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# **Picnic in Paradise**

Blootstelling van een onschuldig plekje<sup>1</sup>

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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## **Abstract**

The picnic blanket, as a textile object, is infused with meaning by its colonial history and its inherent use. Its purpose goes beyond providing a soft and dry surface to sit on. By putting down your picnic blanket you can temporarily stake your claim on that piece of land. We might consider the picnic blanket as a private haven in a public space.

The cross-over between private and public space is a dynamic environment that is established by continually interacting and adapting. By collaborating with others in a space everyone can gain some ownership of that space.

Using the picnic blanket as vehicle for investigation, I explore the boundaries of private and public space. Through linking the history of picnicking with the Sublime and particularly the Female Sublime, I establish its significance and the fact that it provides a gendered space.

With the help of Marcuse's ideas on the 'natural state' I define the private sphere as a state of mind. I then look at that notion in relation to public space. The appropriation of public space as described by De Certeau and the appropriation of mind space as described by Foucault set up a dynamic field by which private space is surrounded. The social navigation of our environment is the constant consideration of willingness to collaborate.

It is something we are all part of, some readily, some trying to resist. Returning to Marcuse, I examine ways in which the private mind space can be preserved. It is the notion of innocence, a state of mind from before 'the fall', that Marcuse and others indicate as providing a barrier against surplus repression of societal judgement. The question is how to maintain this innocence. My personal investigation of innocence, which is presented in this exegesis through narrative, runs parallel to my practice.

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