Portrait and documentary photography in post-apartheid South Africa: (hi)stories of past and present

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Declaration

This thesis is the result of work carried out by me, and has been written by me. Where other sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

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Abstract

This thesis will explore how South African portrait and documentary photography produced between 1994 and 2004 has contributed to a wider understanding of the country's painful past and, for some, hopeful, for others, bleak present. In particular, it will examine two South African photographic works which are paradigmatic of the political and social changes that marked the first decade after the fall of apartheid, focusing on the empowerment of both photographers and subjects. The first, Jillian Edelstein's (2001) *Truth & Lies: Stories from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa*, captures the faces and records the stories of perpetrators and victims who gave their testimonies to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa from 1996 to 2000. The second, Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin's (2004a) *Mr. Mkhize's Portrait & Other Stories from the New South Africa*, documents the changed/ unchanged realities of a democratic country ten years after apartheid.

The work of these photographers is showcased for its specificity, historicity and uniqueness. In both works the images are charged with emotion. Viewed on their own — uncaptioned — the photographs have the capacity to unsettle the viewer, but in both cases a compelling intermeshing of image and text heightens their resonance and enables further possibilities for interpretation. In their contributions to the critical theory of photography Roland Barthes, Victor Burgin and Max Kozloff underscore the centrality of the interplay between image and text in the meaning-making process anchoring a critical engagement with photography. Burgin (1982) states that "Even the uncaptioned photograph, framed and isolated on a gallery, is invaded by language when it is looked at", and Kozloff (1987) claims that "However they are perceived, images have to be mediated by words".

This thesis singles out emotionally charged and forceful photographs in Edelstein, Broomberg and Chanarin's repertoire to consider both the complex process of the construction and interpretation of photographic meaning and question if/when photographs do, in fact, depend on language. Central to the architecture of photography is the layering of the representations, firstly through the specific photographic language and form of address which characterises the portrait genre, and secondly through the verbal text accompanying the images. I argue that the viewer's experience of the photograph unfolds at two distinct moments of viewing. The first moment is defined by the "raw" encounter with the photograph — mediated by an affective response to its emotional or symbolic content — and the second

moment encompasses the response to the photograph's compositional elements, or signifying units, in articulation with the text/narrative accompanying it.

This analysis brings to the fore the relation and exchange between photographer and subject and, ultimately, between photographer, subject and viewer. Emmanuel Levinas and Hannah Arendt's theoretical insights provide a platform for exploring the lived, concrete experience of ethical choice and action at the core of the photographer–subject-viewer humanistic triangulated relationship. Germane to this discussion, Ariella Azoulay's (2008) conception of "the civil contract of photography" extends the possibility of questioning and/or examining, firstly, the complex intertwining roles of the several participants in the photographic act/encounter and, secondly, the photographic image as an intercultural nexus wherein photographer, subject and viewer meet.

The triangulation of photographer-subject-viewer, which constitutes the guiding thread of this study, is further explored and illuminated from the perspective of Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the "utterance", enabling me to engage with the dialogical dimension of photographic practice. The affinities between Levinas and Bakhtin — two philosophers of alterity — revealed through a common language of responsibility in the relation with the other, inform my reading and discussion of the ethical project of photography in post-apartheid South Africa.

Phenomenology, narrative theory and social semiotic visual analysis guide the methodology adopted in this study, creating a synergy between a reflective/dialogical, a discursive/sociological and a more semiological/aesthetic approach. From this perspective, my concern will be in establishing the interdisciplinarity between Visual Culture and Cultural Studies and, in so doing, I will explore the relationship between the photograph, documentary practice, social processes, modes of representation and/or visual testimony, confirming Irit Rogoff's (1998) claim that "[I]mages do not stay within discrete disciplinary fields (…), since neither the eye nor the psyche operates along or recognizes such divisions. Instead they provide the opportunity for a mode of new cultural writing existing at the intersections of both objectivities and subjectivities".

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The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

Nelson Mandela

Introduction

This dissertation aims to contribute to an emerging body of critical studies about South Africa's visual culture by critically reflecting on the formal nature and uses of documentary and portrait photography in post-apartheid South Africa. Two motivating engines propel this study: one intends to analyse the documentary role of the camera during the apartheid era, especially with regards to recording not only the atrocities of apartheid but also the relations between people on different sides of the colour bar; the other aims to examine the inter-relationship of the democratisation[1] of photography in South Africa with the dawning and maturing of democracy after the fall of apartheid. A dialogue will be established between the past and the present, and between history, memory and photography.

During the first decade of democracy in South Africa, scholarly literature produced in and about South Africa reflected on key events, concerns and processes of a society undergoing profound social and political transformations. The early phase of the transition to democracy was characterised by the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings where concepts of "forgiveness" and "reconciliation" became crucial stakes for its success. Official rhetoric emphasised ideas of "inclusiveness", "non-racial democracy", "national unity" and a "national identity". Monument building, new official commemorations and collective representations secured the foundations of a (re)invented collective memory and a new social consciousness. The Apartheid Museum, the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum and the Constitution Hill project emerged as important mnemonic landscapes that, while promoting a constructive future, use forms of representation of the past that guard against the amnesia of future generations.

The roles of memory, of truth and reconciliation anchored most of the critical analyses produced during the first phase of the political and social transition from apartheid to democracy. A worthy example is provided by the essays collected by Nuttall and Coetzee's (1998) in *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*. Centred on the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (henceforth

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[1] The word is used in three ways: the first refers to a form of resistance adopted by the struggle photographers of the 1980s and early 1990s for whom "the 'camera' [was] a voice for those denied a vote and basic human rights, and was instrumental in bringing the South African struggle to the international arena" (Hill and Harris, 1989:7); the second refers to the "liberation" of photography in South Africa following the ban, in 1985, of press-coverage of anti-apartheid violence; the third comprehends the new ways in which photographic representations of apartheid are now used within a society that is undergoing significant socio-cultural and political change.

TRC), the anthology engages and enmeshes questions of representation with those of testimony, evidence and historical memory. Njabulo Ndebele's (1998:20) contribution, in particular, foregrounds the role of personal experience and of narrative in the shaping of a new social consciousness. The author builds a pivotal argument — on which many studies, including this dissertation, draw — around the idea that the TRC "has given legitimacy and authority to previously silenced voices [and] lifted the veil of secrecy and state-induced blindness". Ndebele's argument emphasises that "the stories of the TRC ... are an additional confirmation of the movement of our society from repression to expression".

Coombes's (2003) examination of the role of public art and memorialisation in the South African post-apartheid cultural landscape is fertile ground for reflection. The Robben Island and District Six sites, together with the TRC hearings, provide focal points for her discussion about both the politics of representation in the museum and the institutionalisation of memory underpinning the new (post-apartheid) policy on heritage development. Conceptually, history, heritage, "truth", representation and narrative form the backbone of Coombes's analysis. The complex relation and tension between the present and the past, remembrance and forgetting, healing and trauma is explored against the backdrop of the new government's "nation-building" and "national unity" project. Figuring strongly in Coombes's study, and equally important to this dissertation, is the contention that "all memory is unavoidably both borne out of individual subjective experience and shaped by collective consciousness and shared social processes so that any understanding of the representation of remembrances and of the past more generally must necessarily take into account both contexts" (Coombes, 2003:8).

The waning of the euphoria of the first democratic elections characterises a second — or another — phase in post-apartheid South Africa. Much as the tenth anniversary of the first democratic elections was seen by some as the consolidation of a non-racial democracy, the shortcomings of the new political dispensation have spawned a wave of scholarly inquiry into the continued social problems of housing, education and health care, alongside the alarming growth of poverty and inequality, crime and HIV/AIDS (Beall et al., 2005; Cuthbertson, 2008).Ten years on from the TRC hearings, a conference titled "TRC: Ten Years On" was held from 20-21 April 2006 to review the work of the Commission and assess "TRC *unfinished business*"[2]. In his opening

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[2] The conference was organised by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Its participants included academics, specialists from a wide range of fields and institutions and victims of

statement, Tim Modise, the chairman of the symposium, voiced the questions many had often asked during the two years of the TRC hearings: "Did the TRC forge a concept of nation building at the expense of thousands of apartheid victims? Where did we fall short?" He ventured an answer to the latter: "Victims/survivors are still struggling to exact the whole truth about the fate of their loved ones ... The TRC recommendations on reparations have not been fulfilled and financial reparation to victims has been pitiful" (Villa-Vicencio and du Toit, 2006:15).

Following the publication of the five volumes of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* in 1998, a number of studies have addressed the limitations and flaws of the TRC process and emphasised that imperatives of national unity and reconciliation were pursued at the expense of economic, social and psychological reparation to the victims of apartheid violence (Stanley, 2001; Wilson, 2001; Posel and Simpson, 2002). However, despite recognising the fault lines of the TRC programme, other studies foreground the importance of its having given victims of human rights abuses a chance to speak publicly about the abuses they suffered in the past. Godobo-Madikizela[3] (2002a:11) argues,

> Unlike in a court of law, where victims are brought into the picture only in relation to the perpetrator's deed, the TRC put victims in the center of the process, allowing them to tell their stories in the way that they chose before a listening audience, validating experiences that were denied by the apartheid state for many years.

Parallel to this discussion, different positions have emerged in scholarly literature on the role — and benefits — of forgiveness, instantiated during the TRC process, in changing interpersonal and social relationships, thereby leading to social reconstruction following a prolonged period of systematic abuse and social injustices. In the emerging field of study of psychology of forgiveness, Wade et al. (2005:634) define forgiveness as:

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gross human rights violations. The working group's mission was to focus, in particular, on four areas of the TRC's unfinished business: "government decisions regarding the prosecution of those who were either denied amnesty or refused to apply for it; reparations for those found by the TRC to be victims of gross violations of human rights; access to the TRC archives; and national reconciliation" (Villa-Vicencio and du Toit, 2006: i).

[3] Pumla Godobo-Madikizela is a clinical psychologist who served on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Human Rights Violations Committee from 1996 to 1998. Among other awards, in 1998 she was distinguished with the Peace Fellowship by the Bunting Fellowship Program of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard University. She is the author of *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid* (2003) and co-editor, with Chris van der Merwe, of *Memory, Narrative and Forgiveness: Perspectives on the Unfinished Journeys of the Past* (2009).

an intra-personal process, in which those who have been hurt release negative thoughts and feelings for the offending person and gain some measure of acceptance for the events ... However ... forgiveness does not necessarily have to include reconciliation ... forgiveness is not condoning a hurtful action, forgetting the wrong, or ignoring the natural consequences of the offence. Finally, forgiveness is not simply reducing the negative thoughts or emotions associated with unforgiveness.

Wade et al. (2005:634) stress that true forgiveness "requires the ability to see others in realistic terms (both the good and the bad) and to hold them accountable to natural consequences, yet still to feel compassion, empathy, or some degree of positive feelings for them". Godobo-Madikizela considers the factors and circumstances leading to forgiveness and claims that key among them is the expression of remorse. In this respect, Godobo-Madikizela (2002a:8) highlights the opportunity provided by the TRC hearings for perpetrators to express remorse for their deeds[4], enabling "what is termed the *paradox of remorse*". The author claims that "It is argued that genuine remorse humanizes perpetrators and transforms their evil from the unforgivable into something that can be forgiven".

For Jacques Derrida (2001) there are several problems at the root of the TRC's model of forgiveness and reconciliation. To begin with, he argues that "pure forgiveness" is impossible, since, as he writes, "forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable ... there is only forgiveness, if there is any, where there is the unforgivable" (32). In other words, if one forgives what is easily forgiven, one does not really forgive. In Derrida's view "pure forgiveness" is unconditional and precludes the need for an apology or repentance by the wrongdoer. Secondly, when forgiveness is elicited within the context of amnesty and reconciliation, one cannot speak of forgiveness in the strict sense of the word; one can speak of a gesture towards "[the] reconstitution of a health or a 'normality'" inherent in a process of reconciliation (50). Furthermore, he concludes that forgiveness can never be finalised, stressing that "[a] 'finalised' forgiveness is not forgiveness; it is only a political strategy or a psycho-therapeutic economy" (50).

Derrida's objections to the TRC's model of forgiveness and reconciliation reflect some of the tensions at the core of the debate on the (im)possibilities of forgiveness taken up by scholarship during and after the TRC. It is not the purpose of this thesis to intervene in this debate, which pits proponents against sceptics, and fluctuates

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[4] Only some of the perpetrators did, in fact, offer apologies and show remorse for their deeds.

between the effects and benefits of forgiveness at either the personal/collective level or the socio-political level in the post-apartheid landscape. It is, however, important to bear in mind that forgiveness and reconciliation were two of the main constituents of the prevalent "structure of feeling", to use Raymond Williams' (1961) conceptualisation of what binds together the feelings of people in specific social groups at a particular socio-historic juncture.

Significantly, this "structure of feeling" enabled (for the first time in the history of South Africa) the creation of a confluence of conditions that favoured forgiveness and reconciliation, fostering the development of humanistic values and effective interpersonal relations. A key point of focus for Godobo-Madikizela (2002a:11) is that the TRC created the conditions for victims to testify "in the presence of an attentive, sympathetic audience". Godobo-Madikizela contends that the TRC hearings gave "victims control over their narratives of trauma [which] significantly contribute[d] to the victims' recovery process". In essence, she stresses, "It is about making peace with the past — not *forgetting* the past" (emphasis in the original). The TRC promoted the individual's experience and personal accounts of the past, confirming, as Said (2003:182-3) notes, that

> Memory is a powerful collective instrument for preserving identity. And it's something that can be carried not only through official narratives and books, but also through informal memory. It is one of the main bulwarks against historical erasure. It is a means of resistance.

Important in the context of South Africa's legacy of human rights abuses is Said's (2003) formulation of culture as "a way of fighting against extinction and obliteration" to illustrate the centrality of human agency in cultural processes. From this perspective, this thesis analyses memory, storytelling and visual representation and testimony as instruments of culture used both by the individual and by social groups to exercise political agency. My approach will draw support from Hannah Arendt's (1998:viii) "account of the human capacity for action" as well as from her response to "the damage of the past" (xviii). Arendt's answer to the, at times, unbreakable chain of past wrongs and revenge is the human capacity to forgive. As she puts it,

> Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we would never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever, not

unlike the sorcerer's apprentice who lacked the magic formula to break the spell. (237)

Pivotal in the process of forgiveness — and resonating with the example of South Africa's TRC hearings — is, as Arendt (1998:50) proposes, the willingness to talk about things that had previously been experienced only in private, in as much as these "will assume a kind of reality which, their intensity notwithstanding, they never could have had before". This said, Arendt establishes what is essential for the individual to take this step: "The presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves" (50).

Drawing on Arendt's philosophical thought, Michael Jackson (2002) explores the conditions in which stories are told. He looks at the relationship between authorship, authority and authorisation and analyses the interplay between personal life stories and collectively-shared narratives. Expanding on Arendt's thesis on agency, Jackson (2002:62) argues that the "focus of agency is on each person's relationship to others rather than on his relationship with himself". When the victims at the TRC hearings reconstituted events in a story told publicly, they no longer lived those events in passivity, but, rather, "actively rework[ed] them, both in dialogue with others and within [their] own imagination" (15). In the opinion of analysts who followed the TRC hearings, what was significant in this process was that personal stories were recast in ways that made them "emblematic" of all who suffered. In Jackson's words, "In helping stories and lives 'carry meanings beyond the personal' the TRC worked to reconcile different people to one another as members of a single commonwealth of humanity" (62). This viewpoint acts as the guiding thread to my own arguments and will be taken up for more detailed examination in Chapter 2.

The analyses of photographic representations at the centre of this thesis engage, then, with key cultural and social practices that shape the trajectory from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa. The baseline from which I will start is the discussion, in Chapter 1, of photography during the apartheid era as a means of resistance against oppression through the building of social consciousness. Central to the first chapter is the study of ways in which one image in particular, Sam Nzima's photo of the dying Hector Pieterson, has been used. Two key ideas are explored. During the apartheid years the photograph sparked media attention and gained cult value, enabling it to function as a catalyst of political agency. Alongside it, struggle

photography[5] performed the testimonial function of delivering an account of the tumultuous events — identified as "the struggle against apartheid" or "the liberation struggle" — of the 1980s and the early 1990s.

With the advent of democracy new institutions and cultural practices have promoted the (re)imagining and (re)signification of photographic representations that introduce the possibility of new debates around the use of images. Notably, in choosing Sam Nzima's photograph of Hector Pieterson as its centrepiece, the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum (henceforth the HPMM) has cast the photographic image as a mnemonic device, a privileged site for (re)collecting and (re)constructing the past. Importantly, it enacts this cultural process through the interaction of photography with words, thereby framing the museum as a story-telling performance arena. Hence, memory, individual experience and narrative occupy centre stage at the HPMM, illustrating that, as Hodgkin and Radstone (2006:4) write, "oral history offers a validation of memory as *more* true and more reliable than other records: these people know what it was like because they were there".

The role and significance of the stories presented in the form of captions or text accompanying the photographs discussed in this thesis is one of the major concerns of my work. I consider a photograph's narrative potential when viewed on its own or in a sequence with other photographs, and examine how the stories that relate to each photograph add new layers of understanding to the interpretation of either a single image or a set of images, which cumulatively articulate a more complex meaning of the photographic work. I argue that precisely how the photographic work is perceived by the spectator, and what s/he discovers in it, depends largely on the affect produced by the interaction between photographs and stories (some of which reveal excruciating forms of human suffering). Both the method and substance of theoretical insight of Cathy Caruth (1995; 1996), Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's (1992) work in trauma studies and, among others, Andrea Liss (1998), Barbara Zelizer (1998) and Carol Zemel's (2003) examination of memory and representations of suffering provide a framework for my discussion.

The final part of Chapter 1 focuses on the juxtaposition between struggle photography and another type of register exemplified by David Goldblatt's (1986; 2007) work, drawing attention to different genealogies in the South African

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[5] The concept was developed by the photographers working for Afrapix, the collective photo agency founded in 1982 and dissolved in 1991. Common motifs in the black and white photos taken by Afrapix photographers included youth marches, political meetings with labour unions, funerals and police violence.

photographic archive. I seek to demonstrate that part of Goldblatt's project of documenting the deeper fabric of the South African society during apartheid is a move to go beyond the reductive binary of white versus black, oppressor versus oppressed, evil versus good, and wrong versus right. Critical engagement with Goldblatt's photography brings into view the complexity of human relations and the evidence of human bonds between blacks and whites, compelling us to question the simplistic opposites of struggle and liberation, justice and injustice, humanity and inhumanity that often characterise the apartheid construct.

I draw on Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu's ethical insights to work through and extend the conception of a post-apartheid society orientated towards a mode of human togetherness in which individuals are able to establish relations of reciprocity and solidarity. Forming the central matrix of this humanistic project (which I consider to be the most significant and ethical contribution to the reconstruction of South Africa's fractured society) is the philosophy of *ubuntu* endorsed by both Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu. Particular attention is therefore paid, throughout this dissertation, to Demond Tutu's definition of *ubuntu* (quoted in Habib, 2004:248):

> We belong together. We say in Africa: 'a person is a person through other persons'. We are bound together in a delicate network of interdependence. We believe in *ubuntu* — my humanity is caught up in your humanity. *Ubuntu* speaks of generosity, of compassion, of hospitality, of sharing. I am because you are. If I dehumanise you, then whether I like it or not I am dehumanised.

Germane to the idea, underpinning *ubuntu,* that each person — rather than an abstract being — is a living force in a constellation of relationships which contribute to a group identity is, I propose, Clifford Geertz's understanding of culture and its analysis (adopted here as a guiding principle of this thesis). In Geertz's (1973:5) words,

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.

I am suggesting, in Chapter 2, that the pervasiveness of the concept of *ubuntu* in public discourse at a historical moment when forgotten/silenced sufferings and traumas of a significant part of the population were being redeemed (within the historical and physical context of the TRC) had far reaching consequences on the personal and social levels, since it generated a process of identification with victims

of trauma (but also with perpetrators) that afforded individuals a greater sense of the relational constitution of society and culture. Significant from the point of view of this study is an emerging political discourse centred on a politics of visibility and audibility as the key dynamic of transparent governance. Within the context of the TRC hearings, leveraged on the conceptual framework of truth, the methodological approach of storytelling enabled the public relay and mediation of victims and perpetrators' testimonies. Essentially, the TRC called upon the public to participate in historically remembering, in (re)negotiating the past and (re)constructing a historical narrative.

This process opened up an imaginative space, as well as a site of negotiation and contestation where different accounts and multiple versions of the past superimposed on a hitherto accepted official narrative, allowing individuals to develop a sense of themselves as subjects and to perceive their stories as, to use Ricoeur's (1991:22) words, "something that endures and remains across that which passes and flows away". The idea put forth by Ricoeur and Antohi (2005:12) that "true testimony is oral", it is "a living voice", forms the basis of the testimony as oral history methodology used at the TRC hearings, and constitutes the ground on which a shared social consciousness could be played out. I want to take Ricoeur's thesis further and argue that true testimony is also visual. Accordingly, Jillian Edelstein's (2001) photo essay titled *Truth & Lies: Stories from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa*[6] forms the basis of this chapter, acting as the guiding thread to my argument. Edelstein's innovative use of portraiture and narrative structure to juxtapose representations of victims and perpetrators qualify *Truth & Lies* as a key document for unravelling complex issues of representation, visual testimony and the many potential processes of vision.

The point I would like to raise — and which has so far been neglected in scholarly literature — is that during the TRC process oral testimony was important in giving 'voice to the voiceless', but that, parallel to this, photography had an equally important role in both empowering and humanising individuals, since it gave 'visibility' to hitherto politically invisible and socially disrespected members of society. By attributing human faces to the stories of suffering, photographs lend credibility to those stories and enhance the range and depth of emotion of the stories to which they refer. Importantly, bolstered by the politics of visibility and enunciability at the root of the TRC's discourse and procedures, individuals produced

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[6] Henceforth *Truth &Lies*.

themselves as subjects in the emerging political arena. A central contention of this study is that the photograph articulates the agency of individuals who had been considered noncitizens within the socio-political landscape of apartheid.

Approached within the framework of Ariella Azoulay's (2008) conceptualisation of "the civil contract of photography", the photographs brought into relief in this chapter prompt a discussion about the role of photography in rehabilitating the citizenship of those who had been stripped of it and opening up possibilities of political action, from the perspective of Hannah Arendt's political thought. Within the context of the citizenry of photography each participant in the photographic encounter — photographer, photographed subject and viewer — is held accountable; each negotiates his/her position within what Azoulay calls "this civil political space". The civil contract of photography is what binds each participant in a civil relationship of rights and responsibilities, but I also argue that beyond — or perhaps prior to — this civil relationship, there is an ethical relationship between photographer, photographed subject and viewer that needs to be examined.

Therefore, I consider Edelstein's photographs as an ethical-political locus established through a contract or mutual agreement. In this view, the photograph is a space where the individual gets a sense of self-respect; a space where he/she defines a sense of his/her own value and makes a claim on others, demanding entry — as an active citizen — into the world. Where I part with Azoulay is in the notion of the photographic act as invasive, coercive and even violent. She explores the civil space of photography in terms of a constant tension between photographer and photographed person. While I do not contest the coercive and violent nature of certain *photographies* I propose to oppose Azoulay's examples with another type of photographic practice (illustrated by Edelstein's photographs) that privileges the photograph as a site of ethical engagement with the other.

My emphasis is on an ethical relation between the participants in the encounter as a central value of photographic practice. I seek to contemplate the civil space of photography not in terms of dominance relations between a photographer and a photographed person, but in terms of an ethical relation sustained by a language of interdependence and shared responsibilities between photographer, photographed subject and viewer. My principal contention is that photography that ensues from this ethical relation seeks the nonviolent representation of the other. Nonviolence is an ethical, political and civic decision, one that strikes me as urgent in the context of

the contemporary use of violence in the name of self-preservation (and, in the case of photography, for the sake of conveying reality).

There are numerous definitions of violence proceeding from different theoretical frameworks, but none that captures its many dimensions. Although I am not as concerned with finding an all-encompassing definition as I am with the interpretation and representation of violence, I find Staudigl's (2007:235) working definition of violence useful:

> At its most obvious level, violence can be analyzed as a destruction of our physical and bodily existence, as well as of its symbolic representations in language and other institutions. Violence, however, can also be analyzed at a more fundamental level. Phenomenologically viewed, it … also affects our *being-in-the-world*.

In this vein, the destructiveness of violence stems not only from its manifestations but also from its representation, since both aspects efface the victim's human qualities. I argue that a commitment to the nonviolent representation of victims constitutes the most effective ethical response to violence in that it brings about respect for human rights and restores the violated person's dignity. Photographic practice that flows from ethical concerns provides us with a constructive means of addressing political violence. By reflecting about Edelstein's, as well as Broomberg and Chanarin's photography in these terms, this thesis proposes to make an important contribution to the theory of photographic ethics, since it considers an alternative way of responding to violence with violence, one that involves re-presenting violence without doubling its presence. This choice opens an equally important space for an ethics of looking, which evokes a deeper sense of connectedness. An ethics of looking enlarges the horizon of response, demanding accountability and commitment, and correlatively discouraging civic apathy or passivity. This thesis also locates ways in which an ethical photographic practice enables particular forms of agency in relation to both traumatic historical events and contemporary socio-political circumstances.

My arguments stem from a reflection on recent discussions about imaging violence and the ethics of photography in photography theory. War, torture, violence and aggression have been the subject matter of photojournalism and documentary photography during most of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. Photographic representations of the atrocities of the Holocaust, in particular, have constituted the object of study of an extensive body of literature on trauma studies, holocaust studies and visual memory. Analyses of these

representations have kindled sadness, indignation or disgust at the atrocities that took place, and prompted meditation on the violent and destructive nature of human behaviour. While fully cognisant of the meaning and effect of atrocity photographs, Barbie Zelizer (1998) places these questions aside to examine the usefulness of such photos as both historical records and "building blocks to remembering".

Susan Sontag's (1977:20) well-known response to the first images she encountered of the Holocaust, on the other hand, reveal none of Zelizer's pragmatism. Sontag's reaction is quite visceral. Her words, "When I looked at those photographs, something broke. Some limit had been reached, and not only that of horror", denote resentment over the way the images produced an unexpected reaction or unwanted emotion. Sontag goes on to argue that rather than strengthen one's conscience and generate compassion, repeated exposure to images of suffering anesthetize us to their reality. In her last book, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), she worries about "the normality of a culture in which shock has become a leading stimulus of consumption and source of value"(20). Sontag's scepticism regarding the effectiveness (or usefulness) of images of violence has often been cited in literature as an increasing number of representations of atrocities in contemporary history (in locations like Bosnia, Chechnya, Rwanda, Uganda, Liberia, the Congo, Somalia, and Sierra Leone) have pervaded our newspapers, television and computer screens.

In her book *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence*, Susie Linfield (2010) considers the numbing effect of images of violence (although she clearly opposes Sontag's criticism of photography, just as she contests other postmodern and poststructuralist theorists' disdain of photographic practice), acknowledging that these images often have a perverse effect. She claims that rather than evoke empathy or sympathy, images of victimhood, suffering and loss often repel us, or evoke impatience and anger. These reactions fill us with feelings of guilt at our detachment, conformism and incapacity to respond (as we feel we should) to the realities depicted in the photographs. Linfield's perceptive analysis of our inability to engage with visual atrocity propels the core argument of her book, most notably that we need to look at photographs of suffering, degradation, and defeat so as to engage with the complicated histories they document. She writes,

> I believe that we need to respond to and learn from photographs rather than simply disassemble them … I believe that we need to look at, and look *into*, what James Agee called 'the cruel radiance of what is' … [I]t is photographs, I believe, that bring us close to those experiences of suffering in ways that no other form of art or

journalism can. Yet in bringing us close, photographs also illuminate the unbridgeable chasm that separates ordinary life from extraordinary experiences of political trauma (xv).

Linfield builds a compelling argument. However, she overlooks an important thought: the anger, indignation and disgust evoked by photographs of mutilated bodies do not always stem from our own moral inadequacies. They are quite often directed at the photographer's callousness and disrespect for the suffering of others. It is not that we do not want to see or engage with the realities depicted in the photographs. What most of us do not want to see is visual spectacle. We need only remember the Abu Ghraib images of human rights abuse to feel that victims have been wronged three times: once by the perpetrator, another time by the photographer, and finally by the viewer.

In her reflection about the production, dissemination and consumption of images of sexual intimidation, brutality and humiliation at Abu Ghraib prison outside of Baghdad, Judith Butler (2009) (to whom I will return in Chapter 2) develops her argument around the conception of the other (the Muslim other) as a disposable and ungrievable life. Butler claims that this understanding of the other is what compels the photographer(s) to capture the event, with the intention not of documenting or producing photographic evidence but essentially of further degrading the victim(s) and perpetuating the event. From this viewpoint, the photographer is not a witness of violence; he/she is a perpetrator who both incites the orchestration of acts of violence (by virtue of holding a camera in his/her hand) and derives pleasure from recording human degradation. The resulting "frames" of war mock human suffering, turning it into a public spectacle and annihilating the value and dignity of human life. War is depicted as systematic cruelty enforced at the level of sadistic criminal abuse.

Scholars are divided in their assessment of the ethics of depicting violence in a brutal and explicit way. Again one need only remember photographs of starving children, of executions and decaying corpses by professional documentary photographers and photojournalists, some of whom have won Pulitzer and World Press Photo prizes. Critical writing by Charles Baudelaire, Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag, Allan Sekula and John Berger claims this type of photography is voyeuristic, exploitative, and pornographic. Linfield (2010:45), on the other hand, questions whether "there [is] an inoffensive way to document unforgiveable violence".

I seek to demonstrate that there is a way — that permeates far more deeply and for longer — of heightening our conscience and eliciting a response without resorting to the dehumanising effect of visual atrocity. The photography ethics I am proposing encourages nonviolence and respect for the other[7]. Rather than dwell on human capacity for cruelty, the photography explored in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis promotes an ethics of responsibility for the other. I develop my analysis and interpretation in close dialogue with Butler's (2004; 2009) understanding of the dimensions of interdependence and vulnerability framing the human condition. Butler (2009:44) does not name it *ubuntu*, but her argument captures the essence of the philosophy of *ubuntu* (mentioned earlier) when she writes, "If I seek to preserve your life, it is not only because I seek to preserve my own, but because who 'I' am is nothing without your life, and life itself has to be rethought as this complex, passionate, antagonistic, and necessary set of relations to others".

To return to the argument of my thesis, I focus on a radically different type of photographic practice (from the atrocity photography mentioned earlier), one that seeks to counteract violence by drawing the viewer's attention to the humanity and dignity of victims of violence. The photographs examined here are about form and composition – the "physical rhythm", as Henri Cartier-Bresson calls it – but they are mainly about a respectful encounter between artist, subject and viewer. Implicit in the act of photographing and being photographed is a relationship of trust, a (un)spoken complicity resulting in a collaboration or a compromise between photographer and photographed subject. This ethical space I talk about is not limited to photographer and subject, but indeed extends to the viewer, whose role is not simply that of a passive onlooker, exercising a removed intellectual observance of the scene captured within the frame. The ethical address in the work of the photographers discussed in this thesis acts as a catalyst for reflection about our contributions to social and political change.

Three main questions motivate my discussion of photographic ethics: What sort of ethics can grow out of the photographer–photographed subject–viewer triangulated

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[7] Resonating with Jillian Edelstein's ethical treatment of the suffering of victims of human rights abuse during apartheid is Chris Bartlett's portraits of Abu Ghraib detainees, a project that was developed within the Open Society Institute's Documentary Photography Project and "Moving Walls" exhibition. These initiatives aimed to document human rights abuses, thereby gaining public support and bringing about demands for social justice. In 2006 and 2007 Bartlett photographed victims of torture in the Abu Ghraib prison and recorded the human stories behind these abuses. The resulting project consists of a sequence of aesthetically compelling and introspective portraits juxtaposed with biographical information of the photographed subjects and descriptions of the inhuman and degrading treatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib, which can be accessed at www.detaineeproject.org.

relationship? What type of ethical response is engendered by an affective connection to photographs? What type of conflicting, contradictory or ambiguous readings emerge out of an affective engagement with photographs? Emmanuel Levinas and Mikhail Bakhtin's ethical philosophies help to provide answers to these questions in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 respectively.

