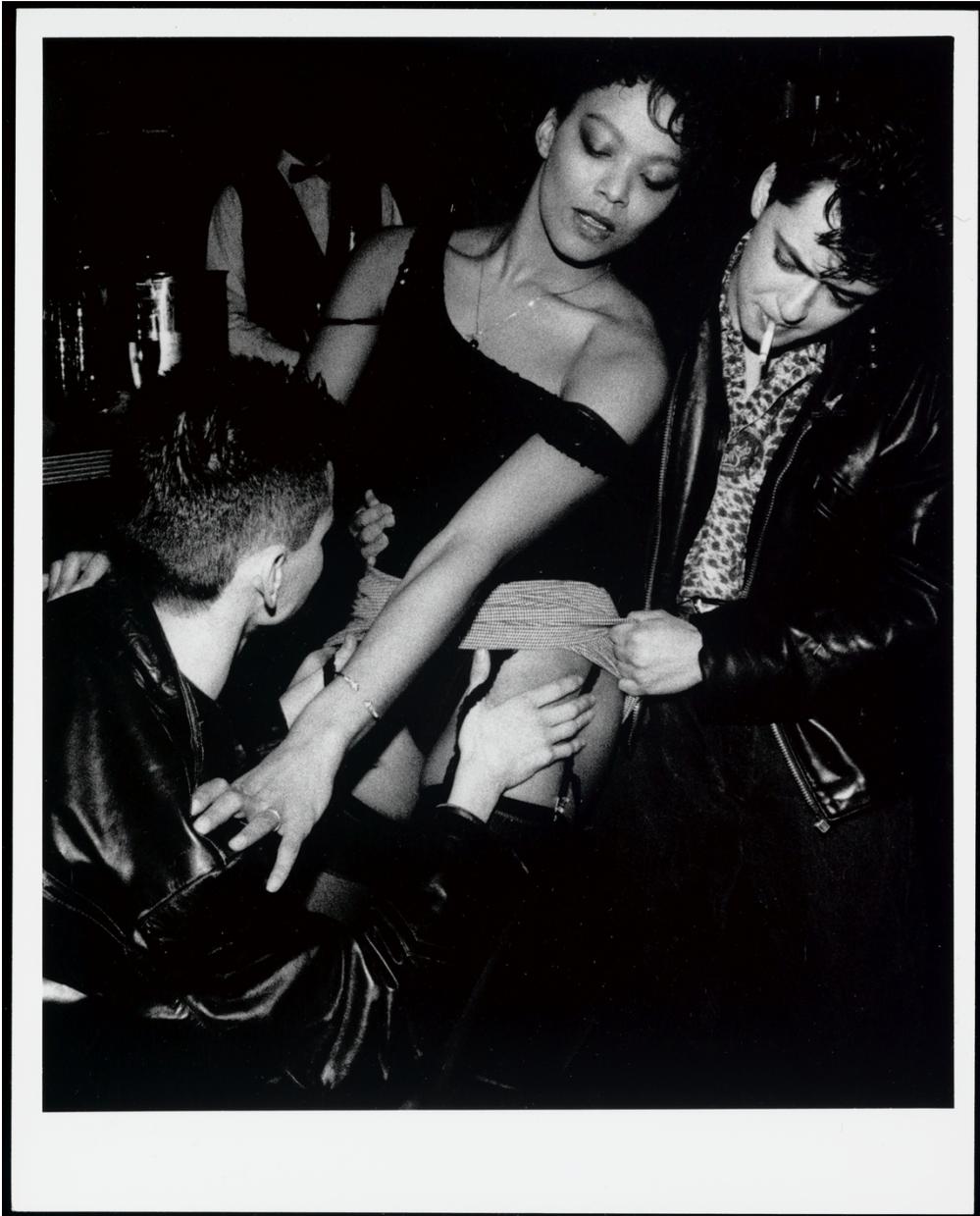
Image 25. Black woman (centre) with two people in a bar. Women's cafe Saarein. 1980. Photo by Gon Buurman. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of Atria.

The image above is a commissioned work made by white photographer Gon Buurman. The work was commissioned and published in the magazine *Panorama* and shown next to an article about eroticism and pleasure. I reached out to the photographer to ask whether I could include the image and initially she responded in shock that I would want to use it. Buurman said something like, this is a very intimate photo and the women in the photo are much older and wiser now; she suggested I have a look at her other images. To me, the image is powerful because it displays pleasure, intimacy and eroticism. While I read plenty of newsletter articles about these topics and conversed with BMR women about relationships and non-western modes of sexuality, there are few images which display these elements of desire, eroticism or pleasure. In exploring queerness and gesture, Muñoz (2009, p. 223) situates the dancefloor as a site for "queer performativity that is integral to everyday life". Muñoz (2009, p. 223) writes, "I am on the same page as [Jonathan] Bollen when he considers the dancefloor as space where relations between memory and content, self and other, become inextricably intertwined". I see these notions reflected in the photo, where a party in a women's café becomes part of everyday life. The BMR movement was known to reject Western dominant readings of sexuality. For instance, the divisions between lesbian and straight women were less clear cut. Further, BMR women did not appease to normative expectations of white womanhood. This becomes clear in my conversation with Ernestine and Ida, when I asked them how they mobilised on women's issues,

> Ernestine: The themes of the women's movement sometimes didn't apply to us, they didn't just have our issues so they also didn't get our issues, for example the subject

of economic independence. Well even now when they research into who are the people with the most jobs and work the most hours, it's Black women. Surinamese and Antillean women, Caribbean, so yes economic independence was fed to us with the ladle. Just like, if you look at this properly, we were ahead of our time, not necessarily us, but Surinamese people. Now people are talking about all sorts of family relationships... that's very modern. But do you know some people were seen, I remember those conversations. (...) I can remember that women would ask questions like, oh but in that family children have different names, is there no love in that family? No really, I remember it was frowned upon.

Ida: There was a *lot* of love, go figure. (Comvalius and Does, 2016; translation mine)

This interview excerpt is poignant because it shows how Ernestine shifts the racist underpinnings of the stereotype of Surinamese single mothers and mothers who had children with multiple partners. Ernestine makes a larger point that many Black women have long been economically independent and engaged in other family structures. I want to be mindful in framing this as queer, but I do want to suggest that, as Ernestine states, these women were "ahead of their time". This temporal rendering allows for BMR practices and other modes of sexualities to become part of a future imagination. Further, Ernestine's analysis should be read beyond just individual experiences, but linked to how the Dutch state responded to Black single mothers and welfare. This framing that Ernestine offers followed by Ida's tongue in cheek comment that indeed these families actually had a lot of

additional love, speaks to the role that pleasure, desire and intimacy had within everyday experiences.

I am aware of the implications of including the image after the photographer's warnings and it is true that I do not know what the women in the image might feel about being included in this work. I further acknowledge that, as with the other images, it is difficult to gauge and construct conversations about agency.[46] The image brings up larger questions on what kinds of futures are held in the queer aesthetics of this image. There is an element of play in this image, which gestures at the importance of pleasure within queer clubs. I do not frame pleasure here as an afterthought or form of repair. Similar to Jennifer Nash (2014, p. 58) who interrogates the role of pornography and pleasure within Black feminism, I am not invested in "imagining pleasure as a site outside of pain or injury". However, I am interested in pleasure as a form and mode of feminist and queer agency that shapes collective movement work. Where key texts such as *Uses of the Erotic* by Audre Lorde do receive recognition, there is little critical engagement with pleasure as a mode of analysis in women and gender studies curricula. Joan Morgan (2015, p. 36) points to the "mulish inattentiveness to black women's engagements with pleasure – the complex, messy, sticky, and even joyous negotiations of agency and desire that are irrevocably twinned with our pain". In this turn to pleasure, Morgan (2015, p. 38) asks the reader to consider what the implications would be for Black feminist thought to "negate pleasure as frivolous, irrelevant, or "unfeminist". This also calls for a broader exploration of what pleasure is and

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[46] Where possible permission has been requested of those portrayed in the images in this thesis.

does. Nash (2014, p. 3) argues for the need to organise around the paradoxes of pleasure rather than "woundedness or the elisions of injury, around possibilities rather than pain". I cannot make any generalisations about pleasure or racialised processes of desire when it comes to the BMR movement. As Botman, Jouwe and Wekker (2001) point out, processes of racialisation and desire are so distinctly different for Surinamese, Dutch Antillean, Turkish, Moroccan and Indonesian women. Each of these informed by distinct anti-black, imperialist, orientalist and anti-migrant sentiments ingrained in the structures of the white Dutch imaginary of the other. In turn, some of the BMR organising efforts were deliberately done across racial groups to unlearn ingrained prejudice and bias amongst BMR women. Another important point is that with the movement of people came other ways of practicing sexuality too. Gloria speaks about this experience with Surinamese women who had come to the Netherlands during the 70s and joined *Sister Outsider* and came to gatherings:

> Gloria: (...)Women from Suriname started to join our little group, women who had come around the independence of Suriname to the Netherlands, around the 70s, who also joined Sister Outsider and came to our gatherings. And that was the first time when I saw, when I went to parties from women who had just come from Suriname, how differently the relationships between women manifested, that actually was the reason why I started studying and wanted to figure out, what is this *mati* work actually. So, it was such wealth to see everything happening under your eyes, under your nose, and especially the massive difference in age in partners, we

were socialised in white lesbian circles, where equality was really important, and in Surinamese circles this was not the case at all. (Wekker, 2016b; translation mine)

What stands out to me in Gloria's account is the importance of thinking through broader geographies of pleasure and the ways in which Surinamese migrants broadened how women related to each other. As Muñoz (2009, p. 241) writes, "Queerness is lost in space or lost in relation to the straight minds' mapping of space". This conceptualisation of queerness as mode of orientation that has the intention to be lost further resonates in Gloria's reading. White lesbian circles operated alongside certain codes and respectability politics, as also noted by Gloria in Chapter Four. The image I used to open this section with, shows a Black woman in the centre, with a white butch woman to her left pulling up her skirt. The person who is on the bottom left in the image grabs her thigh. I am not sure whether the photo was staged or whether Buurman captured this in the moment. The politics of white feminist and lesbian dancefloors are complex, again as referenced by Gloria in Chapter Four, and I want to acknowledge this complexity here. Queer gestures, performances and dance are hard to document or evidence, and yet they play such an important part of thinking through the sexual politics of the BMR movement. In reference to thinking through the body as archive, Singh (2018b, p. 27) writes, "Abandoning the pursuit of a legitimate archive — one external to me and one that might ensure my professional success and upward mobility — I began instead to dwell on the messy, embodied, illegitimate archive that I am". In theorising the futurity of the archive then, alongside this image, there is a need to attend to let go of constructing or continuing a

legitimate archive. Reading the image alongside Ernestine, Ida and Gloria's interview excerpts, offers the possibility for this photograph to signal a presence larger than just a referencing to the past or the enunciation of a futurity.

Forecast
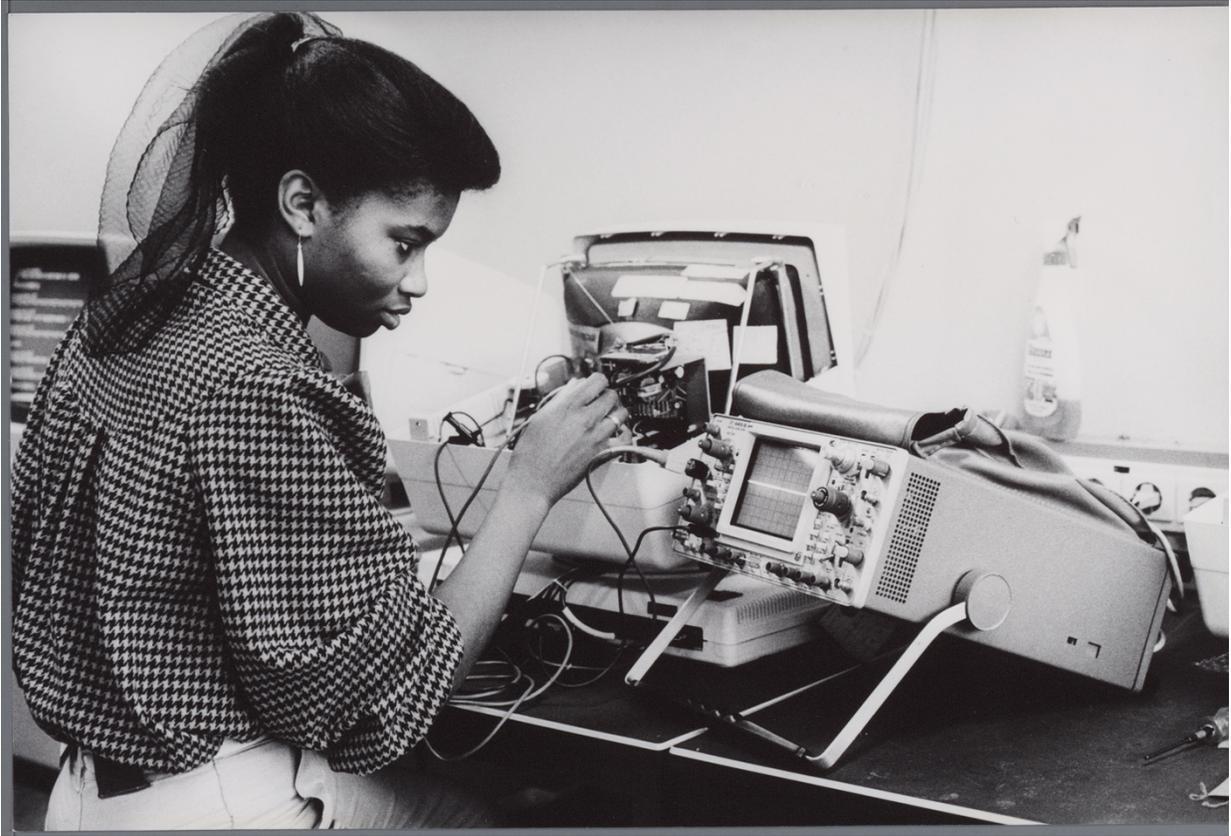
Image 26. Computer technician Ana repairs a computer. Approx. 1985. Photograph by Marian Bakker. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of Atria.