The portrait — the photographic genre brought into relief here — projects the complex architecture of human character, revealing beauty and power and vulnerability or even, at times, an indefinable emotion, which could perhaps be called the subject's inner self, his/her 'absolute being', or "the inner silence" referred to by Agnes Sire (2006) when characterising Cartier-Bresson's portraits. Another expression for this indefinable quality is the *animula* (meaning 'little soul' in Latin), which Barthes (2000:109) alludes to, the attitude, the *air* of the face, "that exorbitant thing which induces from body to soul" and which is unanalysable. In this context, the act of photographing intimates facing the other, perceiving him/her, answering to him/her and allowing "the face [*le visage*]" – as understood by Emmanuel Levinas (1969) — to look back, to talk back, to transform the gaze[8]. At that moment, the face, *le visage* (deriving from the Latin *visum*), not only serves its etymological function of beckoning to "a thing seen", it expresses, signifies and speaks, addressing me (the photographer/the viewer), and awakening in me a sense of responsibility for the other which Levinas foregrounds.

To take this reflection further, drawing on Levinas' (1969) conceptualisation of the "face of the Other" [*le visage d'Autrui*], Chapter 2 seeks to explore the power of Edelstein's portraiture to, in Gombrich's (1998:I) words, record and arrest "the movements of the face — [to freeze] them as it were" during a moment of introspection, a moment when external silence reflects an inner stillness or quietude, when "the face speaks" (Levinas 1969:66). Taken as an interface between self and the other, the portrait affords an encounter with the other as a face, giving rise to what Levinas (1969:33) calls the work of identification, that is, my ability – while allowing for the other to present himself — to absorb otherness "into my identity as thinker or possessor". It is in the encounter with the face of the other that the gaze undergoes transformation, turning from a relationship of appropriation of the other to one of generosity.

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[8] It is important to note that "the face" in Levinasian terms is not necessarily the anatomical face, as Hand (2009) underscores. Levinas's reflections extend far beyond the phenomena of the human face as the unique locus of expressivity. This insight offers us resources for re-thinking the way we look at a portrait, as I will explore in this thesis.

Applied to the interpretation of portraiture, Levinas's thought proposes a radical change in the way we engage with a photograph. To take cognizance of the photographed other's face is to be receptive to the other; it is to enter into dialogue with the other; it implies an experience that transcends that first assessment of the component features of the face — the shape, the texture and colour of the skin — and branches out into an understanding of something that cannot be seen, that goes beyond visual perception. As Seán Hand (2009:36) observes,

> [Levinas] presents the face not simply as a physical detail, but as a moment of infinity that goes beyond any *idea* which I can produce of the other. The very existence of this face challenges all our philosophical attempts to systematize and therefore to reduce the other.

This requires an ethics of looking, which compels me to engage with what is immediately perceptible in the face of the Other and, most importantly, with what I cannot immediately apprehend. It entails, as Derek Attridge (2004:27) observes, "registering … that which resists my usual modes of understanding". In letting myself be discomforted or unsettled, stimulated or moved, in short, transformed by the visual experience, I am welcoming the possibility of responding "adequately to the otherness and singularity of the other, it is the other *in its relating to me* … to which I am responding, in creatively changing myself and perhaps a little of the world as well" (33).

Reading images through a Levinasian optic resonates with Barthes' (2000) approach to photography in *Camera Lucida* (first published in English in 1981), where the author lays out a theory of photographic reception. Central to Barthes' photographic analyses is his categorisation of the effect photographs can have on a viewer. Strident criticism has been levelled at Barthes' last study on photography for being personal and subjective, superficial and inattentive, unoriginal and uncritical. But I argue that it is subjectivity, the individual experience, precisely, which affords each viewer the freedom to choose his/her place in relation to the photographic image, giving rise to a phenomenology of viewing.

Each viewer brings with him/her a repertoire of personal experience and values. The photograph proposes, never imposes upon the viewer; it articulates a lived experience, stimulating the viewer's memory and imagination, as well as provoking a recognition of some past experience which triggers the establishment of correspondences. Therefore, subjectivity, the personal or individual response to the photograph enables the viewer to be drawn to a detail in the photographic

representation that "pricks" or "wounds" him/her, as Barthes (2000:55) reflects. It is this affective relationship of viewing — stemming from the viewer's emotionally evaluative position — together with the ethical question of responsibility that is explored in relation to Edelstein's work.

Chapter 3 expands the theoretical analysis of photographic ethics. The substance of this chapter is formed by the understanding that at the root of an ethical photographic practice is a dialogical relationship between 'self' and the 'other'. In this regard, the concept of the "utterance" that dominates Mikhail Bakhtin's (1987) thought on dialogue provides the impetus for the exploration of the dialogical constitution of the photographic act. Framing Bakhtin's argument is the notion of constant interaction or continual flux at the core of every human encounter. Grounded on the assertion that, in Holquist's (1990:36) words, "the 'self' [is not] a unitary thing; rather it consists in a relation, the relation between self and other", Bakhtin establishes "dialogue" as the unifying element between self and the other.

Bakhtin's thesis comprises two important aspects: the first is the historical and socially specific context in which dialogic engagement takes place, and the second is the idea that "any utterance … is preceded by the utterances of others (or, although it may be silent, others' active responsive understanding, or, finally, a responsive action based on this understanding)" (Bakhtin 1986:71). Bakhtin (1986:91) contends that the continuous and constant interaction between utterances establishes speech communication as a chain made up of mutually dependent links, since "every utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances", refuting, affirming, supplementing and relying on others, presupposing them to be known and somehow taking them into account.

Bakhtin's exposition on the dialogic engagement that characterises the utterance resonates with the central contention of the current study, which situates photographic practice in a sociologically significant relationship between people. A distinguishing feature of the photographic representations examined in this chapter is the dignity with which subjects present themselves, composed and addressing the camera face on, demanding to be looked at face on, with deference. The idea that the subject has been given the possibility to address the viewer (or, to put it in Bakhtinian terms, to author his/her text) by striking a pose, and giving the most dignified image of him/herself, reflects the dialogical relationship between photographer and sitter. The viewer, in turn, is summoned to this ethical relationship and called upon to contribute a response.

In essence, I draw on Mikhail Bakhtin's approach to language and action — with its axiomatic emphasis on dialogue — to critically engage with Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin's (2004a) *Mr. Mkhize's Portrait & Other Stories from the New South Africa* from a number of perspectives. As discussed previously, the triangulated relationship between photographer, subject and viewer is seen as feeding on a continuing process of utterance and response. The production and presentation of a body of photographs (in different material forms) can be understood as emulating the same process. From this viewpoint, when photographs are put together as a body of work each individual photograph acts as an utterance that responds to other utterances that precede it.

As has been established in critical theory, the reception of photographs takes place in and through language and narrative. Viewers use language and narrative to both describe their experience of interacting with particular images and construct meaning of the photographs and stories that accompany them. In other words, following David Herman's (2007:3) definition of narrative, viewers (re)construct "what happened to particular people — and what it was like for them to experience what happened — in particular circumstances and with specific consequences", since, as he argues, "Narrative … is a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process and change" (3).

From this perspective, I discuss in detail the exhibition "Mr. Mkhize portrait & other stories from the new South Africa" held at the Photographers' Gallery in London from June to August 2004 to examine how photographs that are placed in a sequence (in a book or in an exhibition) gain relations between them. By establishing connections between the images and considering how representations relate to the world outside their frames, the viewer enters into a dialogue with the photographic work. Narrative provides a tool for both building causal-chronological connections between images and embedding each image in wider structural conditions.

In summary, this dissertation intends to reflect on the ethical and political status of documentary and portrait photography in post-apartheid South Africa, with particular emphasis on two distinct historical moments in South Africa's recent past: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the tenth anniversary of democracy. Jillian Edelstein's (2001), and Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin's (2004a) projects crystallise, with great insight and clarity, the complexities and specific conditions of South African society at these two moments. Therefore, in my analysis of individual photographs in each chapter I relate the content of the photograph to the broader

political and social context in which the photographed subject is enmeshed. The conclusion of my thesis seeks to draw together the essential traits of the two bodies of work examined here and the key themes of my work. It also aims to be a meditation on the major political, social and economic issues that reflect the changed/ unchanged realities of democratic South Africa ten years after the demise of apartheid.

Chapter 1

From apartheid to post-apartheid: the status of documentary photography in South Africa

> We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable rights to human dignity — a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world.
>
> Nelson Mandela

1.1 The (re)production and (re)contextualisation of symbolically-invested photographs

The words opening this chapter were voiced by Nelson Mandela's (2004:69) at his inauguration as president of the democratic republic of South Africa in Pretoria on 10 May 1994. Evocative of Martin Luther King's acclaimed address (quoted in Gilbert 1999:302)[9] on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, Nelson Mandela's inaugural address celebrated the "common humanity that bonds both black and white into one human race" (Mandela 2004:509) and heralded the transition from apartheid South Africa to a democratic society. Much had gone before, and much more was to come after the first non-racial elections on 27 April 1994. Multiple processes and many state and social actors were involved in the social and political changes leading up to the elections. However the inauguration of the man who had become a symbol of the black liberation cause as the head of the first freely elected non-white South African government was more than a symbolic and unparalleled event in the history of the country. It represented the collapse of the hegemonic project of apartheid and, most importantly, it conveyed the promise of a new beginning for a "rainbow nation" — erected upon principles of democracy and equality — that prized the protection of *all* its citizens' political, civic and human rights.

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[9] 'I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."'

Both supporters and sceptics of the project of the Government of National Unity (GNU) were moved by national and international media coverage of an unprecedented national fervour building up to the country's first one-person, one-vote election as images of people of all races standing together in long queues snaking their way to the polling booths made their way to the front pages of newspapers worldwide. Election day, 27 April 1994, was the day when ordinary South Africans stood patiently in lines waiting to cast their vote. It was in those long hours that, in the Reverend Desmond Tutu's words (1999:4), "South Africans [found] one another. People shared newspapers, sandwiches, umbrellas, and the scales began to fall from their eyes [and] they realised … that they shared a common humanity". While this climate of national pride astounded observers and raised worldwide admiration, there was much interest in the factors that contributed to a relatively peaceful negotiated settlement, laying the groundwork for the complex process of South Africa's transition from a race-based apartheid system to a full participative democracy.

Many people realised that although the first democratic elections — followed by Nelson Mandela's inauguration — represented the dawn of a new era, it was difficult to untangle this historic moment from a legacy of colonialism and apartheid that had imposed a system of racial domination amounting to decades of racial and ideological conflict. Many weapons had been used to contest and resist apartheid, but of interest to this study is the role played by photography at different junctures during the struggle against apartheid. Photography of different genres — photojournalism, social and political documentary — provided the language which best gave form to and represented the experience of apartheid. These *photographies* played a crucial role in denouncing the cruelties, injustices and brutal violence of a system that trampled on fundamental human rights, thereby raising individual and collective consciousnesses, and compelling spectators to vehemently oppose the South African government and demand socio-political change[10]. The struggle against apartheid, or liberation movement, took on many forms, but two organised mass protests — notably the 1960 mass civil disobedience against the compulsory use of the passbook, and the 1976 student protest against the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction for black students — are often invoked as key moments of struggle in South African political history.

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[10] For a retrospective of the important contributions of photographers working for *Drum* magazine in the 1950s, alongside that of Ernest Cole and, later, the struggle photographers, see Darren Newbury's (2009) *Defiant Images: Photography and Apartheid South Africa*.

This chapter explores the photographic mediation of these two events, the role played by both photographers and the white liberal and black press in recording and disseminating images of unrest, alongside those of victims of the confrontation between police and protesters. Conflicting narratives will constitute an analytical strand in this chapter, which will focus on contested narratives and representations characterising these two crucial moments in the struggle against the apartheid regime, and argue that the confrontation of the different accounts or representations of the same event leads to a more complex understanding of the power and control exercised by the apartheid government.

Central to the visual construction of apartheid's oppressive regime is a deontological concern with, on the one hand, the production of visual testimony of the state's repressive violence and, on the other, the reiteration of visual statements of determination, resilience and courage. Representations of pain, suffering or death garnered — largely due to a combination of affective and aesthetic appeal, and narrative embeddedness — iconic status, the most significant example being Sam Nzima's photograph of the dying Hector Pieterson being carried by a young student.

Although this image will be taken up for analysis again later in the chapter, it is relevant to highlight the iconic power of a single photograph — derived, in part, from the symbolic value invested in it, from its multiple appearance over the years, in varied contexts and forms and in articulation with certain discursive frames[11]. A young boy killed by a shot fired by the police, being valiantly carried by another young boy and mourned by his sister running alongside them, came to epitomise the events of the Soweto uprising. The story of Hector Pieterson's death was told and re-told over the years until the image was lodged in the collective memory, becoming a symbol of the struggle against apartheid.

Its effectiveness and impact stem from a highly emotional register through which a primary affective response is triggered. The meaning of trauma[12] — broadly understood, in the theoretical context of trauma studies, as a wound inflicted upon both the body and the mind — is encapsulated in the three youngsters, two of them running in terror as they try to escape from death while attempting to save the life of the third. Much like Huynh Cong (Nick) Ut's widely recognised emotionally resonant image of children escaping from a napalm attack during the Vietnam War,

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[11] For a comprehensive discussion of this topic see Ruth Kerham Simbao's (2007) essay titled "The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Soweto Uprisings: Reading the Shadow in Sam Nzima's Iconic Photograph of Hector Pieterson".
[12] I will return to this line of inquiry in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

one of them a naked girl running down the road, screaming in agony from napalm burns, Sam Nzima's photograph produces a visual record of traumatic suffering that leaves an imprint on the observer, preventing him/her from ignoring the direct address or appeal transmitted by the expressions and manifestations of intense pain on the subjects' faces and bodies.

I want to suggest that these photographs (but I am particularly interested in Sam Nzima's photograph) achieve their haunting power because of the way they have been engaged with, reproduced and (re)contextualised. Trauma theory provides one lens through which the recirculation, reproduction and recontextualisation of Nzima's photograph can be discussed. Scholars contributing to trauma theory — whether from the perspective of psychoanalysis, neurobiology, sociology or literature — have produced significant insights about the repetitive and belated nature of trauma. In her reading of Freud's text *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Cathy Caruth (1996:4) reflects that

> the wound of the mind … is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that … is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again … trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature … returns to haunt the survivor later on.

Thus the impact of the traumatic event is recognised only when the suffering it produced is re-lived, re-called, re-presented. During the turbulent years of mass mobilisation and resistance acts following the Soweto uprising, liberation movements invoked the Hector Pieterson image, first to trigger a sense of loss and ultimately to renew the meaning and import of the anti-apartheid struggle. This insistent return to the event — enabled by the image's metonymic capacity to represent youth resistance — imprinted trauma in black social consciousness during apartheid, since as Caruth (1995:4) claims, the recurrent memory of traumatic experience leads to the "*possession* of the one who experiences it" (emphasis in the original). She stresses, "To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (4). Once again drawing on Freud's insight, Caruth (1995:9) notes that "[T]he impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time".

I argue that this investment grants the photograph of Hector Pieterson incomparable import within the South African photography archive. The image is the centrepiece of the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum, one of the two leading photography museums that display part of the extensive visual record of the struggle against apartheid. The other museum is the Apartheid Museum[13]. The years leading up to the first democratic election in South Africa, and particularly those following it were of great change politically, socially and structurally. Accentuating the dominant discourse of reconstruction was a grammar of democracy centred on the concepts of social justice, national unity and stability. The development of a "new" nation – one seeking to radically break free from the ideological structures of apartheid – became a crucial stake in the new political dispensation's project of an inclusive democracy.

The question — and, indeed, challenge – of how best to catapult the nation into a new political, cultural and social order which would radically change the face of society without effacing the memory of the past took centre-stage in a political agenda focused on the urgency of the process of redefining a national identity. Cultural institutions — in particular, museums — emerging in the decade since the dismantling of apartheid, hovered between the political and social tensions of the past and the post-apartheid impetus of social transformation and renewal, pivoting around the engagement with memory as a process of (re)imagining and (re)negotiating identity within the discursive frame of a politics of reconciliation and reconstruction.

Museums provide the locus for the conflation of the (re)interpretation of history, the production of historical narratives and the institutionalisation of a social memory[14] considered crucial to the practice of remembrance — or of a "pedagogy of memory" as Ricoeur (2006:67) terms it — of reinventing and retelling the legacy of apartheid. In this regard, the Apartheid Museum just outside Johannesburg and the Hector

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[13] Parallel to these two museums, the University of Western Cape-Robben Island Museum Mayibuye Archives comprise approximately 30,000 negatives, 80,000 prints and 4,000 transparencies which document life in South Africa under apartheid, from the late 1940s to 1990. The archive was compiled by the London-based International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF), the nerve centre of the international anti-apartheid information campaign since the 1960s. After its closure in 1991, IDAF relocated its collection to the Mayibuye Centre for History and Culture in South Africa, based at the University of the Western Cape.

[14] See Annie E. Coombes's (2003) important critical reflection on post-apartheid cultural policymakers' strategy for (re)fashioning South Africa's visual and material culture as a means of (re) shaping collective memory and introducing new practices of public commemoration. See also Sabine Marschall's (2006) and Angel David Nieves and Ali Khangela Hlongwane's (2007) insightful articles on public memorialisation, focusing, in particular, on the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum.

Peterson Memorial and Museum in Soweto, which opened in 2001 and 2002 respectively, have become instrumental in giving expression to testimony, experience and memory of apartheid as a means of importing retrospective witnessing and remembrance into contemporary South African social consciousness[15]. The exercise of remembrance is rendered meaningful only if, as Ricoeur (2006:86) underlines, memory is turned into a project which extracts "from traumatic memories the exemplary value", in other words, "If the trauma refers to the past, the exemplary value is directed toward the future".

The intersection of trauma with the dialogue between present and past is, in fact, central to the design and construction of the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum. On arriving at the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum, the visitor becomes instantly aware of the many details that were carefully taken into account during the design phase of the project, most notably the choice of location and site layout, as well as the choice of construction materials and iconography. The memorial site (Fig.1) was erected 600m away from where the original shooting of Hector Pieterson took place on 16 June 1972 in Soweto's Orlando West township. A "flame-line" of grass draws the eye from the museum entrance to the spot where Hector Pieterson fell to the ground.

A spacious public square dominated by dark stone and pools of water invites silent contemplation and mourning. To one side of the square a dry stacked black slate wall — symbolising the thousands of students who marched in protest against Bantu education — acts as a canvas for the almost life-size reproduction of Sam Nzima's photograph screen-printed on aluminium (Fig.2). "Weeping" water slides over an inscription on red granite that reads: "To honour the youth who gave their lives in the struggle for freedom and democracy". Placed directly in front of the water feature, the red granite cenotaph erected by the ANC Youth League in 1992 to commemorate the 16 June uprising also bears an inscription honouring all the nameless "heroes and heroines of [the] struggle who laid down their lives for freedom, peace and democracy" (Fig.3). Each year on the anniversary

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[15] While the Hector Pieterson Museum is centred on the representations of the June 1976 Soweto uprising, the Apartheid Museum, parallel to drawing a timeline of the rise and decline of apartheid, maps out the democratisation of documentary photography in South Africa. Both museums answer to the mandate of providing space for previously silenced voices to narrate history, disrupting, as Nieves and Hlongwane (2007:354) maintain, "the possibility of amnesia". For an analysis of the architectural and curatorial strategies characterising both museums see Darren Newbury's (2009) chapter "'Lest We Forget': Photography and the Presentation of History in the Post-apartheid Museum" in his book titled *Defiant Images: Photography and Apartheid South Africa*.

commemoration wreaths are laid at the cenotaph. Thus, the highly emotional material used for the memorial provides visual and emotional cues for a ritualistic enactment of the memory of trauma.

Inside the museum the affective dynamic explored in the exterior of the building is once again used to maximum effect. Recorded testimonies of witnesses of the events engage with large size photographs mounted directly onto the walls. The narrative construction of the museum display is accomplished by interspersed panels of text, images and video screens. Multiple strands of personal memory intermesh with researched narratives, prompting the viewer to reflect on the immense expanse of lives that were affected by the uprising. A tribute is paid not only to those who died but also to those who survived. The strength of the display derives from the size — which overwhelms us — of well-known photographs by the now legendary South African photographers Peter Magubane, Alf Kumalo, Bongani Mnguni and Sam Nzima, illustrating Sontag's (2003:76) view that "Photographs that everyone recognizes are now a constituent part of what a society chooses to think about, or declares that it has chosen to think about".

By the time the viewer comes to the photograph of Hector Pieterson lying motionless in the arms of Mbuyisa Makhubu who, alongside Antoinette Pieterson, is running towards us, as if to ask us for help (Fig.4), there is — due to the cumulative effect of the display — a sense of immense loss and grief. On the wall to the left of the large-size image several text panels provide eyewitness accounts (Fig.5), locking the story of what happened in our minds. A portrait of Hastings Ndlovu reminds the viewer that, contrary to what is normally stated, Hector Pieterson was not the first victim to be shot on that day. Hastings Ndlovu was shot on the head and died in hospital a few hours later. Two guns aimed at the portraits of Hastings Ndlovu and Mbuyisa Makhubu are fixed to a metal support, mimicking the police guns that were fired in June 1976, many at youngsters such as these two. The narrative provided by the articulation of the eyewitness accounts, the photographs and the guns brings the spectator to a halt, confronting him/her with the violence perpetrated against unarmed schoolchildren, eliciting both emotions and thought about the consequences of political violence and the impact of trauma on the social consciousness and the moral texture of society.

Fig.1 *Hector Pieterson Memorial*. Soweto,2009. Photograph by Gadi Magagane.

Fig.2 *The large-scale reproduction of Sam Nzima's photograph of Hector Pieterson, Mbuyisa Makhubu and Antoinette Pieterson Sithole at the Hector Pieterson Memorial. Soweto, 2008. Photograph by Paula Horta.*

16 JUNE 1976

IN MEMORY OF
HECTOR
PETERSON
AND ALL OTHER
YOUNG HEROES
AND HEROINES
OF OUR STRUGGLE
WHO LAID DOWN
THEIR LIVES FOR
FREEDOM, PEACE
AND DEMOCRACY

UNVEILED BY DR. NELSON ROLIHLAHLA MANDELA ON 16 JUNE 1992
PRESIDENT OF THE ANC

ERECTED BY ANC YOUTH LEAGUE

Fig.3 *Cenotaph at the Hector Pieterson Memorial.* Soweto, 2008. Photograph by Paula Horta.

Fig.4 *The large-scale reproduction of Sam Nzima's photograph inside the Hector Pieterson Museum. Soweto,2009. Photograph by Gadi Magagane, taken with permission of the Hector Pieterson Museum.*

Fig.5 Sam *Nzima's photograph inside the Hector Pieterson Museum.* Soweto,2009. Photograph by Gadi Magagane, taken with permission of the Hector Pieterson Museum.

The repressive violence of 16 June was, in fact, replicated throughout much of the next decade in townships all around the country. I am interested in showing, in this chapter, how the "struggle photography", a political documentary photographic movement that took root in 1982 under the aegis of *Afrapix* photographers' collective, took its cue from the photographers of the Soweto uprising to invest in the potential of photography as a cultural weapon of struggle, mirroring Edward Said's (2003) definition of culture as "a way of fighting against extinction and obliteration" and bringing about social change. Interestingly, the photographic space that emerged in the midst of repressive violence and censorship laws throughout the decade of 1980 not only produced a vast archive of important visual testimony but was pivotal in promoting the democratisation of political and social documentary photography in South Africa.

I seek to draw attention to how photographers in South Africa responded in different ways to the events and social landscape of the country. The struggle photographers relied on documentary photography's claim to providing evidence and rendering a truthful account of events to expose the injustices, inhumanity and repression of apartheid. Funerals, marches, political meetings and confrontation between the police and protesters were the subject matter of the struggle photography, which very quickly developed into the discourse of the disempowered, playing a major role in shaping social knowledge and interpolating the type of political action that led to the downfall of apartheid.

It is important, I feel, to engage with another type of visual rhetoric, represented by the social documentary work of David Goldblatt. Demarcating himself from the political and propagandist discourses of the struggle photography, Goldblatt took a subtler – but not less critical – approach to documenting the social structures and race, class and gender relations at the base of a segregated society. Goldblatt is concerned with values, with notions of place and identity. His exploration of the socio-political texture of apartheid sidesteps the dramatic visual rhetoric of political unrest that did much to underscore the violence in a racially divided society but did little to reveal the personal dimension, the human consciousness of both victims and beneficiaries of apartheid. Therefore, this chapter examines how life under apartheid, the object of study of Goldblatt's work, is documented not at sites of struggle and resistance, of brutality and violence, but rather at everyday social settings where social interaction and relationships intermesh.

I am arguing that documentary photographs cannot be dissociated from their social, historical and political contexts. In order to fully engage with the photographs of the Sharpeville massacre, the Soweto uprising, the protest events of the 1980s or the daily life settings captured by David Goldblatt, it is useful to explore the historical sociology of apartheid. Parallel to the discussion of the contribution of particular photographs — and *photographies* — to anti-apartheid thought and politics, this chapter will take up the trajectory of the discourse of nationalism underpinning the hegemonic project of apartheid, which developed a tight set of racial policies aimed at securing political, territorial, socio-economic, cultural and educational segregation on the grounds of race in South Africa during four decades. It will consider the radical distinction between the two political projects of the National Party (NP) and the African National Congress (ANC), with the first prioritising the entrenchment of white political power and the second — largely due to Nelson Mandela's vision of a united country — advocating a new set of values, most notably freedom, democracy, equality, respect, diversity, responsibility and reconciliation[16]. As Nelson Mandela's words, inscribed on a wall at the entrance of the Apartheid Museum, remind all South Africans, "To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others".

1.2 From apartheid to democracy: from Afrikaner nationalism to national unity?

The first democratic elections in South Africa have often been defined by a combination of elation and calm despite the radical changes that were required at the political, social and structural level of a country transitioning from apartheid to democracy. The tortuous (and, at times, apparently never-ending) road of negotiation had been initiated by F.W. de Klerk on 2 February 1990 after the unbanning in Parliament of the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), the freeing of political prisoners and the subsequent release of Nelson Mandela from prison on 11 February 1990. The pre-negotiation initiatives begun by Mandela with members of the South African government in late 1985, while still in prison — and, parallel and equally important, talks between members of the *Broederbond* and the exiled

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[16] These are the core values of the Constitution inscribed on seven pillars at the entrance of the Apartheid Museum.

African National Congress (ANC) — gave leverage to the settlement politics that took place after Mandela's release. An aiding factor was the basic political predisposition for change that had gradually been generated by the shift in the politico-socio-economic climate of the country since the late 1970s. Giliomee and Schlemmer (1989:115) include in what they call the "forces propelling the change process", "a white demographic decline, growing black militancy, foreign pressure, changes in the Afrikaner class composition, and the fiscal crisis of the South African state."

In 1976 the Soweto uprising provoked an outcry against the brutality of apartheid in the increasingly indignant international community, sharpening international sanctions while condemning the South African government's denial of basic human rights. There was no other alternative for the government but to introduce piecemeal reforms to the Verwoerdian apartheid system over the next ten years — ranging from reform in labour and the defence force to desegregation in higher education and a gradual desegregation in public facilities — in an attempt to win international favour, reverse disinvestment, curb foreign debt and begin to salvage the country's stagnant economy. Another move was to breach the political colour bar and win the support of Indians and coloureds with the 1983 Constitution, which made provision for a Tricameral Parliament with separate chambers for white, coloured and Indian legislators.

Implicit in Giliomee and Schlemmer's analysis of the apartheid reform is the criticism that despite initial tentative measures, P.W. Botha's government was not really interested in effectively dismantling the social and political structures of apartheid. President Botha's two-pronged approach stalled wide-ranging reform while agreeing to do away with state-backed privileges for whites, bridge the racial salary gap and, in time, introduce equal opportunities and human rights for all (although this always remained a rather vague intention). Sketched in broad brushstrokes, the reform process included the abolition in 1985 of the Immorality Amendment Act and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act. Abolition of the pass laws came in 1986 and in the same year blacks were granted freehold home ownership. Mixed-residential areas were finally legitimated in 1988. However, the government was not prepared to abolish race classification, group areas and segregated education in state schools. Any future political dispensation would allow blacks to participate in decision-making as long as Afrikaner leadership and hegemony remained unchanged. The result was an onslaught of turbulence and violence in black townships.

In January 1985, amidst a prolonged two year period of political violence and draconian security measures of two states of emergency, P.W. Botha attempted to strike a deal with Nelson Mandela: his release from prison for Mandela's unconditional rejection of violence as a political instrument. Mandela's rejection of the offer was read by his daughter Zindzi at a rally at Soweto's Jabulani stadium on 10 February 1985 and applauded by the black community. Mandela's (2004:47) terms were outlined in the words, "Only free men can negotiate. Prisoners cannot enter into contracts", cornering Botha into a political checkmate. Botha's only viable political ethic would be to renounce violence, dismantle apartheid, unban the ANC, free political prisoners, and guarantee both free political activity and the enfranchisement of the black majority. The outcome of this confrontation was Botha's irascible resolution not to make concessions and Nelson Mandela's refusal to be coerced into accepting any agreement, edging negotiations to a stalemate.

When F.W. de Klerk came into office in 1989, he contended with the international community's sustained economic pressures and sanctions in the form of disinvestment, trade restrictions and bans on long-term credit (Giliomee 1995). Internally, division had fractured the National Party. The hardliners were reluctant to accept a major reform (particularly because they believed that would equate with major upheaval) and endorsed continued domination, but even within the Broederbond it was impossible to stop the wheels of change as many Afrikaner intellectuals defended the need for the negotiation of a new political dispensation. Giliomee (1994) notes that the 1976 Soweto uprising and the black political protest in the 1980s had estranged all the best Afrikaans writers, poets and academics. At this juncture scholars, political analysts and observers considered the possibilities for government organisation at the start of the process of democratisation in South Africa. For Horowitz (1991) the racial and ethnic division in the country was not the only hurdle that needed to be cleared; ideological differences within and across racial groups bred conflict and thwarted a democratic compromise. The tension between Afrikaner and African nationalism was central to contentious views on the future of a country striving for a socio-cultural politics of non-racialism and inclusiveness.

1.3 Nationalism: a theoretical framework

An inquiry into Afrikaner nationalism and its offspring, the ideology of apartheid, warrants an allusion to prevalent theoretical approaches to the mutually constituting concepts of 'ideology', 'nation' and 'nationalism', enabling us to both place the South African nation-building blueprint into perspective and ascertain to what extent the Afrikaner nationalism project conforms with the theoretical perspectives followed and developed by Gellner, Hastings and Smith. Although these theorists' analyses focus on the European socio-political landscape, they inspire critical thinking about the problems raised by Afrikaner nationalism and the environment in which it flourished. Reference to the plethora of existing literature on the subject is at this point unjustifiable, but a juxtaposition of contrasting theoretical critiques aims to offer a comparative outline of distinct (but not inimical) argumentative devices for deconstructing the South African nationalist imaginary.

In their conceptual clarification of 'ideology', critical literature emphasises different but related and indissociable aspects. Grossberg (1996:162) considers that intrinsic to the production of ideology is the enmeshing of particular structures of meaning in particular social and cultural practices, involving "the [hegemonic] mobilization of popular support, by a particular social bloc, for the broad range of its social projects." In support of this view, Geertz (1973:220) contends that

> It is the attempt of ideologies to render otherwise incomprehensible social situations meaningful, to so construe them as to make it possible to act purposefully within them, that accounts both for the ideologies' highly figurative nature and for the intensity with which, once accepted, they are held.

Competing — and often conflicting — propositions constitute the debate about the ideology of nationalism. On one side of the spectrum, scholars like Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm argue that nationalism is a component of modernity and — for Gellner — the consort of industrialisation. They attribute the development of nationalism to the mass production of texts and to widespread literacy. On the opposite side, Liah Greenfeld and Adrian Hastings challenge the modernists' view with regard to the roots of nationalism, with the latter arguing that nationalism can be traced back to the Middle Ages when ethnic groups became distinct cultural and political entities. Whatever the point of departure used for

crafting an argument, the baseline from which scholars expound their theories is the definition of both "nation" and "nationalism".

Gellner (1983) examines the nation as a social construction rather than a national entity. Pivotal to his thinking is the understanding that a nation is a collective of people with a common culture (understood as a shared language and shared education). In a complementary vein, Smith's (2001:13) definition of nation underscores the importance of "common myths … a shared history [and] a common public culture". For Hastings (1997:3) it is important to establish the difference between *ethnie* or ethnic communities and nation. He observes that unarguable as it may be that "an ethnicity is a group of people with a shared cultural identity and spoken language", this does not make of an ethnicity a nation. Nodia's (1994) emphasis on territorial self-determination is subscribed by Hastings (1997:3) for whom a nation is distinguished from other social categories by being "formed from one or more ethnicities, and normally identified by a literature of its own, [possessing or claiming] the right to political identity and autonomy as a people, together with the control of specific territory".