The photos in my folder each bring forth their own affective registers. When I returned to the folder on my desktop, I noticed that several images involved some form of technology; a radio broadcaster, an audio mixer and a dismantled computer. Following Muñoz (2009) I expand the notion of future-orientated blueprints and schematics in my analysis to the presence of different broadcasting technologies. I am drawn to this image of Ana, the machinery, cords and knobs hold a futuristic quality. BMR women made use of radio, printed and stenciled magazines, and several BMR women were involved in film and theatre production. However, we hardly come across visual documentation of BMR women engaged in any of these practices during the 1980s. Cyber scholar Michelle M. Wright (2005, pp. 48–49), argues that, "In the Western imagination, technology is the exclusive provenance of the West – it is by default always white, almost always male, and sexuality rarely emerges as an imaginative category". In a similar vein, sociologist Alondra Nelson (2002, p. 1) refers to the "digital divide", as "a phrase that has been used to describe gaps in technological access that fall along the lines of race, gender, region, and ability but most notably become a code word for the tech inequities that exist between blacks and whites". The historical implications of this digital divide are that the labour and innovation of centuries of Black people are not just undermined but unimaginable. Writing on sound cultures of the Black diaspora, Chude-Sokei (2015, p. 11) argues technology should be situated as a "zone of racial engagement that operates in tandem with the historical fact that technology itself carried racial meanings in advance of that engagement". In this sense, Chude-Sokei (2015, p. 11) does not propose an engagement with technology as a "racial particularity". BMR women using technology should thus not be analysed as something

that is out of the ordinary. There is little scholarship on race, technology and queer diaspora in Europe, which speaks to the lacunae in the imagination of who is understood to be technologically advanced. I offer the photo of Ana here to consider how queer aesthetics challenge "technologies of representation that seek to capture "evidence" that is visible, quantifiable, and measurable" (Gopinath, 2018, p. 101). The image is not a visual rewriting of the "digital divide", and I do not offer it here simply to argue that indeed BMR women were computer technicians or working in ICT. I am, however, interested in how the aesthetics of this image hold the potential of an archival futurity. The image seemingly expands the notion of the archive by documenting Ana working on computer parts. Processors and hard disks inherently hold archival qualities, computers 'compute' information after all. What does it mean then to situate this image as an expansion of the technological imaginary? I situate these questions in a broader framework on coloniality and technology in the Netherlands.

Waves and Frequency

The "digital divide" should be understood in tandem with conversations about integration, language and surveillance in the Netherlands. Botman, Jouwe and Wekker (2001, p. 42) point to the recruitment campaigns of so-called *allochtone* women for the police in the 1980s. The campaigns were specifically directed to Surinamese and Dutch Antillean women, and some of the campaign language directly addressed women who spoke Dutch

with a so-called foreign accent. Botman, Jouwe and Wekker (2001, p. 42) provide the following example of one of these campaigns,

> On an image of the police in Hengelo and Enschede ethnicity is used directly as a recruitment slogan. A woman of colour laughs to a (white?) child on her arm that wears her oversized hat, with the following text: "If you speak with a foreign accent at home, the police has a job for you that speaks to you". A page long explanation follows with: ... in other words, with the police your mouth is the best weapon. With the benefit that people from your own population can understand you better than cops who are from the Netherlands. (translation mine)

I cite *Caleidoscopische Visies* at length here because the example of this racialised recruitment campaign speaks to larger points on technology I want to make. As the editors explain, this campaign was an extension of Dutch integration policies and targeted Surinamese and Dutch Antillean women specifically. These women were understood to be more 'Western' and integrated than Moroccan and Turkish women (p. 42). I was struck by this example because it exemplifies the technologies that underlie integration practices. While Surinamese and Dutch Antillean women are read as more 'Western' because of their linguistic proximity to Dutch, the emphasis is placed on their 'foreign accent'. This example feeds into a larger schema of racist regimes of knowledge and control that underlie integration policies. Amade M'charek, Katrina Schramm and David Skinner (2014, p. 464) argue, "the histories of race in Europe has always been linked to questions of population management and control – most visibly in the bureaucratic regimes of colonial governance". These regimes and forms of governance continue to contour the presence and

experiences of racialised populations, including the "circulation of scientific ideas about populations and the racialized bodies on which these ideas were built" (p. 464). While a rigorous analysis of the intersections of science, technology and race falls outside of the scope of this project, my aim is here to show that BMR women were always already implicated in technologies of control and surveillance.

While BMR women were targeted in these technological schemas, they were not the imagined users of technology. Botman, Jouwe and Wekker (2001, p. 26) state that when the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (*Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen*) organised a study day about how girls can become more active in the field of ICT, girls solely meant white girls. This is especially poignant because, according to *Caleidoscopische Visies*, BMR girls scored high in the sciences and informatica (Botman, Jouwe and Wekker, 2001, p. 26). Further, during general educational days such as "*Allochtonen* and ICT", BMR boys were centred, leaving BMR girls out of the equation (p. 26). This shows that within the configuration of the "digital divide", both gender, race and ethnicity play an important role in the Netherlands. In this sense, the divide here becomes more complex than a division between Black and white technological literacy. The specific processes of racialisation that Surinamese, Dutch Antillean, Moroccan and Turkish women experienced are also reflected in the technologies of control used by the Dutch nation state.

The photo of Ana holds the potential to not just contest colonial modernity and its technological implications, but also shifts the optic of how the image can be engaged. In

reference to imperialism and the notion of freedom in the U.S., Mimi Nguyen (2012, p. 17) speaks to the gift of freedom as an imperial gift of time, "time for the subject of freedom to resemble or 'catch up to' the modern observer, to accomplish what can be anticipated in the preordained future, whether technological progress, productive capacity, or rational government". Dwelling with the aesthetics of the image allows us to re-arrange this schema of 'catching up'. The cords, threads, knobs and machinery in the image offer an interesting looping of time. The futuristic aesthetics in the photo have a forecasting quality. Similar to the waves and frequencies that inform Pezzani's (2015) earlier referenced work on oceanography, where the ocean is read through meditated waves (Chapter Two). The unexpected connections between the images residing in my folder make evident why exploring the futurity beneath the radar of the archive is generative. Unintentionally, I set images apart that unsettle the normative present.

Diskamazones

 Image 27. Double Portrait. First 'Pata Pata' swing evening by Black women in Café de Feeks 'diskamazones'. 1985. Photograph by An Stalpers. IAV-Atria Collection. Courtesy of Atria.

Where do BMR pedagogies reside? And what kinds of futurity do they hold? Communing with these 'diskamazones', I want to think about pedagogy from this place. From this club. From the *Feeks*. What BMR forecasting happens from the turntables? I want to imagine this pedagogy from a hand waiting in the air - in between the release of the needle. I want to imagine pedagogy from biting your finger. The kind of contemplation that comes with waiting for the beat to start a new song. That kind of listening. I want to imagine BMR pedagogies from there.

Part of my exploration of futurity is an extension of other ways of reading and sensing the archive. Revisiting my interview recording with Ernestine and Ida, brought another register to my attention. In between sharing political organising and everyday experiences, lived a sensorial record of movement work. While tapping their fingers on the table, Ernestine and Ida recite protest songs and rhythms influenced by Latin American freedom struggles. *Presenté, Presenté*. Ernestine and Ida's cultural work became part of the fabric of their everyday life. Anthropologist Katheen Stewart (2007) theorises the affective dimensions of the everyday. Stewart (2007, p. 15) argues that "ordinary affects", "give things the quality of a *some*thing to inhabit and animate". These 'ordinary affects' within everyday stories and experiences become "an animate circuit that conducts force and maps connections, routes and disjunctures" (p. 3). This is also described by Stewart as 'a kind of contact zone', which leaves room for multiple layers of analysis (p. 3). Creating disparate connections between archival materials and interviews makes visible the kind of work that happens within this 'contact zone'. In the exploration of this type of writing and thinking, Stewart draws on Roland Barthes (1981), who makes the distinct difference between the *stadium* and the *punctum* in reference to photography. Barthes locates the *stadium* and the *punctum* as two main factors within an image. According to Barthes, the *stadium* provides insight into the cultural conditions for the photographer in taking the image, while the *punctum* is the unpredictable piercing that the image does, which is accidental. While the *stadium* and *punctum* could overlap, the very nature of the *punctum* is a disruption to any cultural conventions set in place.

I offer the image of the 'Diskamazones' and my conversation with Ernestine and Ida somewhat alongside each other here. This might be read as a disparate connection, however, I felt called by the accidental 'piercing' quality of the image combined with the interview materials. In the photograph of the 'Diskamazones', we encounter multiple formats of listening; the cassettes, albums and headphones, all of which have the primary function of making recorded sounds available. In Chapter Two, I set out how creating (and following) relationalities generates an important kind of 'movement' with the materials, which becomes clear throughout the project. Creating new motifs and structures of ordering in the BMR archives generate future-orientated 'blueprints'. The concept of forecasting connotes the waves and frequencies that underlie the intricate network of connections that inform this project. While forecasting is often used in relationship to the weather and based on predictions, I use forecasting as an experimental tool to survey 'other' ways of knowing the archive. I link the different formats of listening in 'Diskamazones' to the multiple tonalities of everyday experiences in Ernestine and Ida's interview. At one point during the interview, Ernestine mentions their involvement with the Surinamese squatter's movement, and as soon as she's said these words, Ida starts to sing (Comvalius and Does, 2016).

Krakers Fu Bembre

De flats in de Bijlmer,
Die staan al jaren leeg
Terwijl wij creperen
in de hokken van B&W

Met twintig op een kamer en

een stoof voor zestig man

Krakers fu Bembre

Krakers fu Bembre

Krakers fu Bembre,

w'o win a stre[47]

I offer two verses of the song above, which actually came out as a record (LOSON, n.d.). After Ida stops singing, they simply move on with the conversation. Reading the 'Diskamazones' image and the sensuous nature of the interview through a queer lens offers a fleeting sense of futurity here.

Futurity resides in the anticipation of Ida's voice coming through the speakers of the 'Diskamazones', right after the needle drops.

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[47] I deliberately kept the text in Dutch and Sranang Tongo. While the history of Surinamese squatters is imperative, I choose to focus on the modes of listening to interview materials here. This experimentation gestures to how methodologically we can conceptualise futurity. The lyrics state that the flats in the Bijlmer (now a Black neighbourhood in the South East of Amsterdam) have been empty for years, while Surinamese people were stuck in government regulated pensions, with 20 people per room. The song cheers on Surinamese people who started squatting empty flats. The Bijlmer was built with the intention to become a white suburb, but white people felt the area was too far removed from the centre. This speaks to my earlier points on technologies of population control.

Closing the Locks

In the vignettes I open this chapter with, I meditate on the function and symbolic role of the water. The actual mechanics of the opening and closing of locks to flush the canal water provides an interesting temporal play with water. This closing of the locks happens several times a week and there is a constant renewal of water. I want to follow these waterway mechanisms as a mode of imagination to imagine futurity by symbolically closing the locks in the form of a final chapter and simultaneously allowing water to stream in to create future paths and directions.

Aquatic Futures

On an interactive website dedicated to the 17th century canals, the city ring and design is described as, "an early example of large-scale, coordinated urban planning and forward thinking".[48] I want to read this 'forward thinking' in conjunction with the Amsterdam Gay Pride. Urban Planning studies scholar Kimberley Kinder (2015, p. 40) explains that the Gay Pride organisers were amongst several organisations who started to use the water as part of an open space. Kinder states that this decision was made in line with the increased queer tourist interest in the city. The water and the structure of the canals further enhanced the quality of Amsterdam as a queer capital. The canals have strong marketing appeal and over the years have become a steady trademark of Amsterdam's beauty. This collides with the

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[48] See https://canals-amsterdam.nl/ (Accessed 12 June 2020).

canals becoming "the quintessential place of Dutch history, government, and culture" (Kinder, 2015, p. 43). Not surprising, it was the water that highlighted the visibility of white gays in the Netherlands in the 1990s. The canals provide a stage to Dutch liberal and progressive modes of sexual emancipation. Even more, the canals enabled for a different kind of circulation of gay people dancing, dressed up and donned out on boats. As Kinder (2015) points out, the transformation of the water into a stage became an important performative element for the pride. The boats moving through the canals allows for a constant renewed engagement with the public who come out *en masse* to witness the parade. Kinder (2015, p. 45) states, "water helped to depoliticize the depiction of inclusivity that the parade engendered". This, according to Kinder (2015, p. 45), is related to the fact that there was a clear lack of political consciousness around water in the present. The water and its centrality thus further exemplified the inclusion of white gay people as part of Dutch society. In Kinder's (2015) reading of the Gay Pride and the use of waterways there is no analysis of who is typically associated with the image of the liberated and sexually emancipated gay figure. Interesting enough, Pride started happening only about a decade after the height of BMR organising in the 1980s. During the 1990s, new BMR organisations such as *Strange Fruit, SUHO,* and *Brown Blossoms* were still active. Of course, queers of colour who organised under the BMR movement have not disappeared from the radar during the introduction of Pride. Yet, there is actually remarkably little published on the violent and political connotations of the water and the presence or absence of queers of colour in the Gay Pride in Amsterdam. I read this in conjunction with queer studies more broadly in the Netherlands, which consistently situates queers of colour outside of the

Dutch queer imagination. Recent scholarship on queer of colour histories and organising in the Dutch context during the 1970s and 1980s does not include BMR feminist and queer collectives of colour (see Boston and Duyvendak, 2015). I have thus called for a closer examination of how a queer of colour presence and organising intersects with the waterways and their subsequent histories. The 'forward design' of the canals centuries later is met by the Gay Pride which becomes co-opted as a white gay liberal benchmark. What does this mean for queers of colour in the present?