Hastings seeks to establish that the construction of nationhood coalesces with the development of an ethnicity's vernacular to a literary language. Its first practical result is the translation of the Bible; secondly (or in tandem to that) is the cultivation of its literature, contributing to the maturation of a self-conscious cultural, social and political entity. The central tenet of Hastings' thesis — and of his critique of the modernist strand of thought, including Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner and John Breuilly — is that the construction of nationhood (a cognate of nation) cannot be dissociated from the interrelatedness of religion, politics and culture.

Smith (2001:9) considers that nationalism is "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual potential 'nation' ". In this view, membership of the nation depends on the answer to the question of who is entitled to citizenship, depending on ethnic or civic conceptions of the nation. Hastings (1997:4) goes so far as to suggest that nationalism "arises chiefly where and when a particular ethnicity or nation feels itself threatened in regard to its own proper character … either by external attack or by the state system of which it has hitherto formed part".

In his articulation of the genesis and development of nationalism, Gellner (1983; 1996; 1997) identifies nationalism as distinctive to modernity and establishes a relationship between industrialisation and the onset of nationalism (as opposed to Anderson (1991), for whom capitalism's print technology acts as a springboard for nationalism, enabling people to "imagine" themselves being linked to a community of other people they will never know). Gellner's theory is anchored in the argument that the economically privileged intelligentsia take centre-stage in the modern society, benefiting educational, economic and political systems. In Gellner's (1994:vii) conceptual clarification of nationalism, high culture ("one whose members have been trained by an educational system to formulate and understand context-free messages in a shared idiom") engenders nationalist homogenisation and establishes a stable and political order.

From this viewpoint, when the state becomes the guardian of high culture and the elite its advocate, the result is a homogeneous nation-state, enhanced by cultural and economic development and modernisation. In this conjuncture, Gellner (1983:55) concludes, "genuine cultural pluralism ceases to be viable". Opposing Gellner's (1983:46) view that nations are "necessary", that there is "an objective need for homogeneity", Hastings (1997:34) argues that the worst failing of nationalism is "the imposition of uniformity, a deep intolerance of all particularities except one's own." This line of reasoning was given force by Ernest Renan in a lecture delivered at the Sorbonne in 1882 when he cautioned that "[an] exclusive concern with language, like an excessive preoccupation with race … enclose one within a specific culture, considered as national; one limits oneself, one hems oneself in."

The weakness in Gellner's (1983) functionalist theory is that while it accedes that nationalism is a manifestation and necessary component of modernity, it ignores that cultural pluralism is a feature of modern industrial societies and modern industrial economy where several "high cultures" and educational systems coexist. In defending that political nation and cultural nation must be one, Gellner does not provide scope for multi-ethnic and multi-national states with a common sense of political (not cultural) nationhood, and fails to acknowledge the central role of constitutional engineering in modernity, neglecting to consider both the state and the citizens' moral universe of rights and obligations.

In this regard, Ignatieff (1994) and Habermas (1995) argue that rather than rely on a shared language, shared associations, shared history and a common culture, modern political and social architecture rely essentially on a doctrine of citizenship. These

theorists contend that a community's sense of belonging, loyalty and pride should be founded on the state's attachment to principles of democracy and protection of its citizens' political, civic and human rights. A corollary of this view is that, as Beiner (1995:8) puts it, "there is a requirement that all citizens conform to a larger culture, but this culture is national-civic … it refers to political, not social, allegiance". The point to be made here – and discussed at greater length with regard to South Africa – is that a solid edifice of a (post-apartheid) nation can only be constructed on the pillars of, as Nodia (1994:6) puts it, "Democracy … a system of rules legitimated by the will of the people". This argument foregrounds the conviction that

> 'We the People' (i.e., the nation) will decide our own fate; we will observe only those rules that we ourselves set up; and we will allow nobody – whether absolute monarch, usurper, or foreign power – to rule us without our consent (9).

1.4 The political and intellectual stranglehold of Afrikaner nationalism

The different stages of Afrikaner nationalist awakening reflect, to a great extent, the rationale of European nationalist theory of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but with a distinct tonality and political nuance. The extensive and widely cited academic literature on Afrikaner nationalism follows diverse strands of discussion on the rise and fall of Afrikanerdom. The sociologist Dunbar Moodie (1975) in his seminal work *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, equates the emergence of an Afrikaner national consciousness with the rooting of the Afrikaans language and the fixation of a 'civil religion' (a Christian-National civil faith), dissecting the role of Dutch Calvinism in the formulation of the ideology of Afrikaner-Christian nationalism. O'Meara (1977) — who will be dealt with in this study at greater length — foregrounds the construction of a rhetoric of ethnic exclusivity/power focused mainly on economic and political gain. Adam and Giliomee (1979) identify survival politics as the tripod upon which Afrikaner oligarchy rests, focusing on the ideological, economic and political mobilisation strategies spearheading ethnic politics. Giliomee and Schlemner's (1989) prescriptive study suggests a transitional period of ten years as a possible approach to the dismantling of the Afrikaner power structure, ushering in the end of residential segregation, increased economic growth and an authority-sharing coalition.

Regardless of the angle from which we survey the political culture of Afrikanerdom in the first half of the twentieth century, two aspects present themselves most saliently. The first is that the imagining of the Afrikaner nation unfolded against a backdrop of watershed events in the South African political landscape understood against several socio-economic variables of a rapid industrialisation. The Transvaal War of Independence against the British in 1881, the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), the Unification of South Africa in 1910, and the 1948 electoral victory of the *Herenigde* (United) National Party (HNP) were major determinants of political behaviour. Rivalries often bolstered economic inequalities, and social tensions between English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, and between blacks and whites were most exacerbated during the expansion of the industrial economy. The second point is that Afrikanerdom was, during this period, far from cohesive; rather, ideological division within Afrikaner leadership cyclically endangered ethnic mobilisation.

Setting aside the cleavages that divided the Afrikaner elite, Afrikaner ideology in the twentieth century survived on Hendrik Verwoerd's claim that "Every nation has the right to self-protection and self-preservation" (quoted in Giliomee 1994:535). The man who was Minister of Native Affairs from 1950 to 1958 and Prime Minister from 1958 to 1966 — and said to be the main architect of apartheid — made it his mission to guarantee the survival of all white South Africans, but particularly of Afrikaners. But Verwoerd merely cemented a political will made concrete by the Afrikaners' political motivations throughout the nineteenth century — beginning with the Great Trek (1838), followed by the opposition to the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 and the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) — to seek independence from the British, reject English cultural and social values, and concurrently resist swamping, miscegenation and degeneration.

A distinctive spoken language, a single religious faith and a common historical heritage were the components of a national consciousness which claimed the right to the development of a separate ethnic group. Another component of the developing Afrikaner nationalism was, as Giliomee (1979:99) observes, "a sense of belonging to a superior social class, elevated above the blacks whose ancestors had been slaves". A racial consciousness and ethnic identity became the building blocks of Afrikanerdom whose survival — championed the nationalists — depended on white Afrikaner political control.

Nurtured by religious and philosophical arguments of theologians in Afrikaans churches, notably the *Gereformeerde Kerk* or 'dopper' (the Reformed Church) and the N.G./ *Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk* (the Dutch Reformed Church), Afrikaners found the moral basis for the definition of a nationalist doctrine rooted in the separate development of racial groups or nations (*volke*). This would, however, only be possible if the state made provision for separate political, economic, cultural, religious and educational institutions, enabling the subsistence of the *volk*, "a collectivity", according to Giliomee and Schlemmer (1989:45), "whose members were of similar descent and racial stock, and who shared a common history, culture and sense of destiny."

Imperialism was seen as an obstacle to the consolidation of the social, political and cultural cohesion of the Afrikaner nation. As O'Meara (1977:160) points out, imperialism was "understood to be the economic and political domination of South Africa by Britain through the Empire". In addition to these threats, Le May (1995) underscores the danger to Afrikaner language and culture presented by Milner's[17] aggressive policy of Anglicisation aimed at crushing Afrikaner national identity and promoting cultural assimilation. Following the Anglo-Boer war and the unification of South Africa, Louis Botha and Jan Smuts'[18] policy of conciliation between Afrikaners and the South African English, endorsing an environment of mutual respect and common purpose in the search for a new white South African identity, raised discord and angered Afrikaner nationalists, among whom J.B. M. Hertzog was a harsh critic.

Hertzog's growing mistrust of Botha and Smuts' integrationist policy — and their neglect of what he considered to be the *volk*'s national interests due largely to the alliance between the newly united South African state and the British Empire — distanced him from Botha's South African Party (SAP) and encouraged him to form the National Party in 1914. For Hertzog, coexistence would only be possible if a "two-stream" policy were to be implemented, allowing the English and Afrikaners to

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[17] After being appointed governor of the Cape Colony in 1897, Alfred Milner sought to introduce reform measures in the Transvaal. One of the tenets of his administration was educational reform based on the mandatory use of English as a medium of instruction in all except the elementary classes, awarding him acrid opposition from the Afrikaners. Disagreement with the leaders of the two Boer republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State led to the Anglo-Boer war.

[18] Following the Anglo-Boer war a commission of five generals was appointed to negotiate the terms of the Treaty of Vereeniging in 1902. They were Botha, de la Rey and Smuts from the Transvaal; de Wet and Hertzog from the Orange Free State. Botha became the first prime minister of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Smuts went on to become prime minister of the Union of South Africa from 1919-1924 and from 1939-1948. Hertzog was prime minister of the Union of South Africa between 1924 and 1939.

pursue their culture and language separately. In his endorsement of the central role of the Afrikaans language in the conception of Afrikaner identity, Hertzog made a commitment to defend the growth of Afrikaans as a language by enforcing bilingualism in the civil service and integrating it into the mainstream of society.

According to A. du Toit's (1985), "the first stirrings of [Afrikaner historical consciousness and] of Afrikaner nationalism" were signalled by several events: the first Afrikaans Language Movement spurred by the Reverend S.J. du Toit from 1875 onwards, the foundation of the first Afrikaans newspaper *Die Patriot* in 1876, the publication of the first version on South African history in Afrikaans titled *Die Geskiedenis van Ons Land in die Taal van Ons Volk* (The History of our Land in the Language of our Nation) in 1877, and the foundation of the Afrikaner Bond (the first major Afrikaner political organisation) in 1880. In the twentieth century, *Die Taal* (The Language) developed as a language of scholarship and general education with a growing corpus of literature and literary criticism due to the patronage of the Dutch Reformed Church and the approval of the translation of the Bible into Afrikaans. It replaced Dutch in schools in 1914, and was declared as an official Language in Parliament in 1925.

In the 1920s the Afrikaans magazine *Die Huisgenoot* became a popular vehicle of Afrikaner values, propagating a conservative view of the role of women, marriage and the family. The Afrikaans newspaper *Die Burger*, the National Party's mouthpiece, was instrumental in promoting the Afrikaans language and disseminating Afrikaner nationalism. The editor — D.F. Malan, a former *predikant* (minister) of the Dutch Reformed Church who was to become the first prime minister of apartheid South Africa in 1948 — turned it into "the most eloquent, and the best informed, of all Nationalist publications" (Le May's 1995:161). With Hendrik Verwoerd (who would later become Prime Minister in 1958) as its editor in 1937, *Die Transvaler* newspaper followed suit, becoming an important forum for the dissemination of the party's ideas by using party rhetoric to engage Afrikaners and win their loyalty.

Ideology as a unifying force and organising principle promoted the creation, in 1918, of a secret and exclusive organisation whose aims were to promote a united Afrikaner nation, to stimulate Afrikaner national consciousness, to infuse the love of language, religion and tradition, and to safeguard the interests of the nation (O' Meara 1977). Calling themselves at first *Jong Suid Afrika* (young South Africa), and immediately after that the *Afrikaner Broederbond* (the Afrikaner Brotherhood), the group of nationalists who first came together to defend their common identity

started to exert an increasingly powerful influence on the economic, political and cultural institutions of South Africa. Founded against a background of party political disunity and economic instability in the northern provinces, the Broederbond, at first a small organisation, grew steadily in membership, ideological framework and activities during the next three decades.

In his critical study of the Broederbond, O'Meara (1977:186) argues that "the Afrikaner Broederbond was a united, disciplined body of petty bourgeois militants, the vanguard which prepared the ground for a new class alliance to capture state power". Resentful of the dominant English-speaking capitalist class (holder of the mining and finance capital), the Broederbond's remit was, O'Meara underscores, the development of an ideological and political matrix which could respond to the pressures of capitalist development. The answer to this struggle was synthesised in the 1930s by the definition of a system of *Volkskapitalisme* (National/people's capitalism). It was believed that this system would nip the problem in the bud by targeting, not capitalism itself, but rather the structure of South African capitalism by taking control of finance and credit capital. The solution, it seemed, was the development of an economic consciousness on a par with political consciousness. This strand of thought advocated that political power was most effective if it prescribed economic participation in the urban industrial economy.

Membership in the Broederbond — of which teachers, academics (in large number from Potchefstroom University), clergymen and civil servants accounted for the biggest fraction — was by invitation only and exclusive to financially sound, white, Afrikaans-speaking Protestant males. While in the 1930s academics led the ideological debates within the organisation, by the late 1970s party politics had become part of the organisation. In fact, all South African prime ministers after 1948 and most of their cabinets belonged to the Bond (O'Meara 1977). Education and the problem of the impoverished urban Afrikaners of rural origins (particularly the fear that Afrikaners might be absorbed by a capitalist system that bred class division) were central to the Broederbond's concerns in the first two decades of its inception (Welsh 1969).

The Anglo-Boer War and agricultural depressions in the three subsequent decades provoked mass migration of unskilled Afrikaners to the cities where they had to compete with skilled English-speaking industrial workers, as well as with low-salaried black workers. O'Meara's (1978:51) states that "Afrikaners found themselves either in the large army of unemployed poor whites and/or as part of an army of operatives

in the least skilled, lowest paid roles assigned to white labour." In the Carnegie Commission's 1932 report on the poor white problem in South Africa, the bulk of the population classified as being 'very poor' were Afrikaans-speakers with the number of unemployed adult males reaching 188,000 by 1933. The industrial economy was dominated by imperialist interests that had no intention of calling to their ranks the petty bourgeois Afrikaans-speaker.

The Broers' (brothers') reply to this conundrum was, on the one hand, to transform Afrikaners' economic consciousness by mobilising Afrikaner workers' savings and harnessing the capital of the petty bourgeoisie and, on the other hand, to secure political power. As O'Meara (1978:60) states, drawing on the several economic journals at the time, "Political power is the sine qua non of success in the economic struggle. The two are indivisible". This strategy required direct participation or influence in a network of social, economic and political institutions, namely in *Die Nasionale Pers* (National Press), trade unions, and the banking, finance and insurance sectors. The economic motivation underpinning the Broederbond's activities spurred the creation of the future insurance giants Santam and Sanlam, coupled with the foundation of a building society and Volkskas bank, and with *Die Nasionale Raad van Trustees* (NRT). This National Council of Trustees aimed to provide financial support to Afrikaner Christian-National trade unions whose two-fold remit was to attack the ideologies of class prevailing within the trade union movement and to inculcate aversion to foreigners/imperialism, blacks and communism (O'Meara 1977; 1978). The *Reddingsdaadbond* (League for the Act of Rescue) concerned itself with Afrikaner workers, offering cheap life assurance schemes and finding placements for the unemployed within Afrikaner-owned undertakings. Construed in this way, Afrikaner nationalism was, as Chipkin (2007:18) argues, "an ideological effect of national capital."

In the 1930s the Broederbond's ideological debates focused on the nexus between kultuur (culture) and nationalism, supporting the formation of the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings*, FAK (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations), an institution whose primary aim was to establish Afrikaans as a national language and — through its influential role in the church, youth and student associations, scientific and educational groups — promote a wide spectrum of cultural activities. The proclaimed need of a redefinition of Afrikaner nationalism in an attempt to do away with class division and achieve *volkseenheid* (unity) was the umbrella under which the Broederbond politicised *kultuur* (culture). According to Dunbar Moodie's

(1975:115) analysis, this politicisation complicated "Afrikaner politics after 1930 … by the vagaries of the relationship between *partypolitiek* and *kultuurpolitiek*".

The celebration of the centenary of the Great Trek in 1938 mobilised the *volk* in an orchestration of the cultural symbols of Afrikanerdom — articulating a heroic mythology of major events in Afrikaner history, notably the Great Trek, the Battle of Blood River and the Wars of Independence in which the Afrikaners took their place as God's 'chosen people' — in an attempt to bridge Afrikaner class divisions and cement cultural and ethnic ideologies by invoking national destiny and a divinely ordained mission. In his deconstruction of "the chosen people ideology" in what he termed "the Calvinist paradigm of Afrikaner History", André du Toit (1985:218) remarked that the rediscovery of the historical past was the attempt of modern nationalist intellectuals to imbue national consciousness with a sense of "discovery of common adversaries and interests, of common ties of blood and of collective grievances", thereby linking the present to the mythological past and validating projections of the future. In sum, for the political ideologues, the metaphors of blood, kinship and homeland enacted as cultural symbols during the centenary of the Great Trek could not have been timelier, as they endorsed ethnic boundaries at a time when class formations threatened the political *status quo*.

Exclusion of English-speakers from the cultural, political and economic spheres was the backbone of the Broederbond's ideological production, which, as noted by Dubow (1992:215), opposed any form of *samesmelting* (amalgamation) between English and Afrikaners. The exclusionary discourse was underpinned by the distinction between "true" white South Africans and those whose first allegiance was to the Empire. Any ideological stream differing from this prescription was likely to meet with the Broers's antagonism. Although association with the National Party is usually taken as given, statesmen did conflict with the Broederbond's interests. The most salient example is Hertzog, whose move in 1933 (in the wake of the Gold Standard Crisis) to coalesce with Smuts' South African Party to form the United Party (UP) in 1933 raised discordance among the Cape nationalists, resulting in the creation of the *Herenigde* (reunited) National Party (HNP) led by D.F. Malan.

Hertzog attempted to redefine Afrikanerdom in terms of, as Giliomee (1979:111) puts it, a "cross-ethnic middle-class base … consisting of Afrikaans and English-speaking whites — 'equal Afrikaners' — who subscribed to the principles of [sovereignty, language equality, and the economic nationalism] of South Africa First". This redefinition not only widened membership to the *volk*, but, implicitly, placed it —

economically and culturally — at the mercy of the Empire. His strategy met with resistance from Malan who appealed to Afrikaner unity, advocating republican independence in the name of the preservation of the Afrikaners' political, economic and cultural independence. The schism within the Afrikaner ruling group widened with Smuts' resolve to have South Africa take part in World War II on the side of Britain, giving rise to a revival of anti-imperialist sentiment and alienating even further the majority of Afrikaners for whom Hertzog's vision of a united Afrikaans and English-speaking *volk* was inconceivable (Giliomee,1979).

In his analysis of the ideological elaboration of the concept of race underpinning the framework of apartheid, Dubow (1992: 211) stresses the contribution in the 1930s of Afrikaner intellectuals from Potchefstroom — among whom he highlights L.J. du Plessis, a politics lecturer — to the construction of an intellectually coherent rationalisation of apartheid in *Koers* (Direction), "the influential theoretical mouthpiece of the Federation of Calvinist Student Associations". However, he notes that the concept of apartheid started gaining wider acceptance in the mainstream of contemporary Afrikaner politics from the moment it was articulated by D.F. Malan in his political speeches in 1943. The next step in the entrenchment of this ideology was taken at the Broederbond's *volkskongres* on racial policy in 1944 — with a convincing address by the respected Afrikaner poet and theologian J.D. du Toit (Totius), son of the Reverend S.J. du Toit. Here the rationale of apartheid was outlined, as Dubow (1992:216) enumerates, in six strokes:

> (i) that a policy of apartheid should be adopted in the mutual interests of the white and non-white population of South Africa, so that non-white *volks*-groups could each have the opportunity to develop in their own areas and ultimately to administer themselves; (ii) that it was the Christian duty of whites to act as guardians over the non-white race until such time as they reached the level necessary to decide their own concerns; (iii) that in the interests of all races no further blood-mixture should take place; (iv) that the calling and duty of the white race in South Africa were to ensure that full control over all aspects of government in white areas should be retained in white hands; (v) that any policy which would result in the detribalization or denationalization of the individual, or his development in such a way that he would be cut off from his own group, tribe or *volk*, should be rejected; and (vi) that the true welfare of non-white population groups should be sought in the development in the individual, in a Christian manner, of a feeling of worth and pride in his own group, tribe or *volk*.

A. du Toit (1985:234) argues that Kuyperian neo-Calvinist principles had no particular influence on modern Afrikaner nationalism and that "the ideological and material roots of apartheid must be sought elsewhere". In contrast, Dubow (1992) claims that Afrikaner political thinking and religious belief that spawned the ideological justification/legitimation for white supremacy were rooted precisely in the ideas of the Dutch theologian and patron of the Dutch neo-Calvinist movement, Abraham Kuyper. According to Dubow (1992), Kuyper's political philosophy impacted on, among other Afrikaner theologians, the influential S.J. du Toit, who subscribed to the intellectual, moral and religious resources of the neo-Calvinist school of thought rooted in the doctrine of the sovereignty of God and of a covenant between God and a chosen people. This ideology, along with Kuyper's crucial tropes of 'diversity' or pluriformity, national destiny, and the nation as an 'organism' found support among Potchefstroom University intellectuals who wielded a strong influence on the fashioning of apartheid ideology.

Influential nationalist ideologues in the South African political arena of the 1930s like Nico Diederichs, Piet Meyer and Geoff Cronjé found another source of inspiration in the writings on National-Socialism of J.G. Herder, F.E.D. Schleiermacher and J.G.Fichte, whose idealised view of nationhood postulated, in Dubow's (1992:220) words, that "the nation or *volk* [is] a collective organism with its own distinctive 'genius' or soul", and that "the creativity of the individual is best expressed through the collectivity of the group", placing the nation above everything else. Although this view raised discord because it clashed with the Kuyperian defence of the ultimate sovereignty of God, the biggest divide among Christian-nationalists was caused by conflicting viewpoints with regard to race.

Whereas Nico Diederichs[19] denied "that the nation can be defined in terms of outward characteristics such as race, land, colour and physiognomy" (quoted in Dubow 1992:221), hard-line defenders of apartheid Koot Vorster and A.B. du Preez alluded both to passages from the scriptures and to biologically based theories of race to substantiate the logic of the separation of races founded on the superiority of the white race[20]. In a later study, Dubow (1994:357) underscores the focus within

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[19] Nico Diedrichs became State President from 1973 to 1978.

[20] The scriptural basis of apartheid was systematised and compiled into what has been termed "the apartheid bible" by J.A. Loubster (1987), and presented to the Dutch Reformed Church General Synod in 1974 under the title *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture*.

academic discourse in the late 1930s and 1940s on "the validity of race as a scientific concept". He alludes to the attack of liberal academics on the conflation of the concepts of race, culture and nation, and cites theorists' articulation in the late 1930s of the concept of ethnicity — rather than race — as an attempt to "downplay the importance of heredity as a constitutive element of human behaviour and to stress instead the agency of culture and the environment" (358). This argument provided the necessary component for the fashioning of a segregationist discourse predicated on the salience of "difference" — without clearly defining "difference" in terms of biological determinism — and advocating the need for the preservation of the *volk*'s cultural identity. Ultimately, a formulation such as this one ushers in Hall's (1996:4) claim that,

> Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity…

Dubow (1992) concludes his theory on the conception of an ideology of apartheid and the engineering of the racialised structure of the apartheid project with the argument that far from being cohesive or monolithic, the discourse on race changed according to, and was refined by, different intellectual and theological strands. The biblical foundations of apartheid were proposed by some scholars of theology and rejected by others; racial science advocating race superiority and the preservation of white civilisation and 'race purity' was boldly assumed by some and half-heartedly disclaimed by others; but opposing views agreed on the need for the practice of racial segregation on the grounds of (for some) practical and historical reasons and (for others) cultural reasons.

The categories of race, *volk* and culture are said to have intersected and interchanged in an almost fluid continuum. Given that the impetus for the elaboration of a legitimising ideology of race derived from concern with the survival of the Afrikaner *volk*, what this amounted to was an intellectual framework whereby, notwithstanding the defence of white supremacy, English-speaking South Africans had to be distinguished from Afrikaners on the basis that the two groups belonged to the same racial group but to distinct *volke*, each with its own identity. Politically, though, at this juncture there was no denying that the Afrikaners' socio-political

project was impracticable without the support of English-speakers. The insistence on white racial solidarity would conveniently obscure any past intra-white struggles as well as any intention of future ethnic hegemony and secure the necessary English support. This strategy reflects Geertz's (1973:202) argument that "Ideas are weapons and … an excellent way to institutionalize a particular view of reality — that of one's group, class, or party — is to capture political power and enforce it."

1.5 Apartheid and the dynamics of racial oligarchy

D.F. Malan anchored his programme on the idea of *Nasionalisme as Lewensbeskouing* (a total outlook on life), advocating the primacy of the Afrikaner *volk* (Beinart, 2001) and emphasising its national distinctiveness. The guiding force that brought Malan's HNP to power, however, was the project of rigid segregation and separate development aimed at the protection of whites and, above all, at the entrenchment of Afrikaner political power. Yet, opposition from the United and Labour parties' liberal supporters conferred the HNP a slim victory in the 1948 elections. Backing Malan were the white Afrikaner working-class whose discontent was proportionate to growing white unemployment as blacks started to occupy skilled positions in the labour market during the war. The farming community, too, voted for the HNP whom they hoped would have an answer to the problem of labour shortage caused by the migration of black workers looking for higher wages in the urban centres.

The period following the 1948 electoral victory until 1966 (and, particularly, the Verwoerdian era between 1958 and 1966) has been equated, in contemporary times, with full-blown apartheid ideology. In fact, in 1948, far from being a cohesive blueprint for the future, apartheid was still very much an inchoate set of intentions and slogans. The values of *Volkseenheid* (volk unity) and *volksverbondenheid* (identification with and service of the volk) adorned the winning party's rhetoric. This value-laden political discourse aimed to foster a sense of ethnic identity centred on the preservation of culture, race and the fatherland, as well as gain support for the consolidation of the framework of apartheid (Giliomee, 1979).

Although this rhetoric appealed to nationalist sentiment, practical matters put a damper on nationalist idealism. The success of the political unit relied not on nationalist idealism but on the guarantee that the needs of the industrial society

were met and ethnic capitalism secured, giving Afrikaners a stronghold on the country's economic development. The economic interdependence of races revealed the fragility of the political framework of apartheid. The most salient question was: How could white economic dependence on non-white labour in farming, mining manufacturing sectors be compatible with a policy of total segregation?

Open division surfaced within the highest echelons of the party. For Afrikaner capitalists the process of capital accumulation was incompatible with total economic segregation of races, whereas for the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA), created in 1947, white supremacy entailed not only political, territorial, social, cultural and educational segregation but economic segregation as well. Within this mindset, SABRA advocated a slow and controlled withdrawal of black labour from the white economy, coupled with its replacement by white labour and an accelerated mechanisation. They argued that such a withdrawal would not only ease the polity into complete segregation but also reverse the worrying growth of an urbanised African population. In consonance with this viewpoint was the *Instituut Vir Volkswelstand*, a member of the FAK, that submitted a proposal to the Fagan Commission in 1946 endorsing a division of the country into labour districts subject to fixed labour quotas (Posel, 1987).

In opposition to the supporters of total segregation was the *Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut* (AHI) – also launched by the Broederbond in 1942 – which defended Afrikaner businessmen's main interest in profitability, refusing to accept any restriction in the supply of cheap non-white labour. The AHI was against migratory labour and in favour of an urbanised black workforce. It argued that a system of allocation of black labour, together with the principle of influx control regulating black urban growth, would secure optimal use of black labour without compromising the economic and social structure of apartheid. These positions (total segregation vs. economic integration) represented opposite poles of a shared discourse: white supremacy was inefficient without economic supremacy. The goal was the same for both factions, but interest varied according to class. For Posel's (1987:113) it was not by chance that "the exponents of 'total segregation' should have been drawn primarily … from the ranks of the Afrikaans petty-bourgeoisie and working class" while "Afrikaner industrialists, financiers and farmers were profoundly threatened by the sorts of proposals germane to the 'total segregation' position."

Afrikaner political and social behaviour had long been underpinned by the ideologies of race and ethnicity. However, the systematic implementation of a tight set of

racial policies — from the moment of the conception of the hegemonic project of apartheid — secured white political power and distributed wealth and privileges unequally for the next four decades. In this context, positions of power and subordination were acted out in every dimension of political, social and cultural life, representing — for non-whites — zero participation in the political arena, and in the social domain restricted access to labour, housing, education and cultural representation. Built upon previous leaders' segregationist legacy (handed down since the end of the nineteenth century) apartheid emerged as an effective instrument of Afrikaner nationalism (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989).

According to Giliomee and Schlemmer (1989), four main tenets underwrote the conceptual apparatus of apartheid. The first brought the *volk* (nation) to the fore, arguing that a common history, culture and sense of destiny gave precedence to the collectivity rather than the individual and justified separate development as a means of survival of each *volk*. This proposal conflated with the understanding that the policy of *gelykstelling* (equalisation) was impracticable, and *rasservermenging/verbastering* (racial mixing/miscegenation) a dangerous enabler of racial decline. An equally important point was the role of education in ensuring that all ethnic groups nurture a "love of 'their own' and, in particular, a love of their country, language, history and culture" (quoted in Giliomee and Schlemmer 1989:52). This key aspect was sustained by Verwoerd's warning that African education should prepare children for incorporation into their own community and not into a white society that would be unable to accommodate them. Another essential premise stated that the political survival of whites depended on the social, political and economic separation from other races, namely black, coloured and Asian. On the basis of these central principles Afrikaner ideologues argued that in recognising that the country was made up of different national states and national communities, apartheid also recognised each nation's right to self-determination within their respective Bantustans or communities.

These guiding principles materialised into repressive apartheid legislation, regulating the position and behaviour of the different races in society and nurturing the doctrine of *baaskap* or white supremacy. Although a framework of racial segregation developed piecemeal during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a coherent and complex ideological system was structured only after the 1948 elections. Several foundational laws of racial segregation were precursors to the oppressive laws of apartheid, but two — out of which others radiate — stand out as the bastions of laws

limiting land occupation and movement. The Native Land Act of 1913 had laid the foundations for the territorial separation of races. Under this legislation, ownership of land by blacks was limited to designated "native reserves", later officially known as Bantustans. The 1923 Native Urban Areas Act introduced urban residential segregation. Successive amendments to this legislation enforced increasingly stringent urban segregation rules of which influx control was a central concern.

Sustaining the influx policies was the pass law, "a vital mechanism of control in the white political armoury", as Frankel (1979: 200) terms them. Dating back to 1780 when the mobility of slaves in the Cape was monitored through a document which authorised their circulation between town and country, the pass law was taken up by the apartheid government for two reasons, according to Frankel (1979:200). Firstly, to prevent over-urbanisation, and secondly "to channel black labour from rural to urban areas", allowing blacks to stay in towns temporarily and only for as long as they satisfied labour requirements in the mining, manufacturing and commercial sectors without compromising white supremacy in the economy.

The pass law neatly summarises apartheid praxis. The 1952 Bantu Laws Amendment Act stipulated that each black South African over the age of 16 was required to carry, and to produce on inspection, a permit authorising its holder to stay in a prescribed area for no longer than 72 hours, a period considered adequate for seeking work. Individuals who fell under Section 10 of the 1945 Bantu Urban Areas Consolidation Act were exempted from this prohibition, i.e. those who had either lived since birth continuously in an urban area or had worked in a prescribed area continuously for one employer for ten years. Alternatively, they could have worked for more than one employer but must have lawfully resided continuously in the area for fifteen years. Permission was also given to the wife, unmarried daughter or son under 18 of a person qualifying under Section 10 to live in an urban area.

Migrants and commuters from Bantustans working on a contract work basis were required to carry a renewable permit issued by a government labour bureau (Frankel, 1979; Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989). Individuals with Section 10 status qualified for housing and social welfare facilities, but were not entitled to own land. Those attempting to remain in towns illegally were subject to harassment, arrest and deportation to the Bantustans. This system of political and social control eroded race relations and motivated disturbances in townships. Large-scale police raids, daily street interrogations and the ruthless use of force became signifiers of apartheid

experience for blacks in South Africa. Second to the fear of losing the privilege to remain in an urban area was the fear of arrest for a pass offence.

Bantu labour regulations supported influx control, first by enabling the supply of cheap black migrant labour for the mining industry, and later by authorising the state to channel labourers so as to accommodate the needs of other sectors. Farm labourers, for example, were prohibited from seeking better-paid work in the urban areas, as this would result in labour shortage in the rural areas. Urban labour 'surplus' was therefore redistributed to the rural areas. African labour tenancy was abolished and black farm-workers made into full-time wage labourers. Contracted migrants satisfied labour requirements in the mining sector by means of a dehumanising process that forcibly separated families by preventing workers from settling in urban areas with their wives and children — bearing in mind that they never ceased to be temporary residents of the cities — and isolating them in single-sex hostels for as long as they were employed in the mines. In this regard Chipkin (2007:51) emphasises that

> industrialisation happened by tying black South Africans to an oppressive and poverty-stricken agricultural society. Rather than create a homogeneous culture, industrialisation in South Africa reproduced an agro-tribal society in its midst.

Chipkin's analysis states a corollary of an emerging socio-economic condition of capitalist societies in the twentieth century, but bypasses the crux of the political rationale which was crucial to South Africa's socio-economic trajectory leading up to and accompanying the exercise of apartheid. Industrialisation itself was not at the core of the dominant social processes at the time, but, rather, the racial policies which entrenched the white minority's exercise of power and evinced the corresponding realities of domination and inequality.

Legassik's study (1974:26) draws on the *House of Assembly Debates* to substantiate his claim that "It was the Bantustan concept which, at the ideological level, constituted the basic framework beneath which the political and economic dynamic reinforced economic growth and black powerlessness together." The argument that blacks could exercise their rights as citizens in the Bantustans, that they could return to "their country of origin or the territory of their national unit where they fit in ethnically" justified, as Legassik (1974:27) notes, both the refusal of rights or privileges in the "white areas" and the "continued removal of 'surplus' or 'non-productive' Africans from 'white areas'". Accordingly, one million blacks had been resettled in one decade by the end of the 1960s. Germane to this development were

the displacement of unemployment and the relegation of social welfare to the Bantustan governments. By restricting the process of African urbanisation, urban policy-makers were effectively circumscribing emergent social and political problems.

The organisational framework of apartheid grew more effective and pervasive in the 1950s and 1960s with the promulgation of a further cluster of laws, embedding the ideology of group survival by excluding the black majority from the country's socio-political environment and entrenching control of socio-political and economic instruments by the white minority. Of fundamental importance were a set of laws which undergirded the compartmentalisation of races. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 prohibited marriages across the colour bar. The Immorality Acts of 1950 and 1957 forbade extra-marital sex across racial boundaries. The Population Registration Act of 1950 enabled the classification — according to appearance, social acceptance and descent — of all South Africans into three racial categories: white, native and coloured (which included Indian, Chinese and Malay). In essence, the legislation of 'whiteness' and 'blackness' contributed to the social and cultural entrenchment of racial categories, producing race as the main source of struggle in South Africa. This process peaked with the 1953 Bantu Education Act, which supported apartheid social engineering by instituting technical education as the basis of Bantu Education and securing African vernacular languages as the medium of instruction up to Standard 6 (Beinart, 2001). These main tenets, compounded by inadequate funding and poor teacher training, were the seedbeds of "a class of servile Africans whose destiny was envisaged to be the hewers of wood and drawers of water", as Quayson (2002:xii)writes.

In sum, the imposition of a large number of racially discriminatory laws after 1948 — of which only a few have been highlighted — sealed the institutionalisation of *apartheid*. As Derrida (1985:291) states, after the Second World War "*all* racisms on the face of the earth were condemned [but] it was in the world's face that the National Party dared to campaign '*for separate development of each race in the geographic zone assigned to it*'" (emphasis in original). The repressive legal apparatus which amended or enacted two hundred laws in twenty years became the reliable instrument of an ideology rooted in the social construct of race, of "a political idiom", an "untranslatable idiom", "Le Dernier Mot du Racisme". Derrida (1985:292) plays with the dichotomy between the idea of apartheid as the last remaining word of racism and apartheid as racism's apogee, claiming that apartheid

concentrates separation, raises it to another power and sets separation itself *apart* … By isolating being apart in some sort of essence or hypostasis, the word corrupts it into a quasi-ontological segregation. At every point, like all racisms, it tends to pass segregation off as natural – and as the very law of the origin. (emphasis in original)

It has been said that the ideology and policy of apartheid reached its apogee after H.F. Verwoerd, previously Minister of Native Affairs, became Prime Minister in 1958. Verwoerd's campaign strategy revolved around the slogan 'The National Party stands for South Africa FIRST', outlining the project of *White* nationalism. Political emphasis was removed from Afrikaner unity and Afrikanerdom and placed on white unity and white resolve (Stultz, 1969). True to his promise — and upsetting the Afrikaner cabinet stronghold — Verwoerd overrode Malan's immigration policy and, according to Stultz (1969), set up a department of immigration led by an English-speaking conservative to promote the immigration of whites to South Africa followed by the appointment of another English-speaker as Minister of Information and Tourism.

Verwoerd's political-ideological discourse valiantly, if unconvincingly and self-contradictorily, attempted to steer clear of the racist implications inherent in the concept of race. Central to this discourse was the doctrine of "separate nations and of separate freedoms" (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989:57), advocating the separate development of blacks "in their own areas without white interference" (Dubow, 1992:230). Verwoerd's speeches convinced that part of the white electorate who were eager to believe that government policy was not motivated by the concept of race but, rather, by the promotion of nationhood of different nations (Legassik, 1974). Understood in this way, government policy intended to minimise racial conflict. In fact, what strongly informed the socio-political context of the 1960s was the consolidation of a racially structured society kept in place by the ruthless authoritarianism, control and coercion of the government through — among other measures — the policing of South Africa's non-white denizens. During the Verwordian years the regnant ideas of race, advocating the notion of 'belonging' separately, were embedded in the legal and political fabric of South Africa.

This led to social and political upheaval that is significantly and vividly illustrated by the incidents leading up to and following what become known as the 'Sharpeville massacre'. As previously mentioned the state-enforced pass law secured white domination, enabled by a system of black labour control and restriction of the access of blacks to urban areas, and deprived the largest part of the population in South Africa of citizenship rights. As a result, a growing sense of grievance and injustice

among the black urban population gave rise to the biggest mass protest (until that date) on 21 March 1960.

The recently formed Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), a break-away organisation of the ANC, planned an anti-pass campaign for 21 March, based on decades of arrests, prosecutions, convictions and physical removal of blacks since the enforcement of the pass law. On that day, thousands of black South Africans marched to their local police stations in townships around the country without their passbooks and demanded to be arrested. A confrontation between protesters and the police followed, ending in bloodshed, and attracting the attention of the press internationally. The ruthlessness of the South African Police, involving the manhandling and shooting of protesters was not unprecedented (the 1946 miners' strike is one example), but the brutality revealed by both images and reports published in South Africa and abroad raised public outrage and prompted the international community to isolate South Africa diplomatically and economically.

1.6 Weapons of struggle: representations of state control and the public face of violence

I now wish to explore the role played by South African photojournalism and documentary photography in denouncing apartheid, shaping social knowledge and interpolating political action. Coexisting, colliding and interlinking with the production of meaning are both the interplay of images and text and the social and political contexts in which the photographs were produced and circulated. The representation, mediation and interaction with images of apartheid raises questions about the power relations enacted in and through the social construction of meaning. A fundamental aspect to be considered is how documentary photography developed into the discourse of the disempowered, casting human beings as subjects, to quote Foucault (1980:136), "generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them".

The 22 March front-page headline of one of South Africa's leading English-language liberal newspapers, the *Rand Daily Mail*[21] read "56 Killed, 245 Injured in Two Riots".

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[21] Founded in 1902, the *Rand Daily Mail* became known in the late 1950s, through to its closure in 1985, for its critical view of the apartheid state. In an editorial titled "Mr Vorster versus 'Rand Daily Mail'" on 21 September 1973, *The Times* described the *Rand Daily Mail* as a "courageous" newspaper that "[printed] … critical leading articles" by virtue of "what remains of the freedom of the South African press", and exposed the government's powers

The report of the previous day (the day of the protest), titled "Thousands Riot: Police Open Fire" (*Rand Daily Mail*, 21 March 1960), identified the locations of Sharpeville and Evaton (near Vereeniging) and Bophelong (near Vanderbijlpark, south-west of Johannesburg) as the trouble nodal points, but adumbrated the day's events, stressing that the police had been compelled to open fire after protesters hurled stones at policemen and police vehicles alike. With regard to the incidents at Evaton, the report stated that "the 10,000 Africans who had trekked to the police-station were in such a vicious mood that they took exception to Africans even driving vehicles and not joining their campaign."

A lengthier report on the day following the demonstration (*Rand Daily Mail*, 22 March 1960) — illustrated by a photograph of armed policemen standing among dead and wounded protesters, bicycles and clothes strewn all over the street outside the Sharpeville Police Station — provides a more detailed account of the confrontation between the police and demonstrators at locations near Vereeniging, as well as in Langa location in Cape Town. Other photographs on the same page were of the crowd of demonstrators gathered at Evaton, outside Vereeniging; of the *Rand Daily Mail* car after it had been stoned; and of a military aircraft flying over Bophelong (which means the Place of Rest). The reporter's narration of the riot included information about seven buildings set on fire (among which were two schools), and also about the stoning of cars and buses, among them a newspaper's car and a car with eight white nurses.

In a report titled "Bodies strewn in location streets" (*Rand Daily Mail*, 22 March 1960), Sharpeville was identified as "the scene of the bloodiest outbreak". The notion that the police had not taken any action when "thousands of Africans gathering outside Sharpeville police station [had] demanded to be arrested for not having passes" remained a moot point. Emphasis was placed on the idea that "[as] the crisis built up, more people joined the demonstration. Among them were

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over the press, condemning the Prime Minister's power to "ban papers or editions, stop publications of organizations he dislikes, forbid journalists to write even a line for 'publication'…". In 1983 an article titled "Promise to keep the Rand Daily Mail open" reported on the newspaper's financial difficulties, coupled with "stiff competition from *The Citizen*, the newspaper launched [on 8 September 1976] with secret funds by the now defunct Department of Information to counter the *Mail*'s vigorous anti-apartheid line". In March 1985 the "flagship of South Africa's liberal English-language press" announced its closure, as Michael Hornsby (1985) reported for *The Times*. In June the same year The *Weekly Mail* was launched by journalists from the recently closed *Rand Daily Mail* and *Sunday Express*, nurturing an ethos of critical journalism prior to the advent of democracy in South Africa. In 1995 the newspaper was renamed the *Mail & Guardian* after *The Guardian* became its majority shareholder.

hundreds of curious spectators – including women and children." According to the reporter, what led to bloodshed were the "shots [which] were fired at the police", causing a response of "volley after volley of 303 bullets and sten gun bursts [tearing] into between 15,000 and 20,000 people who had surrounded the police station."

The main headline on the front-page of *The Star*, the highly-circulated daily newspaper (founded in the Eastern Cape and relocated in 1887 to Johannesburg) catering for English-speaking readers, read "Riot Township Natives Stay At Home" (*The Star*, 22 March 1960). The article focused on the after-effects of the previous day's riot, stating that "Natives did not go to work [on that day, bringing industry to a near standstill]. They gathered in groups in open squares and on street corners" while "buses ran two or three trips but then crowds stopped the buses and forced the passengers out. No attempts were made to prevent Natives from walking to work." The mood in the townships near Vereeniging was described as controlled but tense, with police "patrolling the area in Saracen armoured vehicles and heavily loaded troop carriers". In Langa township in Cape Town, police were on call to troubleshoot any further threats. The "driver of a car owned by the *Cape Times* who was burnt to death after dropping a reporter and photographer in the township [the day before]", the burning down of municipal buildings, the stoning of buses, police vehicles and private cars spearheaded the outbreaks of violence. By way of conclusion, the last section of the article adumbrates — rather weakly — both the Liberal Party's accusation of apartheid policies as the root cause of the riots and the ANC's protest at police action.

Surprisingly, a three-column long article on the same page, titled "Overseas Press horror at riot tragedy" (*The Star*, 22 March), fleshes out British and American newspapers' reactions to the riot. The opening paragraphs highlight the headlines of the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Sketch*, *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Herald* and reproduce the scathing criticism underpinning the headlines. *The Times*'s reference to the Nationalist government as well as to the ANC and to the PAC rather blandly — if not superficially — states "The Nationalist Government has kept the moderate African National Congress at arm's length and so has played into the hands of the far less reasonable Pan-Africanist movement." By contrast, trenchant criticism of the apartheid government's policies by the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Herald* and *The Guardian* is endorsed by the *Scotsman*, which writes, "When people are denied legal means of achieving political and social advancement, they are apt to adopt other means."

In the same article, the American press's reaction to the riot is encapsulated by the *Herald Tribune*'s publication of a "grim and horrifying picture of bodies littering a roadway". The *New York Times*'s editorial is quoted at length, revealing an ambivalent discourse:

> No one thinks that South Africans are wicked men in the sense that they would deliberately plan or feel anything but distress over an incident that brings such appalling results. However the fact remains that a policy which degrades the great majority of the people of a nation is certain to lead to tragedy.

The tragedy was illustrated by a photo essay of distressing photographs of the bodies of casualties sprawled on the ground — titled "After the riot at Sharpeville yesterday" — almost filling page 11 of *The Star* on 22 March 1960. The photograph on the left top corner evinced the bloodshed resulting from the clash between the police and demonstrators. In the forefront — but taking up only one corner of the composition — a policeman leans on his rifle. Behind him, bodies facing up cover the ground. Another photograph reveals a blanket-covered body next to the uncovered body of a man facing down. In the background onlookers, some on bicycles, survey the scene. In another photograph the caption reads: "A body awaits collection [this body was, of course, sprawled on the ground]. A native constable turns wearily to a truck which is being used to take away the dead." In another photograph two municipal employees are seen carrying off a wounded man, while another man, lying dead with his foot in the gutter, is left behind.

The preceding reports lack in critical assessment, failing to dig beneath the surface of events. In contrast, the visuality of the images has social and political significance that grows beyond the photograph. For those South Africans who prefer(red) to ignore the reality of the state's brutal repression, it is/was difficult to ignore these photographs; they not only enable(d) a visual experience, they provide(d) an irrefutable documentation of the state's violent response to political resistance. But is it as simple as that? To take what is (re)presented to us unchallenged – as direct and unmediated transcriptions of reality – is to overlook, in Hall's (1996:1) apt words, "the question of subjectivity and its unconscious processes of formation", or as Berger (1972:10) postulates, "the photographer's way of seeing", his/her "[selection of] that sight from an infinity of other possible sights". In similar terms, Sontag (2003:41) argues, "the photographic image … cannot be simply a transparency of something that happened… to photograph is to frame, and to frame is to exclude."

The implication of these ideas is that repertoires of meaning are produced by the intersection/transaction between the interpretation and representation, in this case by a photographer, of "reality" — in itself conditioned by an institutional, political and personal ideological framework — and the subjective deconstruction and extraction of the "reality" by each observer, involving negotiated/ (re)produced interpretations and reconstructions of the intended message. The mediation of events is ultimately couched in a set of processes nurtured by, as Hall (1997:3) puts it, "the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them."

This line of reasoning provides an understanding of the representation/meaning-making nexus underpinning the mediation of the Sharpeville massacre if the relation of influence and control is brought into the equation. What this implies is that the generation of meaning both in South Africa and abroad was contingent on the ideological and power structures pervading social life and superimposing upon the agency of individuals. Crucially, readers were led to draw on a set of ideas experienced through what Williams (1977:112) terms a "lived hegemony", in other words, "a realized complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits", to interpret and make sense of carefully assembled textual and visual representations. However, as Williams propounds, drawing inspiration from Gramsci, "[hegemony] is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own … [giving rise] to the concepts of counter-hegemony and alternative-hegemony" (112). Foucault's (2002:340) prescient thinking about power relations reinforces this notion:

> A power relationship … can only be articulated on the basis of two elements that are indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that the 'other' (the one over whom power is exercised) is recognized and maintained to the very end as a subject who acts; and that faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up.

In the context of the Sharpeville massacre we must bear in mind — taking into consideration two interconnected theoretical concepts of 'hegemony' and 'power' — the leading actors in the South African socio-political arena preceding and following the event. The South African police's coercive action supported and ensured the preservation of the Nationalist government's authority and legitimacy. Opposing the government's racial discriminatory policies and resisting white supremacy were the

two largest non-white political organisations, the African National Congress —
founded in 1912 as the voice of black South Africans in response to the exclusion of
the African majority from political representation — and the fledgling Pan-Africanist
Congress, founded in 1959 when it broke away from the ANC. Nelson Mandela, Anton
Lembede, Oliver Tambo, and Walter Sisulu[22] were some of the activists who, having
formed the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) in 1944, gave fresh
impetus to the ANC and catapulted it into political action (Mandela, 2002).

Central to ANC values underpinning the democratic national liberation movement
were the principles of racial equality, justice and unity signed and sealed in the
Freedom Charter on 26 June 1955 by the Congress of the People at Kliptown.
Accordingly, the ANC's ideological discourse (reiterated by Nelson Mandela to the
present day) centred on the ideal of a common democratic non-racial society
encompassing economic justice and political democracy. The ANC advocated that the
centrepiece of the Freedom Charter stating, notably that "South Africa belongs to all
who live in it, black and white" (quoted in Mandela, 2002:51), should be edified and
fully experienced by all South Africans, "equal in their value as citizens". As Mandela
(1995:24) professes, this is the essence of "democracy in its purest form".

The ANC leadership perceived the national liberation struggle as a non-violent
enterprise, deeming its success to be dependent on, in Mandela's (2002:4) words,
"getting the masses to function politically" by "arousing [the] people from a
conquered and servile community of 'yes-men' to a militant and uncompromising
band of comrades-in-arms". In this regard, the ANC's think-tank aimed to strike at
the economy by mobilising the black working-class into unions. As blacks constituted
the major force of the South African labour, economic strikes and boycotts would
weaken the state's political and economic power and overthrow the apartheid
political system. Low wages, bus fares and the pass law became the prime targets of
the ANC's struggle in the late 1950s and early 1960s, translating into organised
protest demonstrations, economic boycotts and strikes.

Of great relevance was the Defiance Campaign of Unjust Laws (the pass law, curfew
and the railway apartheid regulations) launched in June 1952, after which Mandela
and Walter Sisulu were banned by government decree from leaving Johannesburg,

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[22] Lembede, a fervent advocate of African nationalism grounded on racial exclusivity, was
elected president of the ANCYL, Oliver Tambo secretary and Walter Sisulu treasurer. Mandela
was elected to the Executive Committee (Mandela 1995). After the banning of the ANC, Oliver
Tambo became instrumental in furthering the ANC's cause in exile and in mobilising
international opinion against the apartheid regime.

from belonging to a political organisation, from attending gatherings or making any public declarations. Also significant were the peaceful anti-pass march by over 20,000 women in 1956 and the anti-Republican demonstrations and strikes of 1961, which cost Mandela imprisonment and subsequent sentencing at the Treason Trial in 1962, followed by the Rivonia Trial held from October 1963 to April 1964 (Mandela, 2002). Following the Defiance Campaign, the government played its trump card: together with the banning of political speeches, demonstrations and protests, it launched a campaign to depoliticise African teachers by forbidding them to voice their political views, thereby, as Diseko (1992:47) posits, "[purging] the profession of teachers known to have a political background". The government's vision of Bantu Education was reinforced in 1959 with the extension of racially separate education to universities where, as Mandela (2002: 33) argued with great acuity,

> [there will be] no resemblance to modern universities. Not free inquiry but indoctrination is their purpose, and the education they will give will not be directed towards the unleashing of the creative potentialities of the people but towards preparing them for perpetual mental and spiritual servitude to the Whites.

The ANC's adoption of the Freedom Charter — which, as Quayson (2002:xiii) notes, "was the first policy document to set out the objectives for a non-racial democratic South Africa" — was met with strong opposition from the African nationalists whose claim for "Africa for Africans" gained support for the foundation of the Pan-Africanist Congress in 1959. Under the leadership of Robert Sobukwe, the PAC's first action plan was to target the pass laws which, as Feit (1972:198) states, "[provided] the opportunity for petty and not so petty tyranny towards South African blacks … [while restricting] their mobility and their access to the towns, where the best labor markets [were] found." According to Feit (1972:199), what characterised the PAC's anti-pass campaign was "the attitudes of the PAC leaders [who] unlike their predecessors … took an active part in the protest, and were among the first to be imprisoned." Feit concludes that the campaign failed because of, on the one hand, inexperienced leadership in the townships in the Western Cape and near Vereeniging and, on the other, police uneasiness.

At the end of the 1960 protest demonstrations, the government resolved to intensify repressive measures as the only means of re-establishing the status quo. Just as both

public protest meetings and political organisations[23] — the ANC and the PAC included — had been banned immediately after the Sharpeville massacre, on 4 April 1960 a state of emergency was declared and police powers were amplified, resulting in tighter police surveillance, as well as widespread arrests and detention in solitary confinement of activists. Despite pressure from the international community, the declaration of South Africa as a Nationalist Republic in 1961 sealed the denial of self-determination to blacks, Coloureds and Indians. Relations with the international community soured and South Africa was made to withdraw from the British Commonwealth.

At home, apartheid's repressive measures were refined, forcing black political organisations underground and their leaders into exile[24]. The arrest, trial and sentencing to life imprisonment — on the charge of sabotage and conspiracy to overthrow the government — of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Govan Mbeki and other anti-apartheid leaders from 1962 to 1964, and the detention of thousands of ANC members and sympathisers, brought "the end of an epoch in the history of African resistance in South Africa" (Feit, 1972:201). Most importantly, the Afrikaner dominated South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) supported the government's programme, while the state-controlled South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) came to the government's aid, countering the dissenting voices of whites who became involved in the struggle against apartheid in institutions and organisations that could not be banned (or rather, that were not immediately banned), namely the English-language press, the Institute of Race Relations, the National Union of South African Students, the Defence and Aid Fund (banned in 1966), the Christian Institute, the Liberal Party (disbanded in 1968) and the English-medium South African universities (Stultz, 1969).

Sixteen years after the Sharpeville massacre, the domestic and foreign press once again brought to public attention the unleashing of violence at a mass protest in apartheid South Africa — now under B.J.Vorster's government leadership. June 16, 1976, was to be remembered as the day when black schoolchildren in Soweto, protesting against the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, were shot

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[23] Having been perceived as a threat, the South African Communist Party had been outlawed since Parliament passed the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950 and "communist activities were declared treasonable and liable to the death penalty" (Mandela, 2002: xix).

[24] Following the banning of anti-apartheid political organisations, the armed wing *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (meaning 'Spear of the Nation' in Xhosa and popularly known as MK) was formed in 1961. It was said to be an independent organisation but its think-tank was constituted by members of the exiled ANC (led by Oliver Tambo) and SACP (led by Joe Slovo) who helped the MK to carry out urban sabotage in South Africa directed against non-civilian targets.

at by the police who used egregious force to break up the protest rallies. The *Rand Daily Mail*'s 17 June coverage of the event displayed a discursive and graphic representation of a violent and raging uprising[25]. Photographs were used as truthful renderings, attesting to the facts presented in the written accounts of the event. Accompanying the headline "Flaming night" and the subtitle "Riots rage — Army on standby" the front-page headline photograph of a burning police armoured vehicle illustrates and lends credibility to the report's opening paragraph, which states, "Troops were on standby outside Soweto last night while thousands of angry Africans set fire to buildings and cars after a day of violence and death."

Supported by dramatic and emotive language, the tone pervading the article is menacing, compelling the reader to relate to the authorities' efforts to contain the violence which had erupted in the course of the protest march, as well as to maintain public safety in light of the threat represented by "The giant Black city — housing more than one-million people — [which] was last night in chaos as roving bands of vandals burnt Government buildings, looted bottle stores and threatened to lay siege to police stations." This line of reasoning explained why "anti-riot and anti-terrorist squads were called in".

Accordingly, the report frames the protesters as rioters and turns attention away from casualties among the black students, mentioning in anodyne manner that, "During the clash an African schoolboy, Hector Peterson[26], was shot dead". It stresses instead that,

> two officials of the West Rand Administration Board were pulled from their cars by children and youths, and hacked stoned to death. One of the officials was Dr Melville Edelstein, 56, author of the book 'What Do Young Africans Think?' – a study of the attitudes of Soweto High School pupils. The other was Mr Nols Esterhuizen, a middle aged inspector who had been an active worker at the Soweto Aid Centre.

Words like "vandalism", "hooliganism", "stone-throwing", "flare-up", "rioters" and "set alight" point to the impending danger in the township. The story ends with the

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[25] Some of the reports do not have a byline and not all the photographs are individually credited, but the white and black reporters and photographers assigned to the coverage of the Soweto uprising are listed on the front page as follows: "Reports: Nat Serache, Mike Dutfield, Derrick Thema. Chris Smith, Patrick Laurence, Helen Zille, Nat Diseko, Bruce Harrison, Viv Prince, Clive Emdon, Mervyn Rees, Gill Murray, Lynn Stevenson. Pictures: Peter Magubane, Robert Botha, Stefan Sonderling, Harold Figlan, Jan Tugwana."
[26] Spellings of Hector Pieterson's name vary, appearing in some sources as Hector Peterson, but the most common is Pieterson.

official source, the Minister of Justice, Mr Jimmy Kruger, justifying police force with the reconstruction of the event. In his words,

> Rioting began at about 8.15 am when about 10 000 pupils started marching from school to school, stoning and overturning vehicles. The police attempted to isolate them from each other and from the shops and houses. This was very difficult… The police tried tear gas … but [it] was not very effective. The police then fired warning shots and this stopped the crowds for a while.

A structured representation of the Soweto riot dominates the first six pages of the *Rand Daily Mail* on 17 June 1976. Carefully anchored images of the protest on each page establish the mood and attest to the tense and threatening atmosphere consistently described in the breaking news story, constructing and reconstructing reality, thereby helping to shape the perspective through which readers made sense of the narratives of violence replicated in the township. On the front page below the photograph of a burning police van observed by a crowd at a distance, another photograph makes it difficult to perceive who or what is being examined by a group of uniformed policemen. One of the men is bending down over what could be a corpse while holding a placard bearing the slogan, "Beware – Afrikaans The most dangerous drug for our Future". Behind the military police, two white photographers witness the scene with their cameras ready to shoot. The caption explains, "Police of the special anti-riot squad with the charred and mutilated body of a White man in Soweto yesterday", linguistically dramatising what is visually imperceptible. It is the frame of meaning created by the words "charred", "mutilated", and the capitalised "White man" that presents a hermeneutic of the image, placing the reader within the conflict frame of the riot and eliciting multiple emotions and responses ranging from indignation and rage at the perpetrator(s) to compassion for the victim and, possibly, empathy with the police.

Two photographs on page 3 offer further descriptive testimony of the headlines appearing immediately below on the same page: "I saw death at the hands of child power", "Oh God, help us, Dean Tutu pleads" and "Only the tip of the iceberg, say Black leaders". The emotive language in the headlines, accentuated by the use of large bold font, prompts an emotional response to the images. One of the photographs is a wide shot of an advancing crowd of youths brandishing sticks and raising clenched fists. The tension is accentuated by the framing and cropping of the image, obfuscating the background and giving the impression that we are being engulfed by the compact mass of angry protesters. The caption adds the information:

"A Rand Daily Mail photographer, Peter Magubane, escaped this charge by Soweto pupils. But his trousers and shirt were torn in the incident", suggesting a reading of the image favouring the menacing mood which permeates the shot.

The same mood is reproduced in the adjacent closely framed photograph of a van besieged by a crowd. The caption, "Vehicles driven by Whites were stoned in Soweto yesterday. Only cars driven by African civilians, many of whom gave the clenched fist salute, were allowed to pass unhindered" once again anchors the meaning. Half of page 4 is taken up by a bird's eye-view of a single burning truck on a curved road emphasised by the number of statue-like figures surrounding it. The shadows cast by the silhouettes of the immovable figures provide a strong compositional device, sustaining the impression that the crowd overpowered any element they deemed hostile. Commentary is provided in the headline: "Students watch as a truck burns" and in the caption: "Pupils surround a disabled and burning truck near Orlando West Junior Secondary School in Phefeni, Soweto. They watched other vehicles burning and many of them moved through the streets damaging and setting fire to more cars".

Taken at close range from a frontal angle, one of the photographs on page 6 of the *Rand Daily Mail* on 17 June derives its strength from the emotion on the faces of the protesters as they charge in the direction of the camera. The exhilaration captured in the subjects' faces, as well as the movement of the multitude racing headlong, composes the emotional language which feeds the visual rhetoric of the photographic space. The headline "The demo that boiled over" frames the image, channelling the readers' interpretation of the scene while the caption "It was happy go-lucky as the demo got under way – but soon after this picture was taken violence flared and people were killed" filters the event and anchors the image in a 'before and after' narrative of the riot.

A second photograph on the same page shows the advancing crowd apparently being led by four boys, completing the sequence of images which encapsulates the event and unfolds the narrative from the viewpoint of white observers. The caption, reading "Fists go up in Black Power salute as the school student demonstrators are marshalled by older boys, some brandishing makeshift clubs", encourages a contextualisation of the events which may lead to an understanding of police action during the uprising as one of self-defence rather than of brutal force. In support of this view, Scott (1999:62) argues, "In the photograph everything is already there, but in no particular order and without intentionality. The title [on the caption] asks the

photograph to have intention, to pull itself into concerted shape, a design." Most important here is the interface between text and image, which keeps the image's interpretative possibilities within boundaries, and acts as a catalyst for the erasure of any doubt readers' minds as to the unequivocal meaning of the photographic message.

A powerful — if ironic — constituent ingredient of the Soweto uprising coverage was the eyewitness accounts and photographic images of the black journalists and photographers working for the English-language press in South Africa. An example of this is Nat Serache and Derrick Thema's stories, titled "Police fired – then I saw four children fall" and "I saw death at the hands of child power" on pages 2 and 3 respectively in the 17 June *Rand Daily Mail*. The first-person headlines (the latter enclosed in quotation marks) heightens the immediacy and assures readers that the journalist is a first-hand witness reporting with the authority of someone who *was there*, certifying the truthfulness of his account with the evidential force of the photographs accompanying — and authenticating — the text. More significantly, in Thema's story, the linguistic structures predominating in his text press readers to accept his impassioned presentation of the facts. The verb form "I saw" repeated in the first four paragraphs of the text places the journalist amidst the events being reported, attesting to the veracity of his claims and reinforcing the meaning of what he *saw*. What follows is a depiction of a violent and raging uprising — a long distance away from the 'students' peaceful protest march' angle adopted by other journalists — cushioned in semantically charged syntax:

> I saw a man dragged from his van and stoned to death in Soweto. I saw another battered to near death. But he was saved because he was Chinese, not White as the mob first thought. I saw an African attacked. He was a policeman. I saw four White women in a small car escape a barrage of bricks and stones. I saw children lying shot in the street. I saw mob anger. And it was ugly. I saw Black Power in the most violent mood. And ironically, it was child power. Many were younger than seven – throwing stones.

The text continues in the same intense, dramatic and arresting tone, leaping from violence to violence and engulfing the reader in information about both black and white victims who were unable to escape the rioters' fury. Among these was (as mentioned earlier) one of the *Rand Daily Mail*'s photographers. Image and text — intentionally combined and/or contrasted and sequenced in the page layout — reinforce the facticity and accuracy of the coverage. The fact that the photographer

who escaped the charge was black amplifies the sense of indiscriminate attacks and anarchic mayhem permeating the journalist's account of the event, conferring his point of view with greater authority. In this case, what paradoxically lends credibility to the news coverage is that far from being unbiased witnesses — contravening journalistic values — both photographer and journalist were unable to remain detached from the events. The inability to screen themselves from the violence ultimately turned them into unwilling subjects, engendering the journalist's subjective response to the day's events in the construction of the coverage.