Circular Visions

This chapter followed future paths and possibilities for queer, feminist and archival scholarship to expand and implode the notion of the archive. I employed different modes of futurity through engaging with archival images and interview materials. The futurity of the BMR movement 'glimmers' in this chapter. I sought to bring together a reading of futurity through offering an analysis of the photographs that lived in my 'misfits' project. This approach tunes into what lives under the radar of the 'official archive'. Futurity is further embodied as an embodied sensuous diasporic praxis, for instance through how BMR women explore their sexuality or sing protest songs to tell stories. Finally, the use of water as a way to connect multiple temporalities makes visible the complexities of reading the presence of feminists and queers of colour today through the prism of 'arrival'. The futurity of the BMR movement refuses to be read through normative templates.

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The news of the violent and tragic death of Orlando Boldewijn was followed by massive online condolences. There was online commentary on the dangers of young queers meeting others via Grindr and in secret places. Queers of colour commented that these unsafe meetings were just part of their queer experiences. Especially Black queers and queers of colour pointed to the lack of safe spaces for young queers of colour. The white man Orlando had a date with was not charged with murder, but rather with mistreatment resulting in death. In writing about the water and the ways in which queers of colour are imagined outside of the waterway structures, I want to pause with Orlando's passing here. The collective queer of colour mourning holds the memory of generational queer grief. In writing after Muñoz's passing, Chambers-Letson, Nyong'o and Pellegrini (2019, p. 278) beautifully write, "Queer grief is characterized by the simultaneity of grieving those we have loved and lost, alongside mourning for a queerness and the forms of queer life that we have not yet known and are still to lose". It is in this space of grief, mourning and the unknown futures yet to come that I come back to 'Gay Mermaids' here. The queer aesthetic qualities of the image linger in the motifs of the soft waves of the water. One of the men looks up with his hand gesturing the air and the other laughs looking toward the camera. Singh (2018b, p. 29) offers another way to imagine the archive, "the body archive is an attunement, a hopeful gathering, an act of love against the foreclosures of reason". It is this hopeful gathering of these two Black queer men on the Amsterdam waterways that resemble the importance of thinking and which gestures futurity to me. We know that the

boat is in motion because of the rippling water. I know it is going somewhere. I know that there is a notion of archive here and at the same time a refusal to be archived, a refusal for this image to simply document the presence or absence of these two Black queer men. Yet something else becomes legible here. To me, this image opens up a circular vision of what is possible in subverting these colonial water ways. This image is not still, it continues to gesture.

Quiet ripples becoming louder and queerer.

A circular return.

Conclusion: Listening to the Archive

This journey into the BMR movement started with a proposition on how to make sense of the many waterways that underlie feminist and queer movement work. In these final reflections on the project, I will bring home the different waterways and infrastructures that underlie the movement. I sought to contribute to the construction of a BMR genealogy in this project by paying specific attention to the role of archives in feminist and queer of colour research. My point of departure was that the archives that I worked with and constructed should not be read as counter- or alternative-archives, but as a re-arrangement of what is already legible as archive. In doing so, this project has offered experimental forms of reading, sensing, listening and orientating toward and with stories coming out of the BMR movement. The overall project brought together a layered and textured account on spatiality and belonging; kinship and circuits of transnational exchange; queer of colour politics and cultural work; and the role of care and futurity therein. Ultimately, this project has done four things: 1) It has situated the BMR movement within a circuit of transnational feminist and queer exchange through paying specific attention to how flows of people, information, ideas, and kinship travel 2) It has unpacked how the BMR movement disrupts the racial ordering of space in the Netherlands 3) It has offered new ways to approach and research the role of the archive in feminist and queer research 4) It has constructed a new archive in this project, providing novel ways to navigate abundance and loss within feminist and queer archives of colour. My multi-pronged approach simultaneously offered a

genealogy of BMR experiences and an analysis of what becomes legible as the BMR archive. I have provided an intellectual contribution to knowledge about race and gender in Europe, feminist and queer of colour studies, and archival theory. This conclusion will further exemplify these original contributions, address the significance of researching the BMR movement, address the problems and flaws I countered, and point to possible avenues for future research.

Disrupting White Order

This project sought to provide insight into important political contributions that BMR women made to undo the stubborn colour-blindness that identifies much of the Dutch political landscape. I argued and set out, through engaging with policy and everyday experiences of gendered racism, how Dutch racism is ingrained in the construction of Dutchness. I follow a wide range of scholars (Essed, 1991; Essed and Hoving, 2014; Ghorashi, 2014; Jones, 2018; Jordan, 2014; Wekker, 2016a) in the exploration of the specificities of Dutch racism. This specificity is, however, not about a Dutch exceptionalism, but about attending to the particular histories that inform what we know about Dutch racism today. In this regard, I have sought to engage with BMR stories across temporalities and geographies. This approach allowed me to move away from the narrow framing of feminist and anti-racist waves of organising. I observe that while the contemporary second wave of anti-racist organising continuous to make important impact, there is still little knowledge

of BMR organising that constituted the first wave.[49] While it was not my aim to provide conclusive answers as to why this is the case, this thesis does have the intention to contribute to intergenerational conversations. This thesis traced multiple strands of disruption to white order within BMR organising through shifting between a micro- and macro analysis of everyday experiences and political events.

While there is increasing valuable scholarship on formations of race in relationship to gender, sexuality, and empire in the Netherlands, the BMR movement is generally not understood as an important site of knowledge production for this type of analysis. I have therefore firmly situated the BMR movement as an integral site to understanding racial and spatial ordering in the Netherlands (Alejandro Martina and Schor, 2018). This project offered a rigorous and in-depth analysis through interviews and archival materials that clearly position BMR women not only as knowledge producers but as a movement that through politics, culture, self-study, and solidarity practices ruptured white hegemony. Through organising events, conferences, workshops and making use of magazines, newsletters and radio, BMR women charted anti-black and anti-migrant rhetoric in the Netherlands. The work of Egbert Alejandro Martina and Patricia Schor (2018) has been influential in my thinking about space and order in the Netherlands. Martina and Schor (2018) argue that race has long functioned as an ordering mechanism to manage populations. This thesis has engaged with this concept by looking into the ways BMR

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[49] This is further complicated by the use and framing of the fourth wave of feminist organising in the Netherlands.

women indexed these "ordering mechanisms". For instance, how both labour migrants and post-colonial migrants were subjected to policy focused on integration and participation. *Flamboyant* actively organised workshops about Dutch policy to more broadly inform how this affected BMR women. Chapter Three addresses the vital subject of funding. During the 1990s, there is a recognisable shift in the Dutch funding landscape, which was detrimental for many BMR organisations. A comprehensive reading of local and national funding bodies fell outside of my scope, however, suffice to say that funding decisions played a crucial role in the demise of the movement. The approaches to funding on a local and national level were complex and riddled with a variety of subjective approaches to how BMR women should participate in Dutch culture.