Not all the photographs in the *Rand Daily Mail* edition of 17 June 1976 have a byline, but most were credited to Peter Magubane in a compilation of photographs titled *Soweto: A South African Legend* (edited by Braun and Dhlomo-Mautloa, 2001). The close-up of the protesters charging in the direction of the camera, published in the *Rand Daily Mail* on page 6, earned Magubane wide acclaim and continues to elicit interest for scholars who posit that "Documentary photographers often see things that do not officially exist" (Tremain, 2000:4). A truthful, objective depiction of an historic moment not only provides evidence but evokes feelings within the viewer, potentially generating a vector of change. As Tremain (2000:4) writes, "A transformation occurs when you see something important that is denied by those who have not or will not see it." This becomes even more meaningful in the light of Raymond Louw's testimony in *The Star* on 24 July 2007. In response to criticism about the editorial conduct of the *Rand Daily Mail* during the Soweto uprising, the newspaper's respected editor from 1966 to 1977 states,

> Hanging over all newspapers at that time was the notorious Section 27B of the Police Act. This required a newspaper to prove the truth of whatever reports it published about police conduct and carried a penalty of conviction of five years' jail and/or a fine of R10 000 – and in our minds, the fear that a conviction could lead to the closure of the paper.

Seen as a symbol and key element of the struggle for the democratisation of photography in South Africa, Magubane is today one of South Africa's acclaimed documentary photographers. He has exhibited widely both in South Africa and abroad and won numerous awards, but during apartheid he was harassed by the police and prohibited from pursuing his career. He received his first photographic assignment while working for *Drum* magazine, the major forum for black writers and photographers in the 1950s, and worked under the supervision of Jürgen Schadeberg and alongside other black photographers who have become equally well known, such

as Ernest Cole, Bob Gosani and Alf Kumalo. It was while still working for *Drum* magazine that Magubane became known internationally for his photographs of the Sharpeville Massacre. Between then and the coverage of the Soweto uprising, Magubane was banned from public life, prohibited from photographing for five years, and forced to resign from the *Rand Daily Mail* in 1970. He was detained and kept in solitary confinement for 586 days. When the ban was lifted in 1975 he resumed work for the *Rand Daily Mail* in time to document the students' protests in 1976 only to be forced to pull out and expose his film, have his nose fractured by the police and be hospitalised for five days (Light, 2000). A few months later he was detained, along with other black newsmen, and his house was burnt down.

An opposite viewpoint to that presented in the *Rand Daily Mail* was offered by *The World* newspaper[27], catering mainly for black readers, which put concrete human faces and names on the coverage of the Soweto uprising. After Percy Qoboza — the 1975 Nieman Fellow at Harvard University and the first black editor of an Argus Group newspaper — took over the newspaper, black journalists were given scope to launch attacks on the apartheid government and its policies (Sanders, 2000). During the Soweto uprising *The World* became a much sought-after publication and a reliable source for the foreign press. Sam Nzima's emotionally charged close-up, capturing the anguished expressions of seventeen-year-old Mbuyisa Makhubu and Antoinette Sithole as the first carries the mortally wounded thirteen-year old Hector Pieterson in his arms and the second — Hector Pieterson's sister — runs alongside, wailing in grief and raising her outstretched hands as if fending off the horror of the moment, was published on the front page of the extra-late edition of *The World* on Wednesday, June 16, 1976 (and again in the *Weekend World* of June 17-19,1976).

This image could have eclipsed the page lead were it not for the banner headline reading "4 Dead, 11 Hurt As Kids Riot" (reproduced in Hlongwane et al., 2006:7). The human impact frame used to report and/or transcribe the shock of the event serves as a counterpoint to the news stories in the *Rand Daily Mail*. But perhaps readers' emotional response to the death of Sowetan schoolchildren on 16 June 1976 derives from the visual experience of Sam Nzima's frontal and confrontational visual register, which demonstrates that the immense emotional power of certain photographic images can outweigh the interpretative suggestions of captions and

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[27] *The World* was founded in 1932 and initially titled the *Bantu World*. It was shut down by the government in 1977, but was succeeded by *Post Transvaal* in 1978 and then by the *Sowetan* in 1981. All three newspapers were owned by the Argus Group, one of the two companies (the other was Times Media Limited – TML) that controlled the English language press prior to 1994.

move readers to accept visual representations as irrefutable evidence of events, helping in turn to shape feelings or justify convictions about the protagonists in those events.

Equally importantly, it confirms Chevrier's (2005:54) theory that "For photographers who are involved, sometimes blindly, in the present that they are recording or that they intend to depict, the documentary content of their pictures will only appear later on: they will know what they have photographed later on". As Chevrier continues, "Whereas the document is at best waiting for the interpretative use that will give it a meaning, if not 'its' meaning, the testimony wants to be seen or heard immediately" (emphasis in the original). The immediacy of Nzima's photograph, encouraging readers to accept it as unmediated reality, enabled it to get front-page coverage in the foreign press. The documentary (and iconic) value of the photograph came later as it lent itself to the exercise of interpretation and re-interpretation underlying cultural practices, whereby man acquires a frame of reference which allows him to make sense of reality. This dynamic is central to Geertz's (1973:5) theoretical vocabulary for studying culture, a concept he embraces as "essentially a semiotic one". As he continues,

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.

From this viewpoint, webs of significance are constructed when events are interpreted and woven into a coherent system of meanings. In the Geertz (1973:18) formulation, "A good interpretation of anything … takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation", but this cue also prompts a string of questions on the politics of representation: How does perspective (and time) alter how events are interpreted and recorded? To what extent does the anchoring function of the caption or text have a bearing on viewers' interpretation of the signifiers of the image? How do the juxtaposition and/or layout of images in a prescribed order both channel the meaning-making process and favour narrativisation? To what extent do viewers' life-experiences, socio-cultural and political environment engender active creators of cultural meaning, stimulating each viewer to construct his/her own context for the image, thereby conditioning the type of response/reflex to a given representation?

Of interest to this study is the substantiation that the photographic images of the Soweto uprising shifted meaning as they passed from an English-language newspaper

read mainly by whites to a newspaper whose readers were mainly black. An image of black youths clenching their fists in the 'Black Power' salute, holding sticks and placards which read "Away with Afrikaans", denoted danger and violence for the white readers of the *Rand Daily Mail*, enabling them to match the faces of those youths to the burning of administration buildings, the stoning of vehicles and the killing of two white officials. A similar image in *The World* represented hope illuminated by black students' agency as they mobilised themselves against the injustices sanctioned by the apartheid government. For many it signified the preview of liberation and the repossession of dignity after many years of oppression and degradation. At this point it is worth considering that neither image nor text is innocent. They depend on and interact with each other to produce contrived photographic messages, precluding readers from making unbiased decisions. A headline or caption encapsulates a diversity of viewpoints, which may not display objective interpretations of the news coverage. As Barthes (1977:26) argues,

> Formerly, the image illustrated the text (made it clearer); today, the text loads the image, burdening it with a culture, a moral, an imagination. Formerly, there was reduction from text to image; today, there is amplification from the one to the other.

As previously noted, Nick Ut's photograph of Phan Thi Kim Puc (the naked nine-year old Vietnamese girl who, screaming in agony, flees her village after a napalm attack) etched an indelible impression in people's minds in 1972 when it was taken, becoming a photographic icon that evoked the Vietnam War. In the same way, Sam Nzima's photograph of the three Sowetan youths is viewed as a symbol larger than the actuality of the image. These are images that, as Hariman and Lucaites (2007:1) put it, "have more than documentary value, they bear witness to something that exceeds words". To borrow Sontag's (2003:76) ever-quotable words, they are "Photographs that everyone recognises … a constituent part of what a society chooses to think about, or declares that it has chosen to think about".

Thirty years on from the Soweto uprising the three subjects in the photograph are recognised as symbols of "the national liberation struggle", as Mutloase (2006:10) notes in a book titled *Soweto '76: Reflections on the Liberation Struggles*, published to commemorate the 30th anniversary of June 16, 1976. Hector Pieterson, along with seventeen-year-old Hastings Ndlovu and eight-year-old Lili Mithi, who were the first casualties, are remembered as "martyrs of [the] national quest to be not only seen to be free, but most importantly, are also freedom personified" (Mutloase, 2006:11),

while Mbuyisa Makhubu and Antoinette Sithole are remembered as the survivors who lived to tell the story.

The thirtieth anniversary of the Soweto uprising in 2006 occasioned critical reflection among scholars on the process of *iconicisation* of Sam Nzima's photograph since it was first published in *The World* (Marschall, 2006; Simbao, 2007). Questions have been raised about how the image was/has been treated/used, whether its resonance on an aesthetic level has superimposed the contextualisation of the image and, intrinsically, whether its iconicity has enabled or impeded memory of the circumstances surrounding the event. Other questions are just as pertinent and worth considering. What holds this image together? What makes it *the* representation of the Soweto uprising, and how did/has it become *the story*, standing by itself, dispensing with textual formulations and yet making a strong point? What has made this photograph *the* iconic image that elicited an international outcry against the apartheid government's policies?

While other photographs that were published at the time were 'rough' images of the violence underpinning the conflict between students and police on that day, Nzima's photograph is aesthetically, splendidly composed. It reflects, according to Hariman and Lucaites' (2007:30) analysis of the iconic image, "a moment of visual eloquence … an aesthetic achievement made out of thoroughly conventional materials", providing, as the authors (2007:35) continue, "the viewing public with powerful evocations of emotional experience …, [placing] the viewer in an affective relationship with the people in the picture".

Photographs are not value-free. Subliminally they are traversed both at the level of production and at the level of reception by the photographer and the viewer's pre-conceived notions, by socio-cultural and ideological frameworks. Bearing this in mind, Nzima's rendering of the three schoolchildren alludes — within the Western Christian tradition — to the *Pietá*, as Simbao (2007:58) underscores, "to the Marian image of sorrow and suffering in which Christ's dead body hangs limply in the arms of the devoted mother". It conveys a "fluidity" that Scott (1999:66) underscores, drawing on Peirce and Barthes' theoretical conceptualisation of iconicity, "between index, icon and symbol, between signifier, referent and signified, between *punctum* and *studium*".

Considered from a semantic point of view, the image is an indexical record with informative value: it not only provides evidence that something outrageous

happened, that children were killed that day, but it is also invested with a political statement. It evokes anger and compels a compassionate response from the viewer, whose confrontation with the subjects' young ages prevents a disengaged/distanced encounter with the image. Considered formally and aesthetically, the image gains much of its acute meaning — its pathos — from its individual components: the intensity of Mbuyisa's agonised expression and Antoinette's outstretched hand. That outstretched hand, concurrently distancing the subject from the viewer and denoting the girl's incapacity to deal with the atrocity of the moment, paradoxically draws the viewer closer to the subject, into the realm of her bereavement. But perhaps what most sears into the viewer's consciousness is what can be seen (and sensed) but not heard — Mbuyisa and Antoinette's anguished cry as the former carries the lifeless Hector Pieterson and the latter runs alongside helplessly. It is *this*, the *punctum*, that "works" within the viewer, that "pricks" the emotion and arouses great sympathy — "an addition … what I add to the photograph and *what is nonetheless already there*" (emphasis in the original), as proposed by Barthes (2000:55), or "[the] 'is-ness' or 'being' that excites me" referred to by Goldblatt (Enwezor, 1998:35), which endows this photograph with intemporality.

Although Nzima is credited with two well-known images that were circulated and used in the foreign press at the time, the British press gravitated towards the image of the three youths as *the one* image which captured the meaning of an historical moment by its connotation of the incomprehensible atrocity committed on 16 June 1976 when children were killed by gun fire. The Pietá trope, represented in the stark simplicity of the confrontation between the triangular pose of the two youngsters (a male and a female) running away from the traumatic event (towards the camera/ 'safety') while the eldest boy carries, in his arms, a younger boy who is dying, introduced the viewer/reader (through the humanising contact with the suffering of others) to the moment when a students' protest march turned into a tragedy.

The meaning of the image was extended by means of Nicholas Ashford's page lead in *The Times* on 17 June 1976. The headline, reading "Six die after South African police open fire on rioters", supplemented both by the sub-title "Army reinforcements are called to Soweto" and the caption "Two students carry the body of a young pupil to a hospital as the rioting continues in Soweto", attempts to help resolve the viewer's sense of what happened, but what seems to surface — and to linger — is the distance between the emission and reception of the message, to use Barthes' (1977) proposition of pictorial and verbal analysis. The words fall short of bridging the

distance between what the photographer witnessed and tried to convey — in an attempt to mobilise people to do something to change the *status quo* — and how the audience receives and is enabled to process the visual/ textual information. It follows that the determinacy intended by the photographer can be (and is often) lost, either in the inadequacy of the text/caption accompanying it, in the contextual incompleteness, or in the angle explored in the coverage.

In his analysis of the foreign press's (in particular, *The Times*') initial treatment of the story of the Soweto uprising, Sanders (2000:164) argues that despite the indexicality of the photographs, which testifies to the reality of the traumatic event the photographer had captured by pressing the shutter at that exact moment, readers were positioned to make sense of the event from the viewpoint of the South African Police " before … a degree of balance [was provided] through the citation of Sophie Tema's [a reporter from *The World*] account". Indeed, Ashford's article titled "Six die after South African police open fire on rioters" begins by focusing not on the black child(ren) who was (were) killed — represented in the accompanying photograph of Hector Pieterson — but on two white men, both officials, one of whom was brutally murdered. The journalist goes on to relay, "He was dragged from his car and then clubbed and stabbed to death. Later a banner was placed over his mutilated body saying: 'Beware – Afrikaans is the most dangerous drug for our future'."

Sanders (2000) establishes that a web of interconnected factors was axiomatic to the representation of the uprising in the Western media — particularly in the British and American press. Correspondents were mostly kept away from the area and were, therefore, prevented from witnessing the event first-hand; their reliance on such disparate sources as the South African police, government officials, and black journalists resulted in refracted representations of the event. This theory is corroborated by the fact that immediately after the description of the murder of the white official, the journalist's focus shifts to the children whose lives were claimed in the riot, but in contrast to the detail about white casualties, the black schoolchildren who died are unidentified, and their deaths are scantily and matter-of-factly summarised in two lines: "Two of the blacks killed were schoolchildren. Both died of multiple injuries and gunshot wounds." Only in the last column is a counter-view brought into the equation. The journalist cites Sophie Tema, whose testimony underscores that "At no stage … did the police warn the students to

disperse" before going on to provide a more graphic and detailed account — which, in itself, constructs an image — of the shootout:

> The students then started running and she saw one hit in the chest and fall. She then saw a boy of about six or seven years old fall with a bullet wound. 'He had a bloody froth on his lips and he seemed to be so seriously hurt so I took him to Phefeni clinic, but he was dead when we arrived'.

In the lead-up to this account, Sophie Tema's testimony that "She then saw a white policeman pull out his revolver, point it and fire [and] other policemen then began firing" entrenches the idea of the brutality of the South African police, which is further enhanced by another image[28] on page 8 of this issue of *The Times*. Captioned "Black South African policemen prepare to open fire against rioters in the Soweto African township, Johannesburg", the closely cropped photograph's strong focus of attention is on the hand holding a rifle in the left lower corner of the frame and on the profile of a black uniformed policeman in the centre of the image, aiming his rifle at a target outside the frame. We do not see the target, but if we consider this image within the context of the breaking news story on the cover of the newspaper, we are prompted to think about what is not in the frame and are compelled to extend the photograph's meaning on the basis of what we imagine is happening outside the frame; we imagine that the policeman is aiming his rifle at a child. The impact of this photograph is heightened through the perception that this image could be the prequel to the image on the front page of the newspaper; that child could very well be Hector Pieterson.

The juxtaposition of the press coverage of two incidents of mass struggle in South Africa (considered so far) reflects how institutional, political, and personal ideologies not only shape the thinking of journalists and photographers but ultimately have a bearing on the representations of those incidents in the press. Journalists' and photographers' depiction of the truth prompts the question: Whose truth is being (re)presented? Decisions of inclusion and exclusion, and judgement of who or what belongs inside the frame (be it literary or photographic), determine the response elicited by a piece of writing or image. The same moment can be appropriated and manipulated to reflect different versions of history; a split-second can separate two moments of an incident, providing different arrangements of visual information. The text, on the other hand, remote-controls the reader through the signifieds of the

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[28] Although this photograph is, according to Sanders (2000), also believed to have been taken by Nzima, *The Times* did not credit either this one or the photograph on page 1 of the dying Hector Pieterson.

image, encouraging some and discouraging others, giving readers a context and telling them what they should feel.

The two events (the Sharpeville massacre and the Soweto uprising) have been interpreted as significant historical matrices of the struggle for freedom, equality and justice in apartheid South Africa. The Soweto uprising was triggered by students' sense of urgency about political and social change. Urban youth were seething with indignation and discontent about "an inferior type of education" which, as Mandela (2002:31) had critiqued so vehemently in an essay written in 1957, "[was] designed to relegate the Africans to a position of perpetual servitude in a *baaskap* society" (my emphasis). In response to these structural conditions, they started to join student and youth organisations, such as the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) founded in 1969 by Steve Biko[29] and home to the ideological precepts of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)[30], and the South African Students' Movement (SASM).

Having been deprived of the proscribed ANC and the PAC's ideological and political platforms, the students' movements defined their own conceptual and ideological frameworks based on literature on black resistance politics emanating from America and other parts of Africa (Hirschmann, 1990). But the main inspiration was drawn from Steve Biko's thoughts. Also influential at their inception were the white dominated students' National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and the University Christian Movement (UCM). At a later stage, these movements, which were based at white campuses, were regarded as weak defenders of black students' social, political and educational needs, and therefore to be parted with (Biko, 1987).

The BCM's ideological and moral appeal sprang from, as Moodley (1991:249) defends, "a 'fictive kinship' between all three 'non-white groups' who [had] experienced the shared indignity of oppression and material deprivation" which claimed to establish, in Mzamane and Howarth's (2000:179) words, "a united black front … [consisting] of all those subordinated by colour in South Africa". Central to the BCM's activism was Biko's (1987:27) denunciation and condemnation of the dehumanising process suffered by black people at the hands of "white supremacy, capitalist exploitation,

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[29] Considered to be the "father" of the Black Consciousness Movement, Steve Biko made his thoughts known in the SASO Newsletters to which he contributed until his writing was banned in 1973. He was detained under the section 6 of the Terrorism Act in August 1977 and died a brutal (and unexplained) death while in detention the following month.
[30] Moodley (1991:245) contends that, "from the late 1960s until the arrest of its most articulate proponents in 1977, Black Consciousness filled a crucial vacuum created by the silencing of the ANC and PAC leadership."

and deliberate oppression", resulting in the material and spiritual poverty of "a kind of black man who is man only in form" (28). Biko's ideas resonated powerfully mainly with intellectuals who engaged in the moral force of his hymn to blackness. His ideas sought to "infuse the black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value system, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life" (Biko, 1987:49).

In his study, Hirschmann (1990:7) observes that opposing viewpoints divide scholars with regards to the influence of the BCM on the 1976 youth uprising, given that it was recognisably "'an introspective and intellectual movement of educated elite' … [unable to deal with] the practical challenges of mass organisation". For Marx (1991:315), this concern with who mobilised action seems to bear very little relevance. What weighs in his argument is that the BCM was a call to African agency, inciting blacks to dissect and challenge the concept of racism which was socially, culturally, politically and intellectually crippling "those branded as inferior". For Marx the strength of the BCM lay in Biko's success in distancing blacks from a position of 'victimhood' and pointing them in the direction of an alternative proactive role, capable of "provoking blacks to seek to regain their capacity to think for themselves" (Marx, 1991:315). This dynamic process was dependent on the role of black teachers — many of whom had been made to drop out of university because of political affiliations and had turned to teaching — in shaping students' racial and political consciousness.

Although teachers may have been the driving force behind black students' awareness of the possibilities of resistance politics, Diseko (1992) observes that the purposive demoralisation of the teaching profession by the apartheid government had pernicious effects on education. In Diseko's (1992:46) view, the effects of "the mass exodus of qualified and competent teachers in the late fifties and early sixties following the implementation of the Bantu Education Act", resulting in an increasingly low number of teachers in black schools with university education, nurtured high school students' discontent. This was further aggravated by the escalation of corporal punishment, and by the teacher:pupil ratio in "African schools in Soweto [which] averaged 1:60 [by 1970], and by 1975 in Phefeni Secondary … 1:300 for individual subjects" (Diseko, 1992:49). But what ultimately led to encounter and resistance was the announcement by the minister of Bantu Education that nuclear secondary schools subjects, such as mathematics, geography, physical science and biology were to be taught in Afrikaans. Deep-seated resentment of

Afrikaner political domination could be traced to Verwoerd's well-known speech during which, defending the Bantu Education Act, he had said: "What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? … Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life" (quoted in Cohen, 1988:80).

The Soweto uprising began to be seen, in the ensuing decades, as *the* causative factor in political and social change in South Africa – but it would take roughly another fifteen years before the much awaited political *volte face* could occur. A theoretical critique of the Sharpeville and Soweto mass protests invites a reflection on the intersections of race, space and power, prompting the problematisation of how the social logics of the white oppressor and the black oppressed played out in a socially charged space and how the agency of individuals shook the structure of the political system of social control and racial discrimination.

These pivotal moments of resistance indicate that the black population's growing sense of grievous injustice — voiced in the 1950s by Nelson Mandela and in the 1970s by Steve Biko — stemmed from the apartheid social structure which used 'race' as its fundamental unit and predicate, taking refuge in arguments of culturally and historically determined differences to justify the construction and mobilisation of the category of 'whiteness'. Through this construction the black majority assimilated, and accepted, a position of inferiority and submission, while the white minority entrenched — under the umbrella of a complex system of social and spatial engineering — racial, social, political and economic domination in the fabric of society.

Supported by a cohesive legal framework which regulated black people's movement, a system of social control — a purposeful display of state power — was exercised through both the geographical separation of social spaces and the planning and design of the racially segregated built environment. This arrangement of the physical space invokes Foucault's (1979) panopticon prison model, an index — and one of the principal instruments — of the "carceral city" in which a network of institutions and mechanisms interact to "exercise a power of normalisation" aimed at creating disciplined individuals (Foucault, 1979:308). Accordingly, as Foucault (1984:253) underlines, "[the] allocation of people in space, a canalization of their circulation, as well as the coding of their reciprocal relations" not only facilitated the surveillance and control, through physical coercion, of subjects excluded from citizenship rights but also became a crucial mechanism of power in the exercise of apartheid.

Ironically, during the Sharpeville and Soweto uprisings, the 'township' — that space which apartheid social thinking would want emptied of meaning — became inscribed with both power and meaning, illustrating Low and Zúñiga's (2003:18) theoretical understanding of "contested spaces", classified as:

> geographic locations where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power.

From this viewpoint, the protesters' action at the sites of the two uprisings was reinforced, rather than annulled, by the repressive action of the police. To borrow Low and Zúñiga's (2003:1) words, "the notion that all behaviour is located in and constructed of space [takes] on new meaning" in the light of the 1960 and 1976 uprisings. What compelled the re-inscription of the geographical and social space were the widely mediated — not only by the foreign press but, essentially, and much to the consternation of the political structures, by the domestic press — textual and visual representations, engendering to the present date re-imaginings and re-definitions of these sites of social struggle. This has a bearing on scholars' need to theorise geographical and social space in terms of its capacity to socially produce meaning and change, leading to Soja's adoption of the term 'spatiality' which, in giving primacy to social context and social action, illustrates his argument that "the meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience" (Soja, 1989:80).

In the wake of the Soweto unrest — which reverberated into the beginning of 1978 — the apartheid government launched a campaign to wipe out black opposition activities. The detention and death of Steve Biko in September 1977 — and the imprisonment of Black Consciousness activists — was followed by the banning of *The World* and its Sunday edition *Weekend World* in October 1977. Percy Qoboza was arrested without charge and released after spending six months in prison. During the next decade the government made successive but unsuccessful attempts to contain the spreading conflict. ANC and PAC activities reappeared, re-inspiring loyalties. In the 1980s a nonracial antiapartheid coalition emerged under the name of the United Democratic Front (UDF), professing, alongside the ANC, the credo of an undivided South African nation, where the concept 'nation' represents, "a collectivity with a sense of historical destiny for the future, intended to unify and to inspire action against domination", as Marx (1991:318), echoing Benedict Anderson, notes. Importantly, the Soweto uprising was a turning point in the political consciousness of

South Africans, not only for blacks but for whites as well, many of whom joined the UDF in the hope of helping to construct a unified South African nation.

The introduction of a new constitution in 1984, which made provision for a tricameral Parliament, would have presented the opportunity to start building "a more inclusive community, forged by experiences of physical domination and resistance" (Marx, 1991:319), in line with the ANC and UDF's vision of a newly constituted and unified South African nation, had it not been for the continued exclusion of the black population from the decision-making process of the country. This political structure, coupled with discontent over rent and transport increases, gave a new impetus to the mass-based popular movement and motivated demonstrations, boycotts of high rents, worker stayaways and consumer boycotts. In response to the increase of violence embedded in the general state of unrest, the government — under the leadership of P.W. Botha — amplified the police's powers of arrest and detention, increased militarisation and renewed repressive measures. State of emergency regulations took effect in 1985 and included the ban (published in the *Government Gazette of the Republic of South Africa*, Vol 276, No. 11342) on press-coverage of anti-apartheid violence, which stated:

> 4. (1) No person shall without the prior consent of the Commissioner or of a member of a security force serving as a commissioned officer in that force take any photographs or make or produce any television recording, film recording, drawing or other depiction – (a) of any unrest or security action or any incident occurring in the course thereof, including the damaging or destruction of property or the injuring or killing of persons, or (b) of any damaged or destroyed property or injured or dead persons or other visible signs of violence at the scene where unrest or security action is taking place or has taken place or of any injuries sustained by any person in or during unrest or security action (quoted in Hill and Harris, 1989).

The 1980s have been characterised as "the longest and bloodiest period of political resistance to apartheid, a time of mass mobilization and brutal repression" (Hill and Harris, 1989:7). It was also the time when South African documentary photography informed the international community about the injustice and inhumanity of apartheid, prompting scorn for apartheid and holding the international community morally responsible if pressure was not applied against the Nationalist government. Throughout these years many South African photographers documented popular resistance and state brutality, often risking their lives and careers to "record everything that happened [truthfully]", as Magubane reflects (Light, 2000:56). Magubane's testimony bears witness, on the one hand, to the power of both the

photographer and the photograph and, on the other hand, to the seriousness of the work of photographers like himself (Light, 2000: 56):

> I have to liberate myself through the medium of the camera. I have to liberate the oppressor through the medium of the camera … even if I found a white person being molested by black people [,] I would not turn around and face the other direction and say it has nothing to do with black people. I photograph that as well.

Shortly before the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the subsequent demise of apartheid, a compilation of black-and-white documentary photography titled *Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa* (Hill and Harris,1989) assembled photographic testimonies of twenty photographers. As they express in their mission statement, "the 'camera' became a voice for those denied a vote and basic human rights" and "photography provided irrefutable documentation" of the South African political and social landscape at a juncture when "both activists and ordinary people began to look beyond the barricades of apartheid toward a new South Africa" (Hill and Harris, 1989:7). The book was published in 1989 to accompany the exhibition "South Africa under Apartheid" which opened at the United Nations in March 1990, reaching large international audiences. The Preface, which is signed "The Photographers", ends with a powerful statement:

> All the photographers represented in this book have experienced state repression. Some have been beaten up by the security forces, and others detained without trial. All have had their film confiscated and been denied the possibility of photographing in conflict situations. The camera has played a special role in these times. It has been there to record inhumanity, injustice, and exploitation… It is beckoned by history to take sides. The photographers in this book have.

The front cover photograph, credited to Gideon Mendel, is a close-up of three uniformed white policemen chasing a group of fleeing black youths. Although the speed of his movement has blurred the object in his hand, we can tell that the policeman in the front is heaving his *sjambok* (a whip, traditionally made of rhinoceros-hide, used by the apartheid police) and preparing to strike. Racing in from the right side of the frame are the three policemen, while the youths are racing out on the left side of the bifurcated frame. The focus of attention is on the expressions of the two subjects in the foreground — positioned on opposite edges of the frame — as they turn towards the camera. The hefty policeman, appearing to be in his 40s (a sergeant, judging by the three stripe chevron on his sleeve) is holding his cap in his right hand. We are unable to tell what he is holding in his other hand because of the

cropping of the image, but tight facial muscles and the force with which he is projecting himself forward towards the youth denote the concentration of someone who is about to lash his target. The young man has brought his left arm up in front of his chest; someone else's hand appears diagonally in front of his stomach. He is looking back at his assailant with a mixture of bewilderment and fear as if anticipating the blow that is about to be dealt. The image derives its strength from the bifurcation of the frame along race lines, clearly placing white against black. The movement of the subjects, which "is sometimes implied to continue beyond the limits of the picture format" (Godby, 2004:37), the direction in which they are moving and the distance between persecutors and persecuted further heighten the tension conveyed by the framing and the composition.

The back cover photograph by Paul Weinberg, in contrast, draws its impact from the immobility of the subjects: a very young white policeman and a black woman. In this case, the mood is depicted by the sheer helplessness and despair on the woman's face as she turns, pleading and gesturing with her right hand to someone outside the frame while clutching a shopping bag with her other hand. She has been forced into the corner of a building and has the barrel of the young riot policeman's rifle at close distance from her face. Apart from the rifle in his hand, the young man is fully equipped with a helmet and a teargas mask, factors which highlight both the disproportion between the subjects and/or the inequality in circumstances, adding to the image's effect. The young man, placed at the edge of the frame, seems almost as frightened as the black woman he is intimidating.

The two photographs on the cover of *Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa* set the mood for the whole book. The use of black and white for the photos prevents distraction and keeps the focus on the subjects while dramatising the scene's atmosphere and emotional content. The medium's reduction to tonal contrasts heightens the tension, sorrow, anger or fear on the subjects' faces, creating immediacy and prompting a sympathetic or emotional response from the viewer. An image capturing the elation of a crowd as they welcome home a member of the banned ANC's military wing MK on her release from prison in 1984; images of protesters burning vehicles in street barricades in 1985; images of youths fleeing from the police in Duduza township in 1985; an image of a woman screaming from the pain caused by tear gas; another of a woman holding up a bloodstained t-shirt; another of a naked youth whose body is covered in whip scars; and yet another of a man wearing a t-shirt with the slogan "BULLETS WON'T STOP US", who is helping to

lower a coffin into the ground and many more images in a similar vein fill the book's one hundred and thirty-eight pages.

The texts accompanying the photographs repeat the words "police", "death squads", "killed", "violence", "resistance", "bloody conflicts", "victim", "arrested", duplicating/amplifying the effect of the images and, in some cases, projecting new signifieds into the visual representations. But the photographic messages in this book are so poignant and self-explanatory that the captions are easily dispensed with when the images are first perceived. Victims like the Reverend Frank Chikane testify, "I personally am a living witness to this chronicle of resistance … I was part of the leadership of the … UDF in 1984 and 1985 who were detained and charged with high treason and later acquitted" (Hill and Harris, 1989:9). Poems and personal accounts of South Africans who were beaten up, arrested or detained reinforce the arrangement of visual information, producing a narrative of mass struggle, but also of individual suffering. The semantics of human rights underpinning the Freedom Charter on pages 28 and 29 contrast sharply with the stifling discourse of the Security Emergency Regulations (referred to earlier), of which a sample has been reproduced on pages 121 to 123. Throughout the book runs a constant tension between image and text, unsettling, disturbing and overwhelming the reader, making it unbearable to leaf through the book from cover to cover, let alone absorb all the information in one sitting.

Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa provides a point of reference for documentary photography in South Africa, illustrating Scott's (1999: 83) theory that, "despite [the documentary photographer's] compassion, [he/she] is uncompromising, and this ability to look reality squarely in the face is what makes the good documentary photograph both intense and authoritative". Scott (1999:97) further hypothesises that "The images of documentary photography are images that seek to haunt us, barely suppressed memories of… our own capacity for cruelty, misanthropy, prejudice, condescension, violation". The work of these twenty South African photographers — classified as "struggle photographers" by Godby (2004:37), and as "activist documentary photographers" by Dubow (1998:24) — is identified by "styles that were fully legible and highly expressive in their representation of oppression and resistance", as Godby (2004:37) describes. The resulting images have been termed "the Guernica of photography" (Gordimer 2001:343). These are graphic records of overt violence — of confrontation at its most brutal — that constitute invaluable documentation of the resistance to and struggle against apartheid. But

this work also serves as a good point of departure for establishing a comparison with the work and style of David Goldblatt, recognised today, along with Jürgen Schadeberg and Peter Magubane, as one of the "pioneers of the early period [the 1960s] whose influence on the photographic movement has been profound" (Weinberg, 1989: 61).