Circuits of Transnational Exchange

In order to grapple with the multi-realities and experiences that underlie the 'black, 'migrant, and 'refugee' movement, I started by asking questions around what kind of framework was best suited to analyse the movement's geo-political nature. I opted for an interdisciplinary approach because the multifaceted nature of the BMR movement cannot be analysed through a singular lens. The archival and interview material guided much of the development of my framework and point of reference. I addressed both individual and collective modes of knowledge production and paid specific attention to the analysis of difference. BMR women offered invaluable contributions to a variety of debates and recognised the discrepancies in Dutch policy, which excluded them on the basis of gender

from minority policies, and on the basis of race from emancipation policies (Botman, Jouwe and Wekker, 2001, p. 13). The archival materials and interviews showed how BMR feminism and anti-racist politics were construed on the basis of solidarity. While many BMR women organised for their own communities, they were simultaneously part of and set up organisations and collectives addressing the needs and realities of the wider movement. What this project showed is that solidarity across ethnicities was an informed ideological decision based on the diverse migratory histories in the Netherlands. The fact that most of these political solidarity structures are no longer operative[50] and have largely been erased from public discourse, informed my focus on the everyday experiences of BMR organising. This included an analysis of how the 'transnational' and 'diasporic' were also experienced within an ephemeral and multi-sensory realm. I illustrate the value and power of this approach across chapters.

In Chapter Three, for example, I demonstrate how important refusal was as part of the political culture of organising at the time, both along the lines of fitting into brackets of ethnicity or to use funding for non-political activities focused on integration. Chapter Four on *Sister Outsider* uses a letter sent by the collective to Audre Lorde; in it, the women situate themselves as Black lesbians from former Dutch colonies who reach out to their Black sisters across the ocean, with the intent to share about the Netherlands. Chapter Five

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[50] In a book review of *Afropessimism* by Frank Wilderson III, Gloria Wekker (2020) addresses the transgenerational lack of knowledge about the Dutch BMR feminist and anti-racist struggles amongst younger generations and questions the prominence of Afropessimism in activist circles.

deals with *Strange* Fruit, founded by Moroccan, Turkish and Afro-Caribbean young men and sex-workers who set out to organise and subsequently received their informal guidance and education from BMR women. This showed that the 'transnational' was already firmly embedded in the convergence of post-colonial migrants, labour migrants and refugees. Even more, each of these examples shows that the 'transnational' stood in conjunction with the 'diasporic' and was woven into the praxis of feminist and anti-racist comradeship and solidarity work. Publications such as *Ashanti* and the *Flamboyant* newsletter, both incorporated in this thesis, further exemplify this by including stories on the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, protests of Ashanti editors and readers against nuclear weapons, and women's politics in Cuba. These investments make evident that BMR women were actively taking part in and shaping the conversation on social justice issues, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism on a structural level. While political contestations were part of the BMR movement, it was harder to trace these in the BMR archival and interview materials. While this might be considered a limitation of the project, the materials and BMR women do actively address and conceptualise difference.

Following the currents and streams that undergird the travelling of feminist and queer activism and scholarship, this thesis shows how Black British and Black North American feminist thought was translated into the Dutch context. As explained, for BMR feminists, the concept of intersectionality was useful, amongst others, to address the Dutch government's failures to understand the position of BMR women. In this regard, the thesis also shows that the very use of BMR as an organising label was a mode of resistance against

the government-imposed pillarisation of racialised communities. In Julia da Lima's speech, referred to in the introduction, she speaks of the dangers of making a distinction between 'Black' and 'foreign'. Da Lima advocated for the use of 'Black' to include women from the "former and contemporary colonies of the Netherlands, and all the women who by white people are called foreign, *allochtoon*, non-western, third world" (Carrilho and Vega, n.p 1984). I wanted to consider what the use of political blackness practically meant and how it has shaped solidarity politics in the Dutch context. In so doing, I was not invested in resolving the legimate tensions about its usage during the 1980s. What became clear from the archival materials and interviews, similarly to what Nydia Swaby (2014) shows in the British context, is that the practical use of the term fell short in addressing the complexities of experiences of those racialised as 'Other'. However, while the term BMR was, as Botman, Jouwe and Wekker (2001) argue far from perfect, it gave a relatively small group of women an umbrella term under which they could organise. Using this broader term still allowed for BMR women to tend to and conceptualise difference as the stories of Gloria, Kamala and Troetje demonstrate. I used examples of BMR publications to further demonstrate how these conversations took shape. These iterations of solidarity politics further underscore the need to consider other histories of colonialism, empire, and migration outside of dominant U.S. transnational feminist frameworks.

That being said, upon finalising this project it is also much clearer to me who is not accounted for under the umbrella of 'transnational'. Inevitably, I played a role in this as researcher and made choices about who was at the centre of the 'transnational' and who

was considered at the margins. For instance, as discussed in Chapter Two, I did not interview Moroccan and Turkish women, nor did I interview women who had come to the Netherlands as refugees. My point is here that each of these groups bring a specificity to how migration is understood through a transnational framework. In interviewing BMR women who are mostly university educated and who are middle class, I too produce a reading of the 'transnational' that is not consistent with BMR working class perspectives. Future research would benefit from delving deeper into the role of BMR women in union work, which Ernestine and Ida discuss in Chapter Seven.

Lastly, I put this framework of 'transnational feminism' in conversation with queer of colour critique and the notion of queer diaspora. In adopting Halberstam's scavenger methodology, I combined these modes of analysis to offer a specifically located reading of the BMR movement within a Dutch and European framework. The use of Gopinath's (2005; 2018) 'queer diaspora' has influenced and challenged my thinking on the usefulness of this concept for the BMR movement. I was in search of a framework that would address the ways in which queers of colour disrupted the nation state by non-western sexual practices. For instance, the stories about Tieneke and her lesbian mother discussed in Chapter Four or Gloria's account on how *mati*-work travelled to the Netherlands discussed in Chapter Seven, all pushed against the common perception that the 'Other' becomes a gay subject in the West. I have not only used Gopinath's (2018) work to analyse the collectives such as *Sister Outsider* and *Strange Fruit*, I also extended this analysis of the visual aesthetics of the diaspora. The collages discussed in Chapter Five show that the 'transnational' and

'diasporic' also configure in the visual production of the movement. With visual references to Pratibha Parmar's short film *Khush* (1991) and Essex Hemphill's poem *For My Own Protection*, *Strange Fruit* also describe how aesthetics become part of the flow of people, concepts and ideas. This queer diasporic presence stands in tension with prevalent liberal white gay and anti-islamophobic rhetoric. In Chapter Seven I briefly touched on the visual optics of the Amsterdam Gay Pride, and how the history of the pride, the role of the water, and white gay visibility are connected. In developing a viable queer of colour critique and analysis of the queer diaspora of the Netherlands, homonationalism (Puar, 2007) and gay imperialism (Haritaworn, Tauqir and Erdem, 2008) need to be further teased out and are important strands that warrant further research. In finalising this project, I see clearly how BMR feminist and anti-racist work would contribute to such research. When Dutch popular discourse proclaimed the emancipation of women had come to an end, it was time to liberate Muslim women from Muslim men. As Botman, Jouwe and Wekker (2001, p. 12) point out, these conversations were inevitably gendered with an increased focus on headscarf's, arranged marriages, circumcision, and honour deaths. At the same time, this rhetoric placed white progressive gays in opposition to the supposedly straight migrant. In particular, BMR lesbian women challenged the dichotomy around in/visibility entrenched in the Dutch context (Botman, Jouwe and Wekker, 2001, p. 173). These connections are beneficial to further engage this continuously anti-black, anti-migrant and Islamophobic climate. Overall, this thesis showed the necessity for the 'transnational' to become firmly ingrained within the politics of location (Rich, 1984). The use of terms such as

'transnational' and 'diaspora' in reference to feminist and queer research require a certain instability to become truly generative.