1.7 Other *photographies*: David Goldblatt's unpropagandistic political act

David Goldblatt has gained international reputation since he started exhibiting in Art Galleries — first in London, at the Photographers' Gallery in 1974 and in 1986, at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne in 1975, and from 1998 in New York, Barcelona, Rotterdam, Brussels and Munich. Goldblatt's black-and-white photography of apartheid South Africa won him recognition for the poignancy of his observation of people and places in mundane scenes, revealing a deep sense of social consciousness and concern about communicating the humanity of his subjects. Stylistically, Goldblatt's photography is distinguished by meticulous and deliberate composition where every detail is of significance, by precise focus and tonal contrasts. But what sets Goldblatt's work apart from other documentary photography is that he displays the stark race divisions of blacks and whites in a racially segregated society without, to borrow Downey's (2003:201) words, "passing an overt judgement on the rights and wrongs of apartheid". In a 1998 interview with Okwui Enwezor (1998:16), Goldblatt reflected that one of the challenges of living in [apartheid] South Africa was "how to square one's conscience with being a white in this country", summing up the principle that governed his work/life for fifty years:

> Once I became seriously engaged in it, photography became my way of being politically active. It was a political act. I must be careful to tell you, though, that I would not allow my photographs to be used for political purposes.

Unable to relate to the conceptual modes of photojournalism, which seek events rather than "the states of being that lead to events" (Goldblatt quoted in Enwezor, 1998:19), Goldblatt's representation of South African society sidestepped the dramatic visual rhetoric of political unrest explored by the struggle photographers. He was interested in highlighting the tensions — and, at the same time, the human bonds — between those who suffered under apartheid and those who lived by apartheid's policies. In many cases the latter lacked initiative and/or courage to

become involved in opposition politics, remaining passive (even if unwilling) bystanders and observers of a political, economic, social and cultural configuration that confronted most people daily with the immorality, injustice and perversity of apartheid.

Activists and opponents of apartheid found it particularly difficult to stomach Goldblatt's portrayal of the Afrikaners, which did not demonise his subjects, nor did it present them as being inhuman. Instead it showed that many Afrikaners seemed to be "trapped in the trappings of middle-class white South Africa", as Goldblatt remarked in an interview with Francine Stock from "Front Row", BBC Radio 4's Arts and Drama programme (2003). This approach seemed at odds with what would be expected of someone who opposed apartheid and openly supported the ANC and the Black Sash. It comes as no surprise that Goldblatt's stance on his role as a photographer, as well as his vehement refusal to allow his photographs to be used in propaganda and his need to expose his work to the public on his own terms, "won him frequent hostility and total incomprehension" among both his peers and the ANC. It explains, as Ardenne (2007:78) argues, "the tardy reception of his work, especially in the U.S.". At a 1981 conference on liberation and the arts organised by the ANC in Botswana, where photographers were reflecting on how photography could be used as a weapon in the liberation struggle, Goldblatt stated that "the camera was not a machine-gun and that photographers shouldn't confuse their response to the politics of the country with their role as photographers" (quoted in Enwezor, 1998:29). He claimed that "The latter demanded a degree of dispassion", which did not equate with a disengaged and apolitical approach to photography, but rather the opposite.

Accordingly, Goldblatt documented life under apartheid in South Africa not at sites of struggle and resistance, brutality and violence, but rather in everyday settings where social interaction and relationships meet and intermesh, illustrating the texture of daily life and encouraging complex and resonant readings of the rural and urban, social and cultural structures of apartheid. Goldblatt seeks out "the quiet and commonplace where nothing 'happened' and yet all was contained and immanent", as Dubow (1998:24) accentuates. Steering clear of shocking events and of stereotypes found in the country's social constellations, Goldblatt's focus of interest is the often dispassionate interaction of blacks and whites during the uneventful flow of their daily experiences. Adding to the impact of his images is the meaning created by the

sense of difference established either between subjects or between what is inside the frame and what we perceive to be in a context outside the photograph.

His seminal work *On the Mines,* published in 1973 together with an essay by Nadine Gordimer, surveys critically the routines, as well as the working and living conditions of miners, shift bosses, mine captains and managers. These are neatly encapsulated in a photograph of a black "team leader" pedalling a mine captain on a pedal car, making a political statement on the values on which the apartheid society was founded. The photo-essay titled *Some Afrikaners Photographed* (1975) — published as an expanded re-issue titled *Some Afrikaners Revisited* (2007) — which earned Goldblatt a vituperative attack from the Afrikaner community when it was published in 1975, focuses on class divisions, on the fragilities of rural poor whites and on the dynamics of relations across the race divide.

The routine and familiar aspects of everyday life in a small-town, value-laden middle-class white community are brought out in a series of photographs taken in 1979 and 1980 titled *In Boksburg* (1982). What resonates in this photographic essay is the orderliness holding the community's placid lives together, as a group of primly dressed elderly ladies of the *Vroue-Federasie/* Women's League hold their monthly meeting, or as a slender teenage girl in a ballet tutu pirouettes in her front porch, or as four teenage contestants in the Hypermarket's Miss Lovely Legs Competition line up on a catwalk to pose in their bathing-suites while behind them black and white spectators — children, women and men — display a mixture of expressions as they stand side by side transfixed. In this small white urban community, alike so many others in South Africa, Goldblatt found what he so keenly wanted to reflect in his photography: "the values by which we South Africans lived and on which our ethos was based" (quoted in Enwezor, 1998:22). As Geertz (1973:127) conceptualises it,

> A people's ethos is the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood; it is the underlying attitude toward themselves and the world that life reflects.

The photographic essay *The Transported of KwaNdebele, a South African Odyssey* (1989), commissioned in 1983 by the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, documents the interminable journeys of black commuters who travelled almost eight hours a day to get to and from work, from the homeland of KwaNdebele to Pretoria. The meticulous observation of bodies slumped in crowded uncomfortable bus seats is enhanced by the use of light, shadow, contrast and composition. The grainy, slightly blurred images produce a strange combination

of magnetism and discomfort in the viewer whose inability to see the expressions or faces of the passengers — so many of whom have buried their faces in their arms as they try to find a position to sleep — is left with an impression of the incommensurability and indeterminacy of these instances. This sense of unease/shock is intensified by the accompanying text, which anchors the immorality of an ideological system that forced people to move to remote homelands where they would be unemployed, leaving them little alternative but to accept the precarious living and labour conditions known to them. The bus rides were just one of the difficulties most people faced daily — the first passengers got on at 2:50 a.m. and many only arrived home at 10:00 p.m., having to start off at 2:00 a.m. again the next day.

South Africa: the Structure of Things Then (1998) looks at details of buildings and structures — be they brick, mud, stone, corrugated iron, wood or plastic — in the South African landscape, bringing out often unnoticed but distinctive traces of white colonialist intervention in the landscape since 1652. These traces were preserved and perpetuated until 1990 by a politics of *baaskap*/ white domination underpinning the apartheid-tainted existence of a divided and dividing society. Government buildings, churches, monuments and houses — all, strangely/surprisingly, empty of people, but not devoid of human presence — are some of the settings used by Goldblatt to highlight the visibility of the sources of power while those over whom power is exercised remain largely invisible and economically, socially and politically disempowered.

Goldblatt's photographs are quite distinct from the dramatic press and television accounts of the political violence engendered by apartheid that people outside South Africa had been accustomed to. As Susan Kismaric (1998), Curator of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, remarks, "These accounts tended to focus on the journalistic and dramatic, revealing little about the system's origins, complexities or nuances". By contrast, Goldblatt's work reflects on how the ideology of apartheid was imprinted in every aspect of life, including the built environment. This capacity to "provide a sense of texture of daily life, and an important piece of missing information regarding life under apartheid in South Africa" (Kismaric, 1998) motivated the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) to display Goldblatt's work in an exhibition titled "David Goldblatt: Photographs from South Africa" from July to October 1998, enabling him to become the first South African photographer to have a solo exhibition at the museum.

From August to December 2001 AXA Gallery in New York hosted a retrospective exhibition — produced and organised by the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) and co-curated by Corinne Diserens and Okwui Enwezor — spanning Goldblatt's photographic career from 1948 to 1999. From the MoMa in New York, the show toured to the MACBA in Barcelona, the Witte de With Museum in Rotterdam (2002), Centro Cultural de Belém in Lisbon (2002), the Oxford Museum of Modern Art in Oxford (2003), the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels (2003) and to Lenbachhaus in Munich (2003) before opening in the Johannesburg Art Gallery in August 2005. The catalogue that accompanied the exhibition, titled *David Goldblatt: Fifty-one Years* (2001) follows a biographical and chronological direction, comprising photographs from the photographer's early work up until the series entitled *Structures*. It is a testimony of half a century of commitment to recording the often grim living conditions of ordinary people while constantly probing and questioning the values of an ideological system that in Golblatt's (2001:251) words, "locked [people] into a deep and portentous fixity of self-elected, legislated whiteness".

The anthology provides an overview of Goldblatt's body of work during the course of apartheid — from its inception to its demise — and is illustrative of the author's visceral involvement with the country he grew up in, with its conditions and states, with its textures and its objects. An ongoing dialogue between form and content is at the axis of his work, explaining a shift in his choice of subject matter in the course of fifty years: from the cityscape to portraiture to landscape and architecture; from public spaces in his early work to the intimacy of someone's living-room, to the subject's direct — or, sometimes, averted — gaze. Hence, a hint of an internal and private self is displayed in the *Some Afrikaners Photographed* and *In Boksburg* series. In the *Particulars* series Goldblatt focuses on details of bodies — a naked breast half concealed by a blanket, hands resting on a lap, or crossed legs on a park bench. Shortly before the demise od partheid, Goldblatt turned his attention to materials, buildings and monuments, which are an extension of the subjects in his photographs, and expressions of an ideological system and the values it embraced.

This shift accompanies Goldblatt's transition from making explicit political statements on a politics of discrimination that bred injustices and iniquities, granting or refusing people human, civic and political rights on the basis of their skin colour, to a more subtle engagement with the layered substructure of apartheid society. The complementarity between photographs and precise explanatory captions, which help to contextualise the subject matter, provides insight into the socio-cultural fabric of

apartheid South Africa and affords Goldblatt's corpus of work inestimable documentary value by virtue of "[the] concreteness, … solidity and constancy to [his] investigation … [which] produced an extraordinary political analysis" (Enwezor, 1998:17).

Following the success of his retrospective exhibition, which toured Europe for two years, Goldblatt was invited in 2002 to exhibit excerpts from both his photographic essay on Boksburg and his more recent series titled "Intersections" at Documenta 11 in Kassel, Germany, where every five years works of art by artists from around the world are presented over a period of a hundred days. Apart from a succession of solo shows in South Africa, Europe and the United States, Goldblatt has participated in group shows which include "History, Memory, Society" with Henri Cartier Bresson and Lee Friedlander at the Tate Modern in London in 2004. This was followed by "Africa Remix", a touring show which assembled the artistic production of eighty-eight African artists and started at the museum kunst palast in Düsseldorf in 2004 and then travelled to the Hayward Gallery in London and to the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris in 2005, the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo in 2006, to Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and finally to the Johannesburg Art Gallery in 2007.

The National Museum of Photography in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, the Kristanstads Konsthall in Sweden, the Reykjavik Museum of Photography in Iceland and the Durban Art Gallery in South Africa hosted, in 2005 and 2006, an exhibition titled "Unsettled: 8 South African Photographers", in which Goldblatt also participated. In 2007, Goldblatt, along with another one hundred and eight artists from forty-three countries, was invited to participate in Documenta 12 in Kassel, contributing with images from "The Transported of KwaNdebele" series. The 2011 Venice Biennale (June-November 2011) featured works from Goldblatt's "Ex-offenders" series, as well as other recent black-and-white and colour prints.

In 2006 Goldblatt became the twenty-sixth winner, and the first South African photographer, to be distinguished with the prestigious Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography. In 2009 he won the Henri Cartier-Bresson (HCB) Award for his project *TJ* [31] that focuses on the development of walled housing estates in the suburbs of Johannesburg as a response to crime. Adding to the success of his career is the fact that many of his images form part of collections, notably at the South African National Gallery in Cape Town; the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; the

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[31] "TJ" refers to the letters used in the former South African vehicle registration indicating the province and city: Transvaal, Johannesburg.

Victoria and Albert Museum in London; the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona, as well as in the French National Art Collection (that acquired fifty-four of his prints in 2004). Direct in his words as he is rigorous and demanding in his work, Golblatt expresses his feelings about the welcome but belated attention given to his work in an interview with Diane Smyth (2006:13):

> It's kind of ironic. The kind of recognition that we South African photographers are getting now would have been far more meaningful and encouraging during the years of Apartheid. The Photographers' Gallery and the Side Gallery were very supportive, but in general there was very little interest.

The end of apartheid prompted a change of narrative style and mode of expression in the photographer's work since 1999, but his interest continues to focus on the values of a society now inscribed in the so-called "new South Africa". A photographic essay titled *Intersections* (2005) was exhibited at Michael Stevenson in Cape Town at the beginning of 2005 and curated for a touring exhibition which opened at the museum kunst palast in Düsseldorf, Germany, in June 2005 and travelled to the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg the same year; to Camera Austria in 2006 and to Huis Marseille Museum of Photography in Amsterdam, followed by the Berkeley Art Museum at the University of California in 2007. This series explores the intersection of the political with the physical and human geography of South Africa through four tropes, namely "Landscapes", "In the time of Aids", "Memorials" and "Municipal People". Combining and contrasting images of the at times rural and barren South African landscape — at intersections of roads and paths where fences, monuments and remains of settlements elicit the country's history and, by implication, apartheid's political and social structures — the work is a shrewd observation of cityscapes where hawkers' wares have appropriated the pavements of Johannesburg and fortress-like houses in the suburbs barricade wealthy residents.

The most distinctive feature of these images is the economy of the human factor, setting off the photographer's eye for detail and careful framing. Indeed, "[the] remarkable economy of means" in which so much is told "in apparently telling so little about what [is] ordinary" — practised by the American photographer Walker Evans and the South African writer Herman Charles Bosmann, two of Goldblatt's sources of inspiration — is what Goldblatt has always aspired to in his own work, and once again achieved in this series (Enwezor, 1998:26).

In a subsequent body of work, titled *Intersections Intersected*, Goldblatt (2008)[32], pursues the inquiry into the relationship (and intersection) between people and the land. He explores the potential of large scale and great depth of field to single out monuments, structures and signage on the South African physical landscape. Pairs of photographs, comprised of an older black-and-white and a more recent colour print, establish a dialogue between images, and invite the viewer to look for converging and diverging points between the past and the present. The images stimulate reflection about land ownership, control, (dis)placement and (dis)possession, and provide a new insight into the continuities and changes in the moral and value systems framing a post-apartheid socio-political landscape plagued by poverty, inequality and exclusion. Implicit, rather than present in most colour images, the human subject has been left out of the frame as if to suggest that the atmosphere of melancholy, desolation, neglect and abandonment mirrors inactivity as much as social and political disinvestment. Rather than ploughed and showing signs of possibility, the land — except, at times, for a fence, a path or a track — shows evidence of either little or frustrated intervention and habitation.

The juxtaposition (and tension) between black-and-white and colour images in this body of work suggests that the beginning of a new social and political era in South Africa signalled a conceptual shift in Goldblatt's photographic practice. The concern that colour film "seemed too sweet a medium [in the years of apartheid]… too pleasing" (quoted in Byles, 2007:96), has now been replaced by the need to "render the colour as [he has] it in [his] mind's eye" (Smyth, 2006:14). This change in register also reflects the trajectory of a country in transition from the oppression of apartheid to democracy, compelling South Africans (David Goldblatt included) to confront their feelings about the past. In an interview with curator and art historian Tamar Garb[33], Goldblatt reflected on a shift in his mindset, which stems from a waning of the anger he felt during the apartheid years, making it emotionally and spiritually possible for him to adopt another kind of photography. In an earlier book Goldblatt (2007:17) underscores, "I no longer feel the anger, fear and disgust that I had then felt at what was being done to South Africa".

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[32] This series was exhibited at the Museu Serralves in Porto, Portugal, from July to October 2008, before travelling to Galerie Paul Andriese in Amsterdam (October to December 2008) and later to the New Museum, New York (July to October 2009). The show was adapted from an earlier exhibition on view at Michael Stevenson Gallery in Cape Town (January to February 2008).

[33] The interview, which took place on 29 May 2008, is available at the Tate Modern website (www.rare.org.uk/onlineevents/webcasts/david_goldblatt/default.jsp).

1.8 South Africa after apartheid: changes in the socio-political landscape

By way of conclusion to this chapter — which has sought to draw out the relationship between the form and content of photography and the political, social and cultural texture of the country, first in apartheid South Africa and now in post-apartheid South Africa — the above statement by Goldblatt motivates reflection about what enables South Africans to "no longer feel the anger fear and disgust that [they] had then felt at what was being done to South Africa". Several questions come to mind. What social and political conjunctions have distanced the contemporary socio-political project from the apartheid past? Conversely, are there continuities between past and present that still corrode social relationships, thus preventing the legacy of apartheid from being effaced?

We have seen that the concepts of nationalism and national consciousness — as the organising principles of a race-based politics of separate development between blacks and whites — featured prominently in the apartheid project. Interestingly, a little over a decade after the end of apartheid, the same concepts of nationhood, national culture, national consciousness and national identity have become constituent ingredients of the nation-building rhetoric. This discourse still draws its inspiration from Nelson Mandela's project of a rainbow nation evolving from confrontation to reconciliation, from resistance to reconstruction, from a racially divided society to a multiracial and multicultural society. Much has been written and discussed about the possibilities of diversity within unity, but also about power structures underpinning the socio-political landscape of South Africa after apartheid; about continuities, changes and challenges; and about the negotiation of past and present. Academia, artists and cultural institutions alike have been instrumental in promoting debate and prompting the formulation of viewpoints within the civil society.

The nation-building process in South Africa is "far from an unproblematic, unilinear, irreversible process", as Simpson (1994:470) argues. In his analysis of the South African polity's prospects for a democratic order, and of obstacles and solutions for a political reconstruction underpinning the transition to democracy, Horowitz (1991) considers that the country's historical legacy plays a determinant role in the democratisation process and is neither to be wished away nor dealt with lightly. From his viewpoint, the nationalist aspiration and racial ideology motivating

Afrikaner political behaviour over the decades drove a wedge between white Afrikaans and English speakers, leading to a polarisation along ideological lines which cannot be assumed "will be transformed during the shorter period in which the adoption and implementation of fundamental constitutional change takes place" (Horowitz,1991:31). But more difficult to deal with, and more deeply entrenched in the fabric of society is the racial polarisation brought about by apartheid's racial legislation. This set of laws, while enforcing the separation of races spacially and socially, gave rise to a divided and deeply resentful unequal society. Drawing lessons from African countries after decolonisation, Horowitz (1991:85) stresses that once white domination is eliminated, "intra-African differences will be particularly important".

The lesson to be derived from the National Party's apartheid project — which, as Simpson (1994:473) argues, constructed a sense of nationhood around an "ethnic core" whose myths and values were imposed on a "macro-white *ethnie*" while the black majority was "ethnicised, denationalised and fragmented" (Moodley and Adam, 2000:51) — was that "nation-building as a policy of assimilating other ethnic groups to a dominant one will fail in South Africa" (Simpson, 1994:473). There is a school of thought that argues that in the new South Africa's socio-political climate loyalty to the state is more important than loyalty to one's ethnic group. This argument, if "transformed into the focus and source of national unity [will gain legitimacy] to implement policies as well as to pre-empt any ethnically-based challenges to its position" (Simpson, 1994:472). Another school of thought argues that what is crucial in post-apartheid South Africa is the commitment to constitutionalism that introduced, concomitantly, a new human rights culture and the establishment of new democratic institutions which are the pillars of a new democratic order, guaranteeing the rule of law as well as a balance in state power (Klug, 2003).

As Chapter 3 will explore, for the majority of the South African population whose human and civil rights had been systematically trampled upon since 1948, the formal adoption on 8 May 1996 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa — of which the Bill of Rights is the backbone — represented a move from what Mureinik (1994:32) termed "a culture of authority" to a "a culture of justification",

> a culture in which every exercise of power is expected to be justified; in which the leadership given by government rests on the cogency of the case offered in defence of its decisions, not the fear inspired by the force of its command.

For the country's political agenda, the adoption of the 1996 Constitution signalled the close of a process involving multiparty political negotiations centred first on reconciling conflicting positions with regard to how state power was to be organised and applied, and second on pacing the transition to majority rule. A compromise was reached on a two-stage transition, by virtue of a commitment that a new dispensation would safeguard the fears and interests of minority groups. During the first stage the Negotiating Council approved an interim Constitution in November 1993. Among other measures, this enabled the election of a Constitutional Assembly which would draft the final Constitution and serve as an interim government for five years. The second stage of the transition began on 27 April 1994 with elections for South Africa's first fully representative Parliament, followed by the implementation of a reform process spearheaded by the government of national unity (GNU) — a political compromise (and power-sharing arrangement) formulated by the ANC and the NP for a five-year transitional period[34].

The four-year negotiation process that culminated in the first national multiracial one-man-one-vote election in South Africa transfixed analysts and observers. Throughout the process the negotiating parties had oscillated. At times they had proved ambiguous about South Africa's future political dispensation. Ideological cleavages — along with escalating political violence[35] — created a climate of distrust, bringing talks to an impasse more than once, but when it seemed that the war of attrition between negotiators could go on for quite some time, the two main parties (the ANC and the NP) started showing greater flexibility and a settlement was reached sooner than observers had expected[36].

Although South Africa's transition to democracy has been pointed out as an example to other polarised societies, many scholars and analysts share Guelke's (1999:19) sceptical view that the relatively 'peaceful' transition (in that it avoided the much-feared racial bloodbath predicted by most) was only possible because there had been

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[34] This power-sharing arrangement collapsed in 1996, leaving the ANC to rule alone.

[35] Guelke (1999:45) draws on figures released by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) to underscore that from the beginning of February 1990 to the end of April 1994, "the months encompassing the transition itself, there were a total of 14,807 fatalities".

[36] In 1991 the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) was set up as a working platform between the NP government and other political parties, but in early 1992 negotiations derailed in CODESA I, only to restart and reach an impasse again in COSESA II with the NP wanting to ensure both a minority veto over constitutional proposals and a system based on group representation. The Record of Understanding, signed by President F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela on 26 September 1992, paved the ground for the negotiations that finally settled on the election of the Constituent Assembly, as well as on the framework of the five-year transitional government.

"a pact between political elites". This agreement safeguarded the white elite's interests, securing its economic and social privileges during the first five years following the elections. Conversely, for another strand of scholarship what is relevant about the end of apartheid is that the language of compromise — particularly, the ideas of constitutionalism — adopted by the two main parties formed the most powerful and convincing argument in leading South Africans to the polling booths in the country's first procedurally free elections.

It is argued that a significant challenge and dilemma for proponents of the nation-building project surfaced after the elections. According to Moodley and Adam (2000), one of the most pressing questions was how memories of the country's divisive past should be steered so as to contribute to the nation-building process, rather than deepen old cleavages within a society in transition from oppressive rule to democracy. Moodley and Adam (2000:53) stress that "some respected academics counsel amnesia about past divisions". By contrast, Bhabha (1996:59) advocates evoking the past as a way of re-imagining the nation, "in its ability to reinscribe the past, reactivate it, relocate it, *resignify* it … [committing] our understanding of the past, and our reinterpretation of the future, to an ethics of 'survival' that allows us to *work through the present*" (emphasis in the original).

In this context, much hope and optimism was placed (as Chapter 2 will explore at length) on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1995-2001) chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu[37] to conduct a process of forgiveness, healing, reparation and reconciliation during and after the TRC hearings, resulting in the publication of the five-volume *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* in 1998. Since then the TRC process has been the object of both gushing praise and harsh criticism in a growing body of literature centred on the assessment of the TRC's contribution to political reconciliation and nation-building.

Scholarly literature has recurrently questioned whether victims of heinous crimes committed during the years 1960-1994 were, indeed, able to forgive perpetrators, some of whom showed no remorse for their acts. Focus has fallen on the notion that application for amnesty exempted perpetrators from punishment, releasing them

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[37] Desmond Tutu is distinguished for the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, but prior to that he was the first black African to serve as dean of St. Mary's Cathedral and in 1978 he became the first black General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches. In 1986 he was appointed Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Anglican (Episcopalian) Church of southern Africa. His public struggle against apartheid centred on the call for equal civil rights for all, for the abolition of the pass laws, for a common system of education and the end of forced relocation of blacks to homeland resettlement camps.

from the consequences of their actions and depriving victims of their right to justice. There have been a range of critical and interpretive approaches on this, as well as on other issues. Derrida's (2001:33) critical thinking on forgiveness is crafted on the paradox that forgiveness is intrinsically impossible since "there is only forgiveness, if there is any, where there is the unforgivable"; if justice is a necessary condition for an individual to forgive another, then forgiveness becomes redundant. This line of reasoning has been developed by other critical thinkers who propound that "the gift-like nature of forgiveness" (Schaap, 2005:71) presupposes that forgiveness is unconditional and, indeed, only that which seems impossible to forgive is truly worth forgiving.

This said, the TRC process was riddled with tension and ambiguity. Its complexity derived mostly from questions posed at the moral level, urging citizens to question the legitimacy of the formation of the state and its justice system, as well as the fairness of the amnesty process. According to Russell Ally (2004:192), one of the members of the TRC's Committee of Human Rights Violations[38], one of the questions that most troubled those involved in the process was how an emerging democratic society should "deal with the perpetrators of [the violation of human rights]…, especially if they are still in positions of importance, remain part of the government after the transition and may even come from the liberation movement now in power".

A strand of Arendtian political thought considers that the only viable way to overcome the complexities of transitional societies — where it is not uncommon for former enemies to form political associations — is to make political forgiveness and transitional justice central to the reconstruction process, introducing conciliation/reparation in the web of human relationships in a post-conflict society (Schaap, 2005). Only then can ordinary citizens find common ground on which to base social interaction. Forgiveness becomes a political action, a prerogative of "the socially conditioned and located individual who is the focus of politics [rather than the state] and the essential political agent" (Williams and Lang, 2005:5). The Interim Constitution of South Africa (1993) — seconded by the 1995 National Unity and Reconciliation Act which established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission —

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[38] The TRC was composed of the Human Rights Violations Committee mandated to investigate gross human rights violations and hold public hearings; the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee mandated to help restore the dignity of victims and make recommendations on reparation and rehabilitation; and the Amnesty Committee empowered to grant amnesty to applicants who, having proved both party affiliation and that their crimes had resulted from political orders, made full disclosure of their acts (Ally, 2004).

appeals to the political agency of individuals, stating, "there is a need for understanding, but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* but not for victimization" (quoted in Wilson, 2001:9-10).

The concept of *ubuntu* — derived from "the Xhosa expression *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye bantu* (People are people through other people)" (quoted in Gibson, 2002: 543) — gained new salience in the context of the TRC process. Championed by the TRC's Chairperson, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the values nurtured by the ancestral communitarian model of *ubuntu* advocate that each person – rather than an abstract being – is a living force in a constellation of relationships which contribute to a group identity. Accordingly, *ubuntu* promotes exercise of the responsibility of the self for the other as both the precept of social existence and the recognition of a shared humanity. Central to the concept is the understanding that, in Desmond Tutu's words (quoted in Habib, 2004:248),

> We belong together. We say in Africa: 'a person is a person through other persons'. We are bound together in a delicate network of interdependence. We believe in *ubuntu* — my humanity is caught up in your humanity. *Ubuntu* speaks of generosity, of compassion, of hospitality, of sharing. I am because you are. If I dehumanise you, then whether I like it or not I am dehumanised.

The revival of *ubuntu* — "a central feature of the African *Weltanschauung* (or world-view) … [that] speaks of the very essence of being human" (Tutu, 1999:34) — became central to the TRC's endorsement of a politics of transition focused on the construction of a common identity nurtured by people's sense of belonging in a common nation. This is best achieved if each person feels involved in the community building process through the pursuit of forgiveness and reconciliation and — by implication — the willingness to restore wrongdoers to the community rather than punishing them. More importantly, *ubuntu* provided the moral and ethical arguments needed to support the granting of amnesty to human rights offenders, which, as Wilson (2001) underscores, was none other than a political deal between the NP and the ANC.

Many critical voices have articulated the misgiving that 'truth' (and, essentially, retributive justice[39]), one of the TRC's core assumptions, was sacrificed to the idea

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[39] According to Gibson (2002) the TRC process was underpinned by four theories of justice, notably, distributive justice which provides compensation to victims, thereby counterbalancing amnesty; restorative justice which emphasises restoring dignity to victims be means of symbolic reparation (an apology) ; procedural justice which ensures victims and their families are given a 'voice' as they get to tell their stories publicly and, hence, receive

of restorative justice. For Schaap (2005:86), what seemed perverse from the start was that "amnesty was not conditional on a perpetrator showing remorse but, rather, on his making full disclosure of the truth and demonstrating that his wrong was associated with a political objective". For those twice wronged — first as victims of gross violations of human rights, and then during the TRC process when the model of justice adopted did not meet their expectations — dignity was to be reclaimed through the public disclosure of their painful stories, a form of procedural justice (Gibson, 2002). The question to be asked in this context is: Where would victims find solace, knowing that offenders took no steps to repair the harm they had caused and yet were restored to society?

This generated a skein of criticism, levelled mostly at the new political elite for attempting to turn the TRC hearings into a ritual of remembrance and catharsis, thereby generating a new official history of apartheid which could hold South Africans together as a nation and act as the seedbed of a new national identity (Wilson 2001). Wilson argues that in its resolve to close the chapter on the past the TRC was more successful in protecting perpetrators than in securing reparation for victims. These qualms are addressed in Tutu's (2003) Foreword to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* released after the conclusion of the amnesty process in 2001. Reaffirming the purposes of the TRC and vouching for its methods and proceedings, the report's subtext establishes that what the TRC sought to disclose was not *the* truth of the event, but rather a perspective on the truth about a past that is extensive and complex, reinforcing the view that what was accomplished was not vengeance (which was not the TRC's mandate) but rather a reassessment of the past which could help to bridge the chasm between seemingly irreconcilable social and political agents.

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recognition that they were wronged, and retributive justice which is premised on the punishment of offenders.

Chapter 2

Towards an ethics in photography in post-apartheid South Africa: Jillian Edelstein's *Truth & Lies*

There was a long table, starched purple vestment
and after a few hours of testimony,
the Archbishop, chair of the commission,
laid down his head, and wept.

That's how it began.

Ingrid de Kok, *Terrestrial Things*

2.1 Reading the TRC through portraiture

The epigraph, taken from the poem "The Archbishop chairs the first session" in the collection titled *Terrestrial Things* by South African poet Ingrid de Kok (2002), resonates with the emotion captured in Jillian Edelstein's photograph of Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Fig.6). Framed at close range, the subject's head rests on folded hands. For the viewer who is familiar with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process, the skull cap and the grey curly hair summon up Archbishop Tutu, but we are left disoriented because the landscape of the face is hidden from us. The black and white medium increases the level of intimacy; it simplifies the image, stripping it down to its essential elements — light, shade and form. The frame, set tightly around the subject, excludes any signifying context, obliging the gaze to focus on the elements of signification in this composition that make it a revealing and beautifully executed image, notably the head resting in abandonment on the hands, the long slender fingers of the left hand placed gently over those of the right hand.

What the photographic medium does is push against the boundaries of language and its ability to fully account for emotions even as it describes them. The image attains affective depth precisely from what cannot be effectively described. The hands make an expressive focus for the viewer, offering what Barthes (2000:27) has termed a

punctum[40] of significance, "that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)", that disturbing detail that makes one linger over the photograph, that induces the viewer (me) to explore the photograph "as a wound", inciting me to see, to observe, to notice, to feel, and finally to respond.

The emotion in the composition stems precisely from this gesture which betrays not only defencelessness and fragility, but also an absolute trust in the ethical stance of the photographer. The viewer, in turn, is compelled to respond with reverence and compassion to the pain of the Other[41]. What humbles us, from a Levinasian perspective, is what is uncontainable in the image, what we cannot see, but can intuit, in the face of the Other. The self, that private space of the being which we have been enabled to access, prompts us into what Emmanuel Levinas has conceptualised as an ethical relation, "a severe responsibility which bears all the weight of the world's seriousness in a non-indifference … for the other" (Cohen, 1985:13).

Viewed from this perspective, the photograph of Archbishop Tutu reveals the emotional resonance of the still photograph: essentially, it demonstrates its capacity to represent an historical moment and, hence, to operate as a signpost of collective memory. The photograph's elements of signification, while producing a moment of visual eloquence, throw into sharp relief key features of the experience of the South African TRC process that call for reflective examination. Grasped within the context of Jillian Edelstein's photographic project under analysis in this chapter, the photograph has more than documentary value. It is a site of contemplation that bears witness to something that exceeds words: the possibility of relations of trust emerging out of the ethical project of the TRC. It further conveys a plea for the nurturing of an inter-dependent humanity that resonates accurately with the TRC's proposal and dissemination of a new set of values framing social relations in the post-apartheid landscape.