Why Archives Matter

Archives matter because they trouble what we come to know as archive or 'archiveable'. In other words, they matter because they undo our expectations of memory and processes of memorialisation. I suggest that conducting archival research and constructing a genealogy of the movement benefits from a reflexive engagement with the archive. This project has demonstrated a thorough and experimental engagement with an archive that intersects multiple sensibilities, some related to coloniality, movement, displacement, queerness, transnational identities and forms of activism in a particular moment in Dutch and Western European history. At the same time, this project has actively sought out and illuminated the various intersections the women of the collectives and activist platforms, in particular, bring to and have brought to disrupt dominant discourses about archives. I wanted to broaden the analysis of the BMR movement by including an engagement of the archive as theoretical tool, concept and method. This thesis thus contributes to existing literature on feminist, queer and colonial archives, by pointing to what we have to gain from developing an analysis of the archival ordering structures that underlie white feminist collections. I further wanted to play with the sense of 'speaking' and 'hearing' in and with the archive. Spivak (1988) informed my thinking on the historical and ideological implications of when the subaltern may speak and more importantly, when they are heard.

As set out in the introduction, Spivak's work (1988) challenged the recovery model of the archive (Arondekar, 2005). Spivak's question offered a provocation that I sought to explore and put to work in the BMR archives.

In Chapter Three, I showed how BMR women were rendered illegible and 'ungeographic' in the archive, which speaks to the epistemic violence that underlies questions of documentation. Further, what the vast range of materials of the BMR movement show is that histories of coloniality reside outside of official state archives. This brings up important questions about where colonial histories are understood to reside. Scholars such as Gloria Wekker (2016) and Anjali Arondekar (2009), who study the connections between sexuality and colonialism have thus long advocated to move away from narrow readings of the colonial archive. Working against the mechanisms of the recovery model thus requires a specific understanding of how materials are evoked.

Through devising a methodology based on 'listening', 'mapping', and 'orientation', I sought to grapple with the complexities of conducting archival research. Despite the BMR collection having been fragmented and scattered, I did not want to produce a linear and historical narrative of the BMR movement. I showed that in approaching the archive we can make use of other narrative devices (Cha, 2001; Cho, 2008). In this regard, I employed the framework of tuning into the fragments and scatters of BMR stories and the archive. The thesis demonstrates that embracing the displacement and unruliness of stories and materials enriches how the movement is framed. In particular, this thesis makes a

contribution to exploring the multiple ways in which we can use 'listening', 'mapping', and 'orientation' to construct new relationalities with the archive. I illustrated this through incorporating archival research notes, putting archival and interview materials in conversation with each other, and tuning into the debris of the archive. The work of Tina Campt (2017) and Gail Lewis (1996; 2017) have been instrumental in my thinking on how we 'listen' to the presence and absence in the archive, and how we attend to and use the category of experience. Through developing a multi-sensory engagement with the archive, this thesis converses with scholars who work on affect (Cifor, 2015), the ephemeral (Muñoz, 1996) and embodiment (Singh, 2018b). I discussed the tensions in working with institutional white feminist archives and how this stands in relationship with working with interview materials. I further argued that there are other ways to know an archive, especially considering the haunted conditions and the presence of ghosts in the collection. One of the key interventions this thesis makes is addressing the racial taxonomies of white feminist and queer archives whilst proposing a radical praxis of care. I suggest that mapping these racial taxonomies are an important part of conducting archival research. Further, I make use of queer approaches to orientation (Ahmed, 2006) to show that as researchers we are orientated by materials as much as we 'orientate' them. Towards the end of this project, I greatly benefitted from scholarship within disability studies and crip theory, to think through the politics of access. I see great potential in further exploring these modes of accessibility, including design (Hamraie, 2017), and pushing against the exclusivity of archival sites and scholarship. The question of who becomes locked out of the archive also matters for those cannot get physical access to the archive. This thesis thus shifted from

primarily engaging the archive as a means to an end, to situating the archive as a thematic, method and question.

Subverting the Water

In the development of my methodological framework, I was inspired by the canal structures of Amsterdam and the contested history of water for the Dutch. I decided to use this idea of waterways as metaphor in the research design. This meant that I had to conceptualise how waterways could be of use for the overall argument. The more I was immersed in the project, the more I started to see the various waterways materialise. This thesis engaged in an analysis of archived materials such as magazines, newsletters, letters, and notes. Other archived materials concerning the visual such as photographs, collage, radio shows and films were also included. I further made use of an analysis of existing interviews and the interviews I conducted for this project. Finally, I paid specific attention to the materiality of the archive through focusing on debris that is not indexed, such as a lost hair, coffee stains, a rusty staple and dried flowers. As a result, the symbolic use of waterways manifested in two ways. One, each of these explorations of interview and archival material constituted their own and overlapping waterways. Two, waterways and circulation were used to offer another form of reading and writing about the movement. In retrospect, this approach has not just been beneficial to the research design, but also allowed me to bring in a sense of place. I wanted the reader to experience a sense of movement and flow in the work. In the development of my methodological framework, 'four-season methodology'

(González, 2000) shaped my thinking considerably on how to incorporate a sense of circularity in the research process. I showed that following a certain fluidity and natural flow in the research is possible. I should note here that this kind of research takes time, and finalising this project took longer than I previously imagined. The thesis pointed out how time and temporal arrangements informed my reading of the BMR movement. Scholars who write on time show why it is important to 'drag time' (Freeman, 2010) or slow down the 'tempo' (Page, 2017), and in retrospect I would argue this is true for the research too. I worked across three different archival collections, conducted relatively long interviews and several interviews with one participant, and I needed time to figure out how I would use different materials and excerpts. Further processes of translation, in terms of language, but also in translating and balancing the Dutch context with a broader transnational story I wanted to tell, also took time. I once again gained a lot of insight from the work of crip theorists (McRuer, 2006; Kafer, 2013) who resist linear and ableist notions of time under which much research projects need to be carried out.