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[40] *Punctum* derives from the Latin word *pungo*, meaning "to prick".
[41] I will follow the convention used in Levinas's texts with regards to the "Other" (with a capital "o") which refers to the personal other or the other person, and the "other" (with a small "o") which refers to otherness in general, or alterity.

Fig.6   Jillian Edelstein, *Archbishop Desmond Tutu*, 2001

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The impressive bulk of scholarly literature that has surfaced since the closure of the South African TRC's work, barely more than a decade ago, reflects the significance of the TRC process within the context of South Africa's social, cultural and political (re)construction after apartheid (as discussed at greater length in Chapter 1). Approaches to the South African TRC model have emanated from fields of study as varied as history, sociology, anthropology, political science and law. On their own, or in articulation with each other, the roles of trauma, memory, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation have been the focal point of debates engaging with the nation-building post-apartheid socio-political landscape. Departing from an evaluative perspective, a number of studies have provided a critical lens through which to view the central mandate of the TRC, focusing on the tensions between truth, justice and reconciliation, and between factual truth and personal or narrative truth. As discussed previously, critical voices have viewed the TRC with scepticism on the grounds that it originated from a political compromise between the displaced National Party (NP) and the incoming African National Congress (ANC) which, among other questionable policy options, sacrificed the pursuit of retributive justice for political and social purposes[42]. However, most have also agreed that the TRC achieved important milestones from which other truth commissions can, and have, drawn valuable lessons.

Chief among these were the promotion of a culture of respect for human difference and human rights; the pursuit of peace and stability; the investigation into crimes committed in the past; the disclosure of truth and the public acknowledgement of the gross violation of human rights during apartheid; the validation of the stories of victims and the respect for their suffering; and, finally, the recommendation on reparations to the survivors of past political violence. The South African TRC was not the first in the world. In fact, since the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disappearances of People in Uganda in 1974, thirty truth commissions worldwide (including Argentina, Chile, East Timor, El Salvador and Guatemala) have been deployed as post-conflict instruments for establishing the truth of past crimes and promoting peace and reconciliation. However, whereas the truth commissions of

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[42] Trenchant criticism has been levelled at the granting of amnesty to perpetrators whose heinous acts were pardoned on the basis of their political motivation. If accountability was a pre-requisite for a human rights culture in the new democracy, as the TRC claimed, then, some have argued, criminal trials — similar to those of Nazi war criminals after World War II — should have been conducted and perpetrators prosecuted. In particular, strong indignation has been expressed with regards to the exemption of political protagonists such as the former president PW Botha, the IFP president Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Winnie Madikizela Mandela, to name but a few prominent leaders, who were found to have sanctioned gross human rights violations.

Chile and Argentina, for example, were set up through presidential decree and not through national legislation, and therefore did not have the power to subpoena, the South African model enabled a wider disclosure of the truth. In the case of Chile and Argentina evidence was primarily taken from families of the victims and not from perpetrators; in South Africa perpetrators[43] also gave testimony, leading to a better understanding of the causes, nature and extent of political violence.

Of unquestionable import are the records generated by the TRC. The TRC Report, which was presented to President Nelson Mandela on 29 October 1998, consists of five volumes, each with a particular focus. Volume One lists key concepts, introduces the rationale for the work of the Commission and details its methodology. Volume Two discusses the perpetration of gross violations of human rights on all sides of the conflict. Volume Three explores the nature of gross violations of human rights, detailing the cases brought to the Commission. Volume Four analyses the political, economic and social environment that gave rise to and allowed for gross violations of human rights. The final volume of the report systematises the conclusion and recommendations of the Commission. A two-volume codicil, reporting on the work and findings of the Amnesty Committee, the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee and the Human Rights Violations Committee, was submitted to President Thabo Mbeki in 2003.

The TRC's work accounts for more than twenty one thousand statements that were gathered from victims or survivors of politically motivated violence. Of these, about two thousand were invited to tell their stories at public hearings of the commission, which took place all over South Africa between 1996 and 1998. Unlike other truth commissions, South Africa's hearings, apart from being public, were filmed and broadcast on a daily basis. Symbolically, this represented the demise of a system of governance that thrived on the concealment of information and the denial and silencing of the voices of black people. Those who testified during the TRC public hearings were mostly black, and mostly women. These were the pained who often broke down in tears as they told their stories of violence, torture and severe mistreatment. Those most uncomfortable with the display of emotions at the hearings were mostly white. These were participants or witnesses who failed to acknowledge any sense of guilt, choosing to ignore or deny the institutional and psychological violence of which the apartheid masterminds were the founders and

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[43] The perpetrators were not only those who committed acts sanctioned by the government but also those who in the fight against apartheid committed human rights abuses.

the white minority the consenting partner. But for some, the full impact — and repercussions — of the injuries and violations experienced in a context of lifelong oppression finally dawned. For these, more important than an awakened consciousness of the legacy of apartheid was the awakening of the idea of a common humanity. The Other, namely the black man, woman and child who had been ostracised during centuries of colonialism and decades of apartheid, was finally perceived and treated as a human being, an equal whose human and civil dignity must be restored.

The experience of loss and trauma and the expression of grief, bitterness and anger brought to the fore during the TRC process has been treated with great insight, sensitivity and feeling in the work of South African playwrights, writers of fiction, poetry and memoir like Jane Taylor, Antjie Krog, Ingrid de Kok and Pumla Godobo-Madikizela. By contrast, critical theory tends to shy away from engaging with the realm of emotions, often treating the manifestation of trauma and the exteriorisation of emotions with extreme caution and some discomfort. Seen through the lens of the camera, facial and bodily responses — either to victims' testimonies or to the act of remembering, or even to the appeal to represent oneself in the context of public testimony — elicits critical inquiry into the coalescence of photographic representation, affect and ethics at the core of this chapter.

I am seeking to explore, firstly, the specificity of Jillian Edelstein's (2001) photographic project, titled *Truth & Lies*, within the historical, political and social context of the South African Truth and Reconciliation process. I argue that Edelstein's project allows us to think about and engage with the complex and multifaceted nature of the TRC's work, which aimed to infuse a new set of values, at a very deep level, into the social and political arteries of a society transitioning from apartheid to democracy. Secondly, I draw attention to the complexity of Edelstein's project, expressed in its multilayered ethos and form of address. My purpose is to consider how Edelstein's photo-essay contributes to the documentation and interpretation of the dichotomy between human frailty and strength at the core of the TRC process, creating a new register of meaning quite distinct from that of photography during apartheid. More pertinent to my discussion of her work is Edelstein's singular use of the portrait genre to contest hitherto accepted/expected structures of power, and to articulate individuals' new sense of citizenship within both the wider post-apartheid political arena and what Ariella Azoulay (2008) terms "the civil space of photography" (taken up for discussion later in the chapter).

A significant body of literary texts produced during and after the TRC has contributed considerably to an appreciation of the experience of suffering brought to the fore during the TRC process. What interests me in Edelstein's work is that it is the only conceptually unified photographic study on this theme published to date[44]. The manifestation of trauma in her project thus constitutes an object of inquiry in this chapter, raising several key questions. How does the photographer approach her subject matter so as to lead the viewer through a mosaic of insights into the human landscape of suffering at the centre of the TRC process? What kind of involvement or emotional response is triggered in the viewer by both the visual intensity and the aesthetic and narrative quality of the images? How are photographer and viewer entwined in an ethical call to respond reflectively and responsibly to the suffering and loss of fellow human beings?

I argue that the originality and value of Edelstein's engagement with the testimonial enterprise of the TRC resides in the layering of the images. This is achieved through the juxtaposition of image and text, most notably of the visual representation — mediated by the specificity of the visual language of photographic portraiture — of the leading actors in this process and the textual representation of their stories and experiences (including that of the photographer). In essence, the photographs are forceful summations of the empowerment of hitherto "invisible" members of society. Central to this chapter is the idea that the *Truth & Lies* photo essay articulates the agency of people who had been treated as noncitizens within the socio-political landscape of apartheid. The photographs brought into relief here prompt a discussion about the role of this project in rehabilitating the citizenship of men and women who had been stripped of it, by opening up possibilities of political action from the perspective of Hannah Arendt's political thought.

The work is simultaneously motivated and enabled by an affective dynamic which evolves out of the encounter between the arresting and intentional stance of *each* subject (giving the impression that each individual is performing his/her unique story, a story that demands a unique response); the photographer's ethical and compassionate treatment of her subject-matter; and, finally, the viewer's own compassionate — or, on the contrary, hostile or angry — response to the story evoked in each frame (and expanded in the accompanying caption). The photographs are

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[44] George Hallett was commissioned as the TRC's official photographer but his photographs have not been published in book form. A selection of his images featured in an exhibition titled "Bearing Witness" at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in Coventry, UK, in September 2004.

simple in composition but complex in their meaning. They draw the viewer in and elicit, at times, conflicting interpretations, confronting us with the complexity of our emotions and the unpredictability of our responses.

In this sense, Edelstein's photographs are powerfully able to invoke huge stories, and equally able — from our responses — to tell us much about ourselves, most notably about our convictions, vulnerabilities, barriers and contradictions, extending our ethical awareness and prompting diverse and perhaps unsettling questions. What moves or fails to move me? What type of value judgements do I make? What impels me to feel, or keeps me from feeling, compassion for the Other? How does my own experience (my subjectivity) impact on how I perceive and respond to stories of the experience of others?

These different strands of inquiry give rise to the theoretical construct for this chapter, which takes up the photographic discourse of portraiture and the ethics in the production and reception of photographs in articulation with Emmanuel Levinas's phenomenological ethics. I begin by examining Emmanuel Levinas ethical theory, and applying his conceptualisation of "the face" to a reading of Edelstein's portraiture. Secondly, I consider how the encounter with the face of the Other enlists ethical responsibility from the photographer and viewer. I discuss how affect is produced within and through Edelstein's photography, and specifically how the affective quality of her photographs contributes to a different understanding of the experience of suffering within the context of the TRC. Drawing on Martha Nussbaum's theoretical insights, this chapter discusses how viewers are moved to feel and think through an emotional connection with the Other, the object of the photograph. This we call compassion, an emotion "suffused with intelligence and discernment, and thus a source of deep awareness and understanding", as Nussbaum (2001) argues.

The compassion one is moved to when studying Edelstein's photograph of Archbishop Desmond Tutu is a catalyst for critical inquiry and deep thought. To dismiss an affective reading of images such as this would mean dismissing the value of the kind of inquiry which an affective response might instantiate. For this reason engagement with this particular photograph introduces this chapter's discussion on the ethics of photography. The photograph is the centrepiece in Jillian Edelstein's exhibition *Truth & Lies* hosted at the Robben Island Museum from December 2009 to March 2010[45], and at the Nelson Mandela Gateway on the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town

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[45] The show was composed of a selection of a further thirty-two black and white photographs from the book.

until June 2010. It is also, I suggest, *the* pivotal image that was sadly left out in Edelstein's book of the same title, published in 2001.

The decisions made, both when the photograph was produced and at the selection stage of the photographs for publication, raise a number of questions about the tension between ethics and the poetics and politics of genre classification (which, although meaningful, is not central to this study). Several key questions motivate my analysis of the photograph: Why would Archbishop Desmond Tutu — a historic figure in South Africa's freedom struggle, the Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the "face" of what became known as the "forgiveness and healing process" — consent to being photographed in this manner? What decisions were made, and what type of contract is sealed, prior to and after the photographic encounter? How do photographer and viewers position themselves ethically in relation to the (hi)story of suffering they are called to witness? What responsibilities or ethical engagements follow from this interaction? How does photography extend beyond documentation and consciousness-raising to encourage individuals to refigure the social practices through which relations are constituted, and to promote more participatory forms of social transformation?

One of the privileges afforded to research work is the insight gained from the engagement with the author(s) of one's object of study. In this regard, the most significant source of inspiration and thought about the triangulation of ethics, affect and photography came out of a personal interview[46] during which Jillian Edelstein articulated her reservations in relation to the photograph of Archbishop Tutu (Fig.7) that was selected for publication in *Truth & Lies*. It is a detailed confrontational close-up of the subject which pins down the authority, charisma and cheerful disposition of the man identified by many with the struggle against oppression during apartheid and the struggle for peace after apartheid. Two visual elements provide a clear focus of interest: the clerical collar and the large crucifix pendant, symbols of the Christian beliefs that have guided his life and actions and ultimately framed his philosophy of the TRC. There is a strong energy in the subject's face. The shadow of a smile on the lips brightens up his whole countenance. As if intent on establishing a dialogue with the photographer and the viewer, the expressive eyes set behind large glasses gaze straight at the camera, conveying attentiveness, determination and optimism (which contrast strongly with the pose of the unpublished photograph).

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[46] The interview took place in London on 18 September 2009.

Fig.7 Jillian Edelstein, *Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Chairperson of the Truth Commission,* Cape Town, May 1997

Edelstein recalled that she had photographed Archbishop Tutu in the street, in the hearings and in a session with him, but she was still not satisfied and in 2001 begged him for another session. She had asked people about what they felt was the quintessential moment of the Truth Commission, and had been told that it was the moment when Archbishop Tutu started crying on the second day of the Truth and Reconciliation hearings while listening to Singqokwana Ernest Malgas describe how he was tortured by apartheid security police. Malgas described how he was suffocated with a mask during torturing and began to sob. Desmond Tutu dropped his head onto his hands and wept openly too.

When Edelstein went back to photograph Desmond Tutu, she mentioned the footage she remembered of that day. And Desmond Tutu said, "Do you mean like this?" and put his head in his hands. He continued, "I'm so tired". Edelstein asked, "Do you mind if I photograph you like that?" He replied, "I'm so happy to lie here just a bit and meditate. That's fine". So she picked up her 4x5 and did the shot. Edelstein's editor felt the shot was contrived, and, on that basis, chose the close-up shot instead. By contrast, I argue that this portrait stems from an ethical relation of responsibility (discussed at length throughout this chapter), which gives rise to a truthful depiction — without artifice — of emotions as they are encountered.

It is this ethical relation which enables the photographer to capture what Henri Cartier-Bresson (2006) called the "inner silence" of an individual, those innermost recesses that we cannot see, but can intuit. What emerged is an intimate photograph that has a clear trace of the relationship or connection established between the photographer and her subject. There is a rare simplicity and humility, and also a sense of quietness and calm about this photograph that touches one both visually and emotionally, drawing the viewer in and summoning him/her to a moment of stillness and awareness. Such photographs dispense with any mediation by words. Any accompanying words would only be a distraction; they would disturb one's own *inner silence*, that zero degree of self-consciousness that blocks out any external noise, enabling us to tune into the *being* of another. This defining trait — the need for an unmediated experience — is particular to only a few photographs in this project. In fact, the work is characterised by images and accompanying text that are tightly interwoven to produce another layer of meaning and suggest different possibilities of interpretation, as illustrated by the analysis of other photographs in this chapter.

The portrait that was published certainly encapsulates the character and disposition that most viewers will identify with Archbishop Tutu, therefore conforming to the

conventions traditionally ascribed to portraiture in critical theory[47]. The image that was not published, by its affective dimension, is much more effective in its capacity to pull the viewer in, to provoke deep thought, and to leave an imprint in his/her mind. As art critic Rachel Campbell-Johnson (2008), writing about the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize (the reputable annual photographic portrait prize and exhibition held at the National Portrait Gallery, London), reflects about the attributes of a good portrait:

> That frail old man has a concentration camp number tattooed on his forearm. We search his face for the scars of a never-forgotten suffering. For a portrait to work, such eye-catching tactics must be far more than mere tricks. Once we have been made to look with the same intensity as the photographer looked, we must discover more: something more personal, more profound, more provocative; some political outlook or emotional reality or universal truth.

In the case of the Desmond Tutu portrait, our emotion is aroused by the aesthetic praise of the subject's psychological vulnerability. Essentially, the image evokes what many have considered a pivotal moment in the witnessing of suffering at the TRC. This representation embodies the psychological breaking point when, as Desmond Tutu (1999:110) bears witness in his published memoir on his work as Chairman of the TRC, "I could not hold back the tears, I just broke down and sobbed like a child".

2.2 The contemplation of the face: moving towards an ethics of viewing the Other

Our experience of portrait photography is that of the face — the face that addresses us, the eyes that engage with our own, acting as a conduit that enables our imaginary entry into the picture. But, as this study seeks to argue, the face is not merely a physiognomic attribute. It is the locus of the encounter with another human being, inducing us to an ethical responsibility, to an infinite respect for someone who confronts us. In the face-to-face encounter, as Emmanuel Levinas (1969:150) reflects, "The Other precisely *reveals* himself in his alterity not in a shock negating

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[47] In this regard, West (2004:21) emphasises that "the etymology of the term 'portraiture' indicates the genre's association with likeness and mimesis", but adds that "Portraits are not just likenesses but works of art that engage with ideas of identity ... 'Identity' can encompass the character, personality, social standing, relationships, profession, age, and gender of the portrait subject".

the I, but as the primordial phenomenon of gentleness" (emphasis in the original). In my response to the face of the Other, I in turn *reveal* myself in a gesture of reciprocity. That is precisely why the photograph of Archbishop Desmond Tutu by Jillian Edelstein is so disconcerting — because the face is hidden from us, inviting a contemplative stance in relation to that which is not immediately captured or grasped.

The human face — the forehead, the eyes, the nose, the mouth, the jaw, drawn together into a constellation of features and expressions — has been the object of interest and study since antiquity. In *Physiognomy*, a treatise on reading character from people's physical appearance, Polemon, a second century Roman politician, who, alongside his contemporaries, devoted much attention to the study of rhetoric, scrutinises the face, and in particular the eyes for indication of the orator's involuntary display of feelings, arguing that a person's character or state of mind will tend to manifest itself through physical expression and posture (Swain, 2007). Boys-Stones (2007:33) argues that the interest of ancient philosophers in facial physiognomy stems from their central concern with the nature of the soul (the locus of moral character) and its relationship with the body, leading some philosophers to "claim that one can tell from appearance the *innate* character of a person or of his or her irrational soul".

In art, early forms of representation denote a commitment by sculptors, engravers and painters to capture distinctive physical traits as a means of establishing the character of an individual. Portrait painting, in particular, anchors its imagery in details painstakingly delineated to reveal the physical and psychological makeup of the subject. Axiomatic in this genre of representation — and contributing to its success, particularly in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries — are, as critical theory highlights, the ideas of likeness and identity, which encompass not only generic qualities such as gender, age and social role, but mainly specific aspects which enhance the character and uniqueness of the individual (West, 2004). In part, the uniqueness in an individual, that which sets him/her apart from the rest of humanity, is brought out by the "idiosyncracies and imperfections" of the face (Woodall, 1997:1). Throughout the centuries, as portraiture has gained a central position in western art history, the face has continued to engage artists and viewers. As Brilliant (1991:10) observes, "For us, the human face is not only the most important key to identification based on appearance, it is also the primary field of expressive action, replete with a variety of 'looks' whose meaning is subject to interpretation".

The photographic portrait, a new genre of representation which started to proliferate towards the end of the nineteenth century, borrowed from painting's artistic styles and conventions. "A formal stillness, a heightened degree of self-composure that responds to the formality of the portrait-making situation", resulting in "images of serious men and women, worthy of respect, persons who should be taken equally seriously by the viewing audience", to borrow Brilliant's (1991:10) words, characterise the work of photographers such as Julia Margaret Cameron and Nadar. Whether in profile, three-quarter or frontal pose, the face constituted for these photographers, as well as for others succeeding them, the focal point in their work. For some photographers, a particular face — crafted in relation to specific parts of the body: hands, arms, breasts and torso — is what intrigues and arrests them.

Each with a distinct aesthetic and mode of approach to his/her subject matter, photographers like August Sander, Alfred Stieglitz, Lewis Hine, Paul Strand, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange and Edward Steichen contributed significantly to the portrait archive of the twentieth century. I am not so much interested in pictorial conventions or agendas endorsed by individual artists in the history of photography as in an ethical stance and particular treatment of the subject — shared by different photographers — that can be brought to bear on the ideas and arguments relative to "the face" structuring this chapter. In this regard, the imaging of Georgia O'Keeffe, the subject of a vast archive of portraiture, is significant because of the similarity in approach by so many photographers whose styles were, nonetheless, different. Over a period of more than twenty years Alfred Stieglitz, who was O'Keeffe's lover and later became her husband, amassed an impressive archive of portraits of O'Keeffe. But she also inspired, among other artists, Eliott Porter, Ansel Adams, Yousuf Karsch, Irving Penn, Arnold Newman, Todd Webb and John Loengard.

Georgia O'Keeffe's face was her signature — her slender nose and sharp cheekbones set off by dark hair, usually pulled away from her face, lend her a stark and almost sculptural beauty; but it is her frontal gaze, her unsmiling expression, at times described as inscrutable, aloof or detached, and at other times as self-assured and defiant, that transmits a magnetic strength. Indeed, her defiant gaze is often interpreted as resentment at the photographer's attempted intrusion and appropriation of her being, as an expression of resistance against the power relations enacted during the photographic act (Clarke, 1997). The antagonistic struggle between photographer and photographed is suggested in O'Keeffe's composed

stance, signalling a refusal to reveal any external expression, or hint of emotion, that might evoke an interior private self. As Clarke (1997:115) writes, "The number of images Stieglitz amassed [many taken in the 1920s] … do not, ultimately, define O'Keeffe. They represent a series of images, facets, aspects of her being which denies the camera access to *its* private spaces" (emphasis in the original).

It is precisely this — the private spaces of Georgia O'Keeffe's being, an inner emotional map of feeling, or "inner silence" — that different photographers sought to capture. Following the tradition of interpretative portraiture, as Anne Tucker (quoted in Maddow, 1977:469) defines it, "[The] intention is not to document, not to glamorize. [The] most important thing 'is that people reveal themselves to the camera and express something about themselves which definitely exists, though it may be hidden — perhaps even from themselves". Ultimately, the kind of insight sought by photographers who subscribe to this line of thinking may be identified with what Levinas (1969; 1985) calls "the face" — in the sense that "the face" is more than a physiognomic attribute. It is, as Levinas (1985:86) describes it, "what cannot become a content, which your thought would embrace; it is uncontainable, it leads you beyond [into an ethical relation]". This strand of thought will be developed throughout the chapter.

The less anthologised portraits of O'Keeffe — those taken towards the end of her life by photographers other than Stieglitz — capture, apart from the dignity of age, *this something* that is "uncontainable [and] leads you beyond". Two such examples are the photos —commissioned by and published in *Life* Magazine — taken by John Loengard (2007) in 1966 and 1967 respectively. In the first, an aged and frail O'Keeffe, dressed demurely in a simple long black dress with a white collar, sits up straight at the bottom of a white linened bed facing the camera and holding a magazine in her hands. Placed at the centre of the frame, the artist appears calm and collected, her shoulders resting loosely, her head slightly bent forward, her chin lowered and eyes gently closed. Unlike other well-known photographs by Yousuf Karsh and Philipe Halsman, who sought to blend the artwork with the persona by weaving into the composition background elements such as the artist's paintings or her collection of stones and bleached animal bones, the focus in this frame is on the subject alone. There is an intimacy about the composition and in both O'Keeffe's posture and furrowed face an absolute exterior stillness and simplicity which invites a finer quality of attention from the viewer than would usually be given to the study of a photograph.

In the second photograph, a profile shot taken on the roof at Ghost Ranch, O'Keeffe appears once again shrouded in black, her hair scraped back in a bun. The photographer has penetrated beyond surface appearance — with her head bent gently down, O'Keeffe seems introspective, drawn into herself, her eyes cast down in a state of complete concentration. In the background, the barren landscape and expansive skies of the New Mexico desert — where she lived a reclusive life on her Ghost Ranch after 1946 when her husband Alfred Stieglitz passed away — allude to the recurrent themes in her paintings, but also mirror the awareness and consciousness, and the stillness, in her appearance. In profile, the slender nose and lines on her face convey dignity and strength, and at the same time a sense of authenticity that yields insight into the subject's interior rootedness. Only when we fully attend to the peace and serenity in her countenance do we understand the limitations of language to fully account for the image's captivating power.

These two portraits of Georgia O'Keeffee have been explored in detail because of their specificity, sense of immediacy and individual appeal beyond schools, movements or styles of portraiture, leading me to formulate a general theory of photographic reception which will inform the reading of the photographs brought into relief in this chapter. When one attunes to this kind of portrait (as is the case with the unpublished portrait of Archbishop Desmond Tutu) a sort of quiet excitement is generated as one learns to examine it slowly and attentively, without recourse to words, images or concepts. There is a feeling that it is meant not so much for quick consumption as for slow chewing. To borrow Walter Benjamin's (1999:510) words, "there remains something that goes beyond testimony to the photographer's art, something that cannot be silenced" and that beckons us to immerse ourselves in the image.   This is the quality that, as literature on the history of photography underscores, portrait photographers have sought to make the cornerstone of the genre. As Clarke (1992:3) writes,

> Nadar stressed a sense of the individual when he spoke about attempting to achieve a 'moral grasp of the subject — that instant understanding which puts you in touch with the model, helps you to sum him up, guides you to his habits, his ideas and his character, and enables you to produce … an *intimate portrait*'" (emphasis in the original).

Virtually from its inception, at the centre of portrait photography has been the quest to find "a sense of the individual", as Nadar described it, or the "essence" of the subject's identity and the "truth of the face" Roland Barthes (2000:67) referred to in

Camera Lucida, or "an inner silence" alluded to by Henri Cartier-Bresson (2006). First portrait painters, and later portrait photographers, have taken their cue from Johann Kaspar Lavater, the Swiss poet and physiognomist who, in his work titled *Essays on Physiognomy* (1789), proposed that painters develop the "talent of discovering the interior of Man by his exterior — of perceiving by certain natural signs, what does not immediately attract the senses" (quoted in Rosenblum, 2007:39). This idea has resonated with portrait photographers since the establishment of the genre. Eager to develop an individual style and "deliver with every portrait his visiting card", for a photographer like Helmar Lerski the challenge was to see "inside the man … [and] make visible the invisible" (quoted in *Image*, 1961:5). Different in style and aesthetic vocabulary but similar in approach, Cartier-Bresson sought to understand the "inner silence" of his subjects in an attempt "to translate the personality and not an expression" of the subject (quoted in Sire, 2006:8).

In this respect, the face has represented for portrait photographers the most rewarding, yet most challenging, part of the human body to photograph. If one is to translate "the personality and not an expression", as Cartier-Bresson (2006) proposed, one has to look beyond the index of emotion — the forehead creased into a frown, eyebrows raised, eyes cast down or narrowed into slits, lips shaped into a smile or pressed into a grimace — staged in what Max Kozloff (2007) calls "the theatre of the face". Whether skilfully modelled by the dreamlike soft-focus explored by Julia Margaret Cameron, who subscribed to the painterly, romantic imagery of pictorialism, or rendered with great precision and description by the sharp focus of Alfred Stieglitz or by Edward Weston's more aggressive and highly detailed aesthetic characterising the modernist approach, the human face has lent itself to the study not only of line, texture and tonal range but of expression — and ultimately personal identity — as well. As Kozloff (2007:7) writes,

> Among its many functions, the human face acts as an ambassador, on the job whenever out in the world. We are face reading, socially inquisitive animals, accustomed, most likely programmed, to respond to physiognomic expressions as signs that help us decide our own behaviour … Jonathan Miller sums up the face's repertoire very well when he writes that the face is: 'Where we are … It's where we think of ourselves as being finally and conclusively on show.'

While the face in particular, and portrait photography in general, may constitute the object of study in academic work, the photograph has to be understood, within the theoretical framework of visual culture studies, as a signifying as well as a physical

object open to interpretation within the historical, social and political context in which it was produced. Also at stake are the formal, representational and aesthetic choices underpinning the individual approach and style of the photographer. Invariably, in making considered decisions about the use of light, angle, perspective and composition, the photographer is using the camera to express his/her particular vision. The critical analysis of a visual image must necessarily take into account its material properties and complex construct of signs; but alongside the viewer's response to an image's compositionality, of crucial consideration is the agency of the image, most notably its documental value. Significantly, as Tina Modotti claimed,

> Photography, precisely because it can only be produced in the present, and because it is based on what exists objectively before the camera, takes its place as the most satisfactory medium for registering objective life in all its aspects, and from this comes its documental value (quoted in Mulligan and Wooters, 2005:500).

2.3 The contribution of phenomenology and Levinas's central ethical vision to the discussion of ethics and photography

From the perspective of cultural studies, as a text and, importantly, as a cultural practice, the photograph places me, the viewer, in the active social role of enquiring into the meaning of its compositional elements and responding to its underlying commentary. The place given to the experience and voice of the individual, the radical and important proposition made by cultural studies, enables a self-reflexive approach to intellectual work grounded on "an individual history of reflection … [which is] the trace of that person's perceiving, absorbing, interacting, reflecting, retelling, reflecting again, and so on" (Couldry, 2000:51). Adjacently, the democratic vision of culture attributed to cultural studies encompasses diverse but complementary elements of theoretical frameworks and methodologies which provide tools for pursuing research enquiries. In this vein, in discussing the future of cultural studies and highlighting what distinguishes its practice, Couldry (2000:14) argues that "Cultural studies should engage with broader theory (not just in sociology and anthropology, but also in linguistics, psychoanalysis and philosophy) not for its own sake, but only if it can open up perspectives for possible empirical work in culture".

In essence, this optic envisions a mode of studying culture that both draws and focuses on the complex of, as Couldry (2000:4) puts it, "multiple voices and forces" which provide crucial insights into what culture is. Central to this approach is a commitment to account for our thinking about self and others, "an ethic of reciprocity, a mutual practice of both speaking and listening" (5). There is, however, an emphasis on the relation between self and the other(s) in the ethical analysis and concern with values proposed by Couldry that has not been sufficiently thematised and developed within the tradition of cultural studies. I feel this relation would benefit from engaging with the ethical discussion underpinning the philosophical project of phenomenology.

The importance of phenomenology as "a *radical* way of doing philosophy, a *practice* rather than a system", as Dermot Moran (2007:4) argues, stems, on the one hand, from the rejection of all dogmatisms and traditional representationalist accounts of knowledge and, on the other hand, from the commitment, advocated by Husserl and Heidegger, to *concrete*, lived and meaningful human experience; in other words, to an emphasis on the description of *phenomena*, "as whatever manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer". Phenomenologists view philosophy as an ongoing search for ways of exploring the complexities of human experience. Across the enormous range of scholarly output in phenomenology, Emmanuel Levinas's mode of approach, in particular, provides a foundation for the present study.

I draw on Levinas's philosophy of ethics, most notably his analysis of the "face-to-face" relation with the other and the conceptualisation of the ethical relation of responsibility set forth primarily in *Totality and Infinity* (1969 [1961]) and *Otherwise Than Being Or Beyond Essence* (1998a [1981]), his two mature philosophical works. Among contemporary phenomenologists, Emmanuel Levinas's thought provides an avenue for casting our encounter with and experience of the Other in an ethical framework inasmuch as "since the Other looks at me, I am responsible for him" (Levinas, 1985:96). This formulation of responsibility to and for the other person entrenches, according to Cohen (1985:12), the idea of "the infinite responsibility of being-for-the-other *before* oneself — the ethical relation" (emphasis in the original).

The crux of ethical relations in Levinas's philosophy lies precisely in the responsibility to the other person whom we encounter, with whom we establish a relationship. As Moran (2007:321) observes, "For [Levinas] ethics is never an egocentric mode of behaving, nor the construction of theories, but involves the effort to constrain one's freedom and spontaneity in order to be open to the other person". Hence, the

acceptance of responsibility in which the self is no longer for itself but for the other "jolts us out of our self-complacency and self-contentment", as Purcell (2007:9) puts it, and brings us face-to-face with the alterity or otherness of the Other, his/her individuality and uniqueness. In Levinas's (1969:66) optic, an ethical relation develops when in the encounter between Self and the Other the "face speaks". More than a nose, eyes, a forehead or a chin, the face lays bare — yet conceals — what is and is not immediately perceivable. What ultimately draws us to the Other is not the colour of the eyes or the proportions of the face but that which Levinas (1985:86) describes as the "essential poverty in the face", that which is not dominated by perception. Levinas's understanding of the "face of the other" is not to be taken in the literal sense, as the physical countenance or expression of the other, but rather that which escapes our gaze.