Weaving in temporality as an important part of the research design also informed the two thematic chapters this thesis offers. In addition to an empirical analysis of BMR collectives, I wanted to address the larger themes that informed my research. I drew attention to care and futurity because these were larger concerns that showed up in the research. Coming up against issues and questions related to haunting, ghosts and refusal, pushed me to include these themes in separate chapters. I proposed that a radical care praxis is necessary when working with haunted and ghostly stories and materials because they unsettle

common narrative devices. I grappled with the complexity that indeed the BMR archives document violence and reproducing these accounts might cause more violence. I did not argue that this is always circumventable, but I showed that there are other ways of engaging weathered accounts that do not centre the spectacles of archival violence. Finally, I asked what does the futurity of the BMR movement look like? I argued that this research endeavour was not about recovering the past in the present. I thus had to make sure to exemplify what the role of futurity is for the movement. I decided to do this in an experimental engagement with archival and interview materials to offer insight into where the stories of the BMR movement gesture futurity. Following queer theorists such as Muñoz (2009), I delved under the radar of the archive, to explore what the BMR stories and materials forecast. In part, this approach was taken because I wanted to link the idea of futurity to the materials I had personally set aside for future use. The photographs that I had set aside did not neatly fit into the other chapters. Further, I sought to return to a contemplation of the water in this chapter, and the ways in which water is a red thread within a larger temporal schema. For instance, I referenced the workings of the canal waterways because I show how these infrastructures inform my reading of futurity. I used two other vignettes, one about the use of canals during gay pride to enhance white gay visibility and another about the tragic and violent passing of Orlando Boldewijn. I was mindful of including the story of a young Black queer boy; I wanted to draw a connection between Orlando and the ongoing queer grief and mourning, that underlies any conceptualisation of a queer future.

Research implications and Ethics

In the discussion of the theoretical and methodological implications of the research, a couple of important implications are made that I briefly address here. I showed that using a transnational framework needs to be fully rooted in a rigorous reading of Dutch and European diasporic politics. This use of a transnational feminist and queer approach to the project was also extended to researching archives. I demonstrated this in Chapter Four, where I argued that transnational feminist and queer approaches have the power to disrupt hierarchal readings of transnational exchange, e.g. centring a U.S. dominant perspective. My empirical findings pushed for an interdisciplinary approach to the archive, which is a necessary challenge to the current limitations of archive studies. One of the key contributions of the thesis is an urgent call to move away from the use of alternative or counter archives. I showed that as such this is not about the content of these archives, but about being relegated to the margins of the archive proper.

I have already pointed to some of the weaknesses and limitations in the study. The main issues relate to a lack of inclusion of Turkish and Moroccan women, and the absence of working-class perspectives in my interviews. This speaks to my concerns of not being able to represent the range of the BMR movement. I recognise that there are clear limitations in the methodological framework of circulation and natural flow, when this very flow means that one ends up speaking to a small circle of BMR women who were already more or less connected to each other. While on the one hand this produces a particular intimacy,

the limitation is a clear lack of other perspectives. In this regard, I recognise that I was not able to contradict or juxtapose BMR experiences with other perspectives. This did inform my decision to include perspectives like Cisca's who in Chapter 3 states that one needed to be educated to produce or be part of BMR knowledge production. Another limitation, which could be picked up by future research, is that I only interviewed one member of *Strange Fruit*. The collective is vast in terms of its organising work and it would be of interest to hear more about the perspective of sex workers of colour.

In terms of ethics, I want to consider two important points came up in the research process. The first point is related to working and using archival materials of women who are no longer alive. There is always a question about the ethics that come with writing about the lives of others. I find Tiffany Page's (2017) work on vulnerable writing practices particularly important in this regard. I particularly had questions about the inclusion of materials of Tania and Inday's stories in Chapter 6, and I grappled with the implications of how I framed their stories. Their stories raise questions about the ethics of writing about sickness, health, violence, and death. They also raise questions about how violence in the archive is engaged with and read. In conducting archival research, I am thus also mindful of the vulnerability of the stories held in the archive. In working with a note about Tania's cancer diagnosis and materials related to her garden in Chapter Six, I wanted to provide an analysis on the ethics of the presence of materiality in the archives. I had found the note about Tania distressing, and wanted to further explore why this was the case. My writing of this account did not take away these ethical concerns, but allowed for a closer reading of how ethical

questions are often the result of an affective relation with materials. The second point is related to the politics of naming and language. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, much of the politics around naming is simply unsatisfactory. The use of BMR already encountered difficulties during the 1980s and 1990s, and is no longer in popular use. I found that the use of POC or NBPOC for non-black migrants did not quite address the specificity of the Dutch context adequately. Further, these terms often obscured specific patterns of migration. Notwithstanding, these are North American terms, which are largely used in contemporary activist circles and now also readily applied to the Dutch context. I therefore opted to stick with BMR, and the terminology women used in interview and archival materials. I recognise that this term is dated and not encompassing, I thus suggest its usage is relevant in a charting a genealogy of the movement, but does not suffice to understand contemporary politics. Lastly, in the use of the term there must always be attention to difference and trajectories of anti-blackness that are inevitably bound up with these umbrella terms. My use of queer as an identity marker and analytical framework posed an ethical consideration in so far that some BMR women could not find themselves in these terms at all and prefer lesbian. I am mindful of the ethical implications of this, and sought to make space for the use of lesbian and gay within a wider framework of queer of colour scholarship. Finally, I want to acknowledge that I am aware of the importance of reflecting on the use of gendered language, including the use of pronouns. While I have not used gender neutral pronouns, I recognise the importance of thinking through the use of this in doing any form of historic research.

A final point about research implications and ethics is related to my relationships with the women interviewed for this project. In particular, I want to reflect on the relationship with Anne in the project, who became a co-curator and co-researcher in many ways. Chapter Five details how Anne and I ended up working in the archives together, and how Anne played a key role in my ability to access archives that were not fully disclosed for the public. This meant that I was only able to access the materials with Anne present, and she became a guide in this process. Moreover, Anne consistently selected materials, including booklets, interviews, flyers, and printouts, for me to look at. As a feminist researcher, I am also aware of the hierarchies that this produces in the final product, which is offered under my name. Overall, the research implications and ethics of this project show that much of feminist and queer theory including methods unfold in real time.

Future Circulations

This project offers many avenues for future research, some of which I already mentioned in my earlier discussion. I chose to focus on the stories of eight women; Anne, Cisca, Ernestine, Gloria, Ida, Kamala and Troetje, because I wanted to allow for perspectives on the movement of women who had organised across different collectives. I purposefully make archival research central to this project, because I wanted to create an interplay between interview and archival materials, and show the possibilities such an approach. My methodology of 'listening', 'mapping' and 'orientation' can be used in relationship to studies on movement and organising work, and in projects that involve archival research

within a feminist, queer, transnational and post-colonial context. Finally, this project called to trouble the uses of the archive and to ask critical questions of the multiple stakeholders involved with the process of archiving. Future studies working with feminist and queer collections of colour can benefit from working with other schemas of legibility. Finally, future researchers seeking to 'unlisten' to familiar or dominant narratives in the archives would benefit from using a multi-sensory approach to foreground a material relationship.

I conclude by returning to the question of legibility. Through honing into the intimacies between people, concepts, and objects, I offered a genealogy of the BMR movement, which resides right beneath the radar of the 'official archive'. Through exploring the everyday political experiences of BMR women, an intricate network of connections emerged, which makes legible the many circulations that underlie feminist and queer movement work.

Coda

In finalising this project, I realise my writing has become a listening circle. Listening for practices and stories of those who were and are willing to do the work to deepen curiosity. The keepers of my circles are the communities that I have built in and outside of these pages that breathe life into future possibilities. This work has shown me how circles emerge in the most unexpected places and what it means to keep writing circulation into words.

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