This insight into the experience of the other harks back to the motivation of portrait photographers (discussed previously) to capture the subject's inner self, his/her 'absolute being', or "the inner silence", or the *animula* (meaning 'little soul' in Latin), which Barthes (2000:109) alludes to, the attitude, the *air* of the face, "that exorbitant thing which induces from body to soul" and which is unanalysable. In an approach to photography anchored in the principle concerns of Levinas's ethical theory, the act of photographing summons first the photographer, and later the viewer, to an ethical relation with the person photographed. In the presence of the Other, in the face-to-face encounter with the Other, I allow myself to be addressed, to be touched. Reciprocally, I feel compelled to respond with generosity, respecting what is infinitely other. As Levinas (1969:50) writes in *Totality and Infinity*, "For the presence before a face, my orientation toward the Other, can lose the avidity proper to the gaze only by turning into generosity, incapable of approaching the other with empty hands".

The encounter with the Other in a photograph, experienced from a Levinasian perspective, compels a moral response to the Other's humanity. Essentially, when faced with the suffering of the Other — the Other's lived pain — one becomes vulnerable to the Other's vulnerabilities, as Levinas (2006) frames it in *Humanism of the Other*, and is moved to take on the Other's suffering upon oneself. As Levinas (2006:64) writes, "To suffer by the other is to take care of him, bear him, be in his place, consume oneself by him". This compassionate response to the suffering of the Other is what Levinas (1998b:94) terms, in an essay titled "Useless Suffering", "the very nexus of human subjectivity, to the point of being raised to the level of supreme

ethical principle". The fundamental thesis of Levinas's philosophy of ethics is rooted in the belief that all suffering is malignant and unjustifiable and, therefore, that the suffering of the Other is meaningless. Ethics, then, is selflessness; it is the unconditional compassion for the Other, the absolute responsibility to have the Other's dignity restored to him/her. As Edelglass (2006:51) observes, "The sufferer's cry opens the world of being to the ethical, for it calls me to respond, it commands me. The tears and cries of the sufferer are more compelling than any argument could be".

This claim certainly resonates with the unpublished portrait of Archbishop Desmond Tutu by Jillian Edelstein[48], flagged as the centrepiece of this chapter and the point of departure for my discussion on ethics in photography. This photograph has been singled out because it contrasts so strongly with a dominant mode of address of public figures. The photographic mode adopted by Edelstein prompts a line of inquiry related to photographic discourse in portraiture and the decisions made during the photographic encounter, alongside the relation between photographer and photographed subject and, ultimately, between photographer, photographed subject and viewer. Allied to this central concern, I propose to explore the triangulation of affect, ethics and photography. Importantly, this representation of Archbishop Desmond Tutu opens up a whole range of possibilities for thinking about the space of public address.

Photographic portraiture — specifically of public figures — has, since the development of the genre, taken advantage of the publicity value of photographs being made available to the public to portray the subject in an often flattering manner, reflecting the way the subject seeks to show him/herself publicly. Reminiscent of painterly conventions used by Renaissance and Impressionist painters, familiar photographic representations of celebrated artists, writers and political figures that make up the history of portrait photography highlight the singularity or complexity of the subject, often exuding authority and wisdom, an "aura", as Benjamin (1999:515) calls it, "a medium that lent fullness and security to [the] gaze". Pose, demeanour and lighting are carefully controlled to produce the type of representation that the photographer — and, mostly, the photographed subject — would like the viewer to identify with the public persona. One need only recall the portraits of Sir John Herschel by Julia Margaret Cameron, J. P. Morgan by Edward Steichen, Charles Baudelaire by Étienne Carjat, Winston Churchill by Yousuf Karsh

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[48] See Fig. 6.

and — more recently displaying a different set of visual tools — Ezra Pound and Jean-Paul Sartre by Henri Cartier-Bresson.

The thread that runs through these portraits is the negotiation of power relations so manifestly central to the photographic encounter, thereby confirming Homberger's (1992:115) claim that "The portrait photograph is never accidental. It is arranged, agreed upon. At the heart of the occasion is a contract between the subject and the photographer". In effect, there results from the act of posing a tension — that Barthes (2000:13) remarked about — between "the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am, and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art", in other words, a tension between the private and the public self, the hidden and the exposed.

Signification is then produced at two levels. On a first level, the conventionality and formulaic arrangement of the photographic setting imprints the photograph with a set of social codes and cultural semiotics; on another level there is an additional register of meaning that suggests an element of self-awareness and control. What the viewer then looks for in the photographic space is a gesture, or the expressiveness of the sitter's gaze, a hint of emotion or feeling, the detail that captures our attention and imagination — "that tiny spark of contingency", as Benjamin (1999:510) defined it, which makes that person ineffably human. The particular appeal of Edelstein's image of Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Fig.6) emerges from its negation of the conventionality and mode of public address embodied in the portraiture of public figures (most notably that of early portrait photography and the commercial studio portrait of the early twentieth century), suggesting new avenues for photographic interpretation and narrative exploration.

2.4 (Re)presentations of public grievance and human suffering at the TRC

The intense emotional plea of the photograph is amplified by the viewer's knowledge of the historical and political context of its production. The image's composition and narrative possibilities lead back to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings in South Africa and, in particular, to 16 April 1996, the second day of the hearings when former Robben Island prisoner Singqokwana Ernest Malgas testified. Malgas, a victim of torture, harassment and imprisonment, appeared before the TRC

in a wheelchair to tell his story. Bennett (n.d.) reports on the hearings' proceedings in an article titled "The day the truth hit home" published in the *Sunday Times* online.

Malgas was arrested by the East London security police and accused of being a terrorist on his return from Rhodesia, where he had been in military training. He was sentenced to 22 years in jail, but his defence lawyer, Nelson Mandela, managed to have the sentence reduced to 14 years. During thirty years he suffered arrest, detention, house arrest, assault, torture and harassment. As Bennett writes, "In 1985, his house was burned down and acid poured over his son Simphiwe, who died as a result. Malgas reported the attack on his son to the authorities, but no action was ever taken". When asked to detail the tortures of which he was a victim, Malgas described, "During the torturing, I was always suffocated with a mask and there was this helicopter training. A stick was put inside your knees and you had to stretch your knees. During this period you were suffocated" (quoted in Bennett). Bennett writes, "At this point, Malgas began to sob. Tutu, in his purple robes, dropped his head onto his hands and wept openly, too".

Suffering and tears became the central feature of the TRC hearings during the following two years. As Robert Block (1996), the foreign correspondent for *The Independent*, expresses in an article titled "When the truth is too hard to bear",

> Sometimes the tears seemed to be contagious. A witness would start to sob and then a member of the audience would begin to cry. Soon the tears would spread like a bush fire, until it seemed like almost everyone in the room was weeping, wiping their eyes or trying to push a lump back down their throat. One foreign observer was overheard to remark: 'This country is so traumatised. If one person is hurt, then so is everybody'.

For many people who engaged with the TRC process, memory of the hearings is mediated by the extensive press coverage and broadcasting carried out by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), alongside the prolific and sustained international media attention. During the first week of the hearings, SABC broadcast seven hours of coverage daily. A huge force of emotion was unleashed publicly as the widows of the Pebco Three and the Craddock Four, community leaders who had been abducted by the South African security police and brutally killed, provided vivid descriptions of torture and murder. Nomhle Mohapi, the wife of Mapeta, a friend of Steve Biko, also testified about her husband's murder while in police custody. Following the first week of the TRC proceedings, one-hour long reviews were aired on

Sunday nights in a television programme titled "Truth Commission Special Report" hosted by the journalist Max du Preez[49]. Editions ran between 21 April 1996 and 29 March 1998. These episodes, eighty-seven in total, represented a mere ten percent of the testimonies heard at the public TRC hearings[50]. In the first three months the focus of the programme was on the hearings of the TRC Committee on Human Rights Violations, and in particular on the victims of gross human rights violations[51] (Verdoolaege, 2005).

The emotionally charged and complex atmosphere of the hearings captured by the cameras confronted the public with the physical and psychological suffering of wives, mothers, daughters, fathers and sons who came forward to tell their stories. As Verdoolaege (2005:192) notes, "Victims often talked about torture experiences in great detail … Quite regularly as well, they started to cry or they broke down when telling about the loss of a loved one". These stories were rendered all the more compelling when contrasted with those of perpetrators who expressed no remorse for their deeds. Joe Thloloe (1998), former Editor in Chief of SABC Television News, recalls that

> what finally wrenched emotions during that remarkable [first] week was the special report broadcast on Sunday night in which a former security policeman, Joe Mamasela, who had defected from the ANC, confessed on camera to killing more than 30 people. Many a stomach turned as he told, sometimes with a smile playing on his face, how he and his colleagues had butchered a well-known lawyer on a soccer field and how they had kidnapped and killed the Craddock Four.

Along with the television coverage of the TRC hearings, radio was judged "the most effective communication medium for its proceedings to the widest number of people

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[49] Max du Preez was the founder and editor of *Vrye Weekblad*, the only anti-apartheid Afrikaans newspaper, which ran until 1994. After exposing, among other investigations, the apartheid death squads, the newspaper faced expensive law suits and was eventually forced to close.

[50] According to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (Volume 6, Section 4, Chapter 3, pp.570-588) during its two year operational period the Human Rights Violations Committee (HRVC) collected a total of 21 519 victim statements, containing more than 30 384 gross violations of human rights. Approximately ten percent of the victims were heard in public hearings.

[51] Defined in the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No 34 of 1995 (the Act) as either "the killing, abduction, torture, or severe ill-treatment of any person [or] any attempt, conspiracy, incitement, instigation, command or procurement to commit" any of the aforementioned acts "during the period 1 March 1960 to 10 May 1994 … and the commission of which was advised, planned, directed, commanded or ordered, by any person acting with a political motive" (quoted in *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* 1998:60).

… [since] radio broadcasts penetrate all corners of the country in the home languages of the majority of South Africans", as Krog (2009) writes. Accordingly, poet and journalist Antjie Krog was appointed by the SABC to lead a small team to report on the TRC hearings. Morning bulletins contextualised the day's proceedings and in the evening there was a review. On Friday mornings there was a wrap of the week and on Sunday evenings a longer slot made way for longer stories as well as for live interviews.

Since the end of the TRC process, scholarly debate and literature has levelled harsh criticism at the South African media both for promoting sensationalism and for turning the TRC into a "trauma spectacle and the TRC process … a theatrical representation of pain suffered during the apartheid era" (Verdoolaege, 2005:188). Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson (2002:7) accuse the media of presenting the TRC to the world as a "compelling drama of confession, suffering and sometimes repentance". However, from the point of view of Hugh Lewin (1998), a journalist and a member of the TRC Human Rights Violations Committee in Gauteng, who experienced the victims' testimonies firsthand, there is no way of sugar-coating unimaginable suffering, pain and personal loss, "the intense intimacy of torture and pain". In effect, the hearings *were* psychologically overwhelming for all those who sat in at the proceedings, requiring, as van Zyl (1997) argues, a shift in the mindset of journalists from reporting "criminal activities" to giving an accurate account of the harrowing stories of the victims. van Zyl takes his argument a step further, contending that in these circumstances, " 'Objectivity' has become neither possible nor desirable since attempts at objectivity stifle debate and lead to silence". On this point, Lewin (1998) echoes van Zyl when he writes,

> When you listen, for instance, as happened at the Alexandra township hearings, to a mother telling how she returned home one day and saw her child shot, then saw the people who shot him batter his head against a rock to make sure that he was dead, then you can have no predetermined formula for reporting, no easy intro, no trite pyramids … You can only record, very precisely what you have heard and how you have heard it. It makes nonsense of our rules and guidelines and so called 'objectivity'.

For van Zyl, the responsibility — and, I add, the ethics — of journalism resides in reporting "a victim's story of humiliation and degradation" in such a way that it reaffirms the victim's humanity rather than perpetuates his/her victimhood. Equally important is the ability to reveal the brutality of the perpetrators' actions without

turning them into victims in their own turn. A parallel can be found in Antjie Krog's (1999) approach to the representation of human suffering in *Country of My Skull*, a semi-fictionalised memoir of the experience of covering the TRC hearings as a radio reporter for the SABC[52]. Extensive passages of transcribed testimony provided by victims and perpetrators are interlaced with reportorial accounts of the TRC proceedings and with personal reflections, political and social analysis. Weaving her own conflict and guilt about her Afrikaner background into the narrative, Krog creates a mosaic of pain and suffering, guilt, denial, shame and truth – but also misconception and distortion – as she discursively layers past and present and gives depth to the many voices that emerged during the TRC process. Encapsulated in the publisher's note is the notion that the TRC's work allowed the 'voices of the voiceless' to be heard while Krog's work explores and draws into the public sphere subjectivities which had until then been confined to the realms of the private, bringing into sharp focus the politics of visibility and enunciability at the centre of the TRC project. Restating a sense of the legitimacy of the expression of individual experiences, the publisher (1999: x) writes,

> Many voices of this country were long silent, unheard, often unheeded before they spoke, in their own tongues, at the microphones of South Africa's Truth Commission. The voices of ordinary people have entered the public discourse and shaped the passage of history. They speak here to all who care to listen.

As stated previously, in the decade following the closure of the TRC's work (signalled by the publication of a five-volume interim report in 1998 along with a summary final report in 2003) its accomplishments — and most notably its shortcomings — have been the subject of an expanding body of literature which reveals the complexity of a process grounded in ideological, political and teleological premises (Stanley, 2001; Graybill, 2002; Posel and Simpson, 2002; du Pisani and Kim, 2004; Chapman and van der Merwe, 2008). Most recently, the main question driving scholars' analyses is whether the TRC succeeded in delivering its ambitious goals of establishing truth and promoting forgiveness, reconciliation and national unity which can serve as a model for other countries transitioning from political and civil violence to democracy. Analyses are mostly critical; however, scholars acknowledge that, notwithstanding its fault lines, the TRC has positively contributed to South Africa's transition from

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[52] Antjie Krog and her radio team were awarded the Pringle Award for excellence in journalism for their coverage on the TRC proceedings. Krog also won the Foreign Correspondents' Award for outstanding journalism for her articles on the Truth Commission.

apartheid to "a more democratic, inclusive and responsible government" (Chapman and van der Merwe, 2008:278).

Most notably, the TRC should be credited with having created what Posel (2006:91) termed "a platform for the narration of personal stories", thereby entrenching "new modes of speaking — a politics of speaking out predicated on newfound democratic freedoms" (93). Particularly important, in light of South Africa's history of repression, concealment and silencing of the majority of the population, is the place and significance attributed to experience and testimony[53]. The shift from what Ndebele (1998:20) has called the "state-induced blindness" of the past to a political agenda seeking to make public visibility and audibility the key dynamic of an inclusive and free society inscribes the TRC with a complex and politically charged mandate.

Two crucial processes took place. "Tell your story", "The truth hurts: silence kills" and "Revealing is healing" were the slogans printed on posters disseminated throughout the country before the hearings. These constituted the ethical discourse of the TRC, marking a radical break with the politics of silence and anonymity imposed by apartheid, and introducing the Human Rights Violation Committee's (HRVC) mission to 'give voice to the voiceless'. As Ross (2003:329) defines it, "By 'story' was meant a personal account of events of violence and suffering during Apartheid, and their effects on individual lives and relationships". The TRC, then, operated as a platform of agency. In the Arendtian sense, agency — individuals' socioculturally mediated capacity to act, to begin something new — is enacted and represented in (and through) speech. Hence, the spoken word became not only the means through which individuals represented themselves and exercised agency, but also a catalyst of change. As Hannah Arendt (1998:178-179) stresses, "Speechless action would no longer be action because there would no longer be an actor, and the actor, the doer of deeds, is possible only if he is at the same time the speaker of words. The action he begins … becomes relevant only through the spoken word".

Victims' awareness of their political agency, and of their right to speak, parallel to the public's growing consciousness of a moral obligation to listen, supplied the contextual anchor for — and lent urgency to — the creation of a public space where victims (or the families of the disappeared) could remember and articulate their experiences of suffering. Testimony became the privileged site of narration

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[53] Testimony is understood here as the act of bearing witness to traumatic events (Felman and Laub, 1992).

potentiated through memory, or as D'Entrèves (1994:28) describes it, "a selective reappropriation of the past, of a remembrance of past actions and events (what [Hannah Arendt] called 'forgotten treasures') for the purpose of redeeming and illuminating the present". The experience of narration offered a means through which people could reinterpret and reconstruct their lives in the sense that the narrative "does not simply record events; it constitutes and interprets them as meaningful parts of meaningful wholes" (Prince, 2000:129). During what became a process of rewriting history, more than provide a record of the events of the past, victims described what it *felt* like to be there.

Narrative rooted in individual subjective experiences became the matrix upon which both a sequence of events could be placed in time and space and a plurality of stories could intermesh to facilitate another understanding of the past. This contributed to an uncharted democratisation of history, since different accounts and perspectives of the past now questioned and superimposed on the hitherto accepted official narrative (Nuttall and Coetzee, 1998; Wieder, 2004). From the perspective of historians like Du Pisani and Kim (2004:80), however, the focus on individual experiences introduced a "tension between the pursuit of objective factual truth and the acknowledgement of various subjective truths". This tension overrides the idea that the TRC records would culminate in "The Truth" about the apartheid past.

Given South Africa's historical legacy of repression, the TRC approach was significant not only because a new archive of previously repressed histories[54] was produced through the valorisation of marginal voices, victims of violence and violation, but also because its methodology reached beyond the task of narrating and analysing the past to one of acknowledging the physical and psychological wounds inflicted on so many people by the indignities of apartheid. Key to the role of acknowledgement is, as the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (Volume 1, Chapter 5) states, the public "affirmation that a person's pain is real and worthy of attention. It is thus central to the restoration of the dignity of victims" (114).

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[54] Aside from the evidence compiled in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (1998), the TRC archive spans across a selection of sources. The most significant, the TRC Archives Project, is a joint initiative between the South African History Archive (SAHA) and Historical Papers (The Library at the University of the Witwatersrand) which is composed of a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data, comprising records generated by the TRC during its two-year operational period along with testimonies, interviews and other material gathered during and after the TRC. During this period, almost 22,000 written testimonies were collected of which approximately 2,000 were video-taped and publicly broadcast on television and radio. One of the components of the TRC archive available to the public is the Traces of Truth website, featuring digitised copies of key archival materials related to the human rights violations, amnesty and reparations processes.

From the outset, the metaphor of the 'wound' or the 'scar' epitomised the pain of individuals who had suffered – or seen relatives suffer – gross violations of human rights, while 'healing' was valorised as the necessary condition for the rehabilitation of an ailing social character afflicted by the apartheid legacy of strife and conflict. Many believed that this trauma was creating a gulf in the body politic, preventing it from becoming "a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world", as envisioned by Nelson Mandela in 1994. The TRC worked to promote closure on these conflicts, a goal that became dominant in the years following apartheid, and one especially championed by Desmond Tutu, the chairperson of the TRC. As Tutu (1998:7) wrote in the Foreword to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, "However painful the experience, the wounds of the past must not be allowed to fester. They must be opened. They must be cleansed. And balm must be poured on them so they can heal".

Considering the performance of the TRC against this background, I argue that the TRC was an ambitious ethical project. The metaphors of "wound" and "healing" (conjoined with the imperatives of "forgiveness" and "reconciliation") framing the ethical discourse of the TRC opened a horizon of affective responses stemming from the capacity for compassion not only for those enduring suffering, but also for those responsible for the suffering. In this regard, one of the TRC's most important contributions was that it framed intersubjective relations in a new semantics, proposing a course of action capable of transfiguring social exchange and providing new grounds of human community. The willingness to listen to another person is an expression of respect and a gesture that restores his/her dignity.

Although the TRC did much to strengthen the fabric of intersubjective relations, for Alex Boraine, the vice chairperson of the TRC, the most significant civic challenge in post-apartheid South Africa lay in extending the ethic of responsibility beyond the proceedings of the TRC. As Boraine has put it, "the process will not be completed until all South Africans who benefited from apartheid confront the reality of the past, accept the uncomfortable truth of complicity, give practical expression of remorse and commit themselves to a way of life which accepts and offers the dignity of humaneness" (quoted in du Pisani and Kim, 2004:85).

This outlook is reflected in the guiding principles shaping the TRC framework, which may be traced back to the several intersecting constitutional and ethical imperatives underpinning the founding provisions of the Interim Constitution (Act 200 of 1993), and subsequently the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, no. 34 of

1995 that gave rise to the TRC. Both documents articulate the idea that the goals of democracy, peaceful co-existence, national unity and the reconstruction of a deeply divided society can only be secured through reconciliation, which, in turn, feeds on the capacity, as the Act stresses, "for understanding but not for vengeance, ... for reparation but not for retaliation, ... for *ubuntu* but not for victimization".

Chapter 1 of this thesis discusses the concept of *ubuntu* at length. At this point it is worth stressing the centrality of *ubuntu* to the discourse framing the TRC's mission statement: *ubuntu* is "generally translated as 'humaneness', [which] expresses itself metaphorically in *umuntu ngumuntu ngabuntu* − people are people through other people'" (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, Volume 1, Chapter 5:127). As Desmond Tutu (1999:35) explains in *No Future Without Forgiveness*, the intention and reach of the African communalist philosophy of *ubuntu* is better understood if instead of saying, "I think therefore I am", we say, "I am human because I belong". The ethic in *ubuntu* resides in the formulation that,

> A person with *ubuntu* ... has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.

Mutually supporting and inspiring one another are the ideas of *ubuntu* and of a common humanity. The significance of this interconnection is better apprehended if we consider, as Tutu (1999:35) does, that in the context of apartheid,

> The humanity of the perpetrator of apartheid's atrocities was caught up and bound up in that of his victim whether he liked it or not. In the process of dehumanising another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, the perpetrator was inexorably being dehumanised as well.

During the various stages of the TRC's work, when faced with cases of torture, rape, murder and other traumatising experiences, as details of atrocities committed during apartheid were disclosed and perpetrators offered gruesome accounts of crimes and criminal behaviour without (in most cases) acknowledging guilt or showing remorse, commissioners and TRC committee members admitted that they were poorly equipped to deal with (hi)stories of violence and trauma[55]. For many observers and

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[55] I take trauma to mean, as Caruth (1996:3) defines it, "a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind". This understanding of trauma is traced to medical and psychiatric literature, to which Freud's texts are pivotal. Informing Freud's theory of trauma is the idea that, as Caruth notes, "the wound of the mind ... is not like the wound of the body, a simple

critics, what held this fragile process together, thus preventing it from being derailed by hatred, anger, vengeance and violence was the repeated appeal to the main coordinates of the TRC, namely tolerance, compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation.

The capacity to forgo hatred, anger and revenge and respond non-violently to violence, embodied in the philosophy of *ubuntu,* was displayed by the parents of Amy Biehl, a white American Fulbright exchange student who was killed in the township of Guguletu near Cape Town in 1993 by a mob shouting anti-white slogans. After spending three years in jail, her convicted killers — four members of the Pan-Africanist Students Organisation (PASO) — applied for amnesty to the TRC for stoning, stabbing and beating Amy Biehl to death. Amy's parents did not oppose amnesty and flew to South Africa to attend the hearing.

The documentary film *Long Night's Journey Into Day*, directed by Frances Reid (2000)[56], intersects archival footage with the amnesty hearing of Mongezi Manqina, one of Amy's murderers, external interviews with Amy's parents, and interviews with members of Mongezi's family, culminating with a meeting between Amy's mother and Mongezi's mother. This juxtaposition of stories, voices and viewpoints effectively reveals the complex emotions inherent in the deep racial fault lines at the core of apartheid. This emotional complexity challenges a facile conciliatory narrative of forgiveness, healing, reconciliation and nation-building. The grief-stricken story of Peter Biehl, Amy's father, stands in stark contrast to Mongezi's detached and emotionless testimony, coupled with the indifference toward the death of a white woman displayed by some of Mongezi's family members at the beginning of the film. This contrast raises questions about the ability of the TRC to dispel the anger, fears, suspicion and resentment that had formed the basis of interracial relations for so long, while promoting a new vocabulary of solidarity, generosity and interconnectedness.

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and healable event, but rather an event that … is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again" (4).

[56] Shot over a period of two and a half years, the film chronicles the stories of victims and perpetrators in four cases brought to the TRC: the murders of Amy Biehl and the Craddock Four, the Magoo Bar Bombing and the murders of the Guguletu Seven. Other documentary films have focused on the TRC, most notably Mark Kaplan's *If Truth Be Told* (1996), *Where Truth Lies* (1998) and *Between Joyce and Rememberance* (2004); Gail Pellett's *Facing the Truth with Bill Moyers* (1999); Antjie Krog and Ronelle Loots's *The Unfolding of Sky: Landscape of Memory* (1999) and Lindy Wilson's *Guguletu Seven* (2000).

Reid's documentary highlights the importance and meaning of individual actions in contributing to a renewed landscape of post-apartheid social relations. These actions are expressed in both victims' and perpetrators' willingness to understand the Other's pain and humanity, a decisive step away from anger and vengeance toward compassion. Insight into this possibility can be gained by looking at length into a sequence in the film that evinces a shift in attitude and behaviour, particularly towards the 'white Other'. The sequence opens at the TRC hearing with a reading of Mongezi Manqina's affidavit:

> The car stopped and the driver, Amy Biehl, stumbled out of the car and started running towards the Caltex petrol station. We chased after her and I tripped her and she fell down. I asked one of the persons in the crowd for a knife. I got the knife and moved towards Amy Biehl … I took the knife and stabbed her once in front on her left side. I heard the evidence that this blow was fatal. I accept that it must have been the wound that I inflicted.

A dialectical structure is used to intersperse the reading with Peter Biehl's impassioned story of how he heard about and reacted to his daughter's death, with the opinions of Mongezi's relatives in ancillary interviews conducted in private settings. In one such interview Neliswa Solatshy, Mongezi's cousin, admits,

> To be honest, I didn't care much because she is a white lady. She's white; she's white. How many blacks have been died. At first because I didn't know that my cousin was also involved there. If he was, I would also remain feel the same. She's a white woman. What the hell must I care about her.

Following the matter-of-fact statements by two of Mongezi's other cousins, the viewer is brought back into the setting of the hearing with the words read by Mongezi's lawyer: "I deeply regret what I did. I apologise sincerely to Amy Biehl's parents, family and friends and I ask their forgiveness". The camera zooms in on Mongezi's imperturbable expression. In an interview conducted at his house, Mongezi calmly states,

> Before it all happened I was a person who loved sport. I was in Standard 6 at Guguletu Comprehensive and after school I knew that come five o'clock I would be at the gym. In the week that this thing happened, a student died at Nyanga Junction. His name was Shawbury. Before my eyes, he was shot by a Boer (policeman) while he was singing freedom songs. I felt terrible because he died in my arms.

Back in the amnesty hearing Robin Brink, the TRC lawyer, asks Mongezi: "How did you possibly think that the killing of a single unarmed white young woman would

bring about your objective?" Mongezi's reply is, "The government would get very angry during the times of apartheid if only one white person is killed. By killing Amy Biehl that was going to make us proud and force the government to attend to the demands of the black people". This prompts an accusation from the TRC lawyer: "You had no mercy in your heart that day". The reply is, "No".

A rapid cut in the film introduces the viewer to Linda Biehl, Amy's mother, who describes how she became aware of the remorse of Evelyn Manqina, Mongezi's mother, in a message the latter had asked to be filmed. Evelyn is then seen saying: "It's going for Christmas time. Each and every house is sitting with his family around the table enjoying themselves. She's going to sit at the table … but when she's sitting and eating thinking that there's somebody short here". Tearfully she continues, "She passed away without any sickness. You haven't even been to the doctor. Just like that; without no reason. It's too much".

News footage shows Peter and Linda Biehl's visit to Evelyn Manqina's house in Guguletu. The two women embrace each other and Linda comforts Evelyn, repeating the words, "Don't cry. Don't cry". At the hearing Linda reads a brief biography of Amy, and Peter explains how he and Linda would like to honour their daughter,

> Just two months before she died, Amy wrote in a letter to the *Cape Times* editor: 'Racism in South Africa has been a painful experience for blacks and whites, and reconciliation may be equally painful. However, the most important vehicle to reconciliation is open dialogue'. Amy would have embraced your Truth and Reconciliation process. We are present this morning to honour it and offer our sincere friendship. We are all here in a sense to consider a committed human life which was taken without opportunity for dialogue. When this process is concluded, we must link arms and move forward together.

Linda and Peter Biehl's statements are intercut with Mongezi's reflection, "It made my heart sore to hear how they described her. I didn't know who she was. I had seen her simply as another oppressor. I realized … I hit the wrong person". The closest we get to an expression of remorse from Mongezi occurs after being granted amnesty, when he admits,

> It shocked me that Amy Biehl's parents didn't oppose amnesty for us because every mother has suffered the pain of childbirth, and to lose the child you love is very painful. It's a wound that does not heal. And it still comes as a shock to me that they were able to reconcile within themselves.

I cannot engage here with all the aspects of the complex archaeology of emotions underpinning the TRC process, but I advance an hypothesis that addresses the wide social support of what scholars have called "the *ubuntu* theology of Desmond Tutu", an ethic that established the baseline for the moral reconstruction and humanisation of a society fractured by the dehumanising practices of apartheid. Much has been written about the unquestionable influence of Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu's leadership on the structure and implementation of the TRC, and most notably on the centrality of forgiveness in the radical proposal for reconciliation that framed not only the TRC, but in particular Nelson Mandela's political discourse (Graybill, 2002). I argue that the discussion should move past teleological, political and individual influences on the project and focus on the significance of the cultivation of a new set of values generated by the vocabularies and ethical imperatives framing the TRC guidelines.

On this score, much attention has been paid in scholarly literature to forgiveness as the essence of the TRC enterprise. However, not enough has been theorised about the role of compassion in enlarging the scope of moral and social reform, the fundamental transformation craved in post-apartheid social and political life. I argue that compassion precedes forgiveness; it is through compassion that the Other's humanity is recognised and his/her dignity is restored. In essence, it is compassion — before forgiveness — that should be considered the backbone of a model of society centred on human togetherness nurtured by the capacity and willingness of individuals to reach beyond a state of self-satisfied ease and build relations of mutual respect, reciprocity and solidarity. Compassion engages with and makes the project of *ubuntu* viable since, as Nussbaum (2001:327) puts it, "it is to be for *another*, and not for oneself, that one feels compassion" (emphasis in the original). In the same vein, as Tutu (1989:71) advocates, "*Ubuntu* … speaks about … putting yourself out on behalf of others, being vulnerable. It embraces compassion and toughness".

I will draw on Martha Nussbaum's (2001) acute perspective on compassion in *Upheavals of Thought* to consider the social role of compassion in crafting a more humane post-apartheid society. Nussbaum's thought evolves out of her analyses of the Stoics, Adam Smith, Rousseau, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. Aristotle defined compassion as pain caused by the perception of another person's misfortune or suffering. Drawing on Aristotle, Nussbaum (2001:326) explains "pain" as "something more organic to the thoughts … the sort that is 'about' or 'at' the

misfortune" of another person. In this regard, "pain" is not a "throbbing or a tugging", but a way of viewing the distress of others. She clarifies that "It is mental pain directed toward the victim that we want, not some obtuse physical spasm; but what is this mental pain, if not a way of seeing the victim's distress with concern, as a terrible thing?".

Central to Nussbaum's thesis is the distinction between empathy and compassion. Nussbaum considers empathy an important tool that contributes to the understanding of another person's plight, since it requires the reconstruction of that person's suffering in one's imagination. An empathetic understanding of someone's suffering may generate concern, a sense of connection and, importantly, the acknowledgement of the other's reality and humanity. However, although empathy is a prominent route to compassion, it does not guarantee a compassionate response to the sufferer's experience. Nussbaum substantiates this view with the following argument:

> One may, again, empathize with someone to whom one refuses compassion on the grounds of fault: as a juror, for example, I may come to understand the experience of a criminal without having compassion for the person's plight, if I believe him both responsible and guilty (329).

Compassion, on the other hand, stems from "a significant quasi-ethical achievement: namely, it involves valuing another person as part of one's own circle of concern" (336). The ability to identify with the sufferings of another does not imply for Nussbaum what it did for Nietzsche. As Nussbaum puts it, "Nietzsche's idea was that this experience helps people to embrace their own lives. Sophocles' (closely related) idea — and my own — is that it helps them to embrace the lives of others".

Nussbaum's insight into compassion — which she classifies as a moral emotion — speaks directly to the essence of Levinas's philosophy. In his analyses of the relation between Self and the Other Levinas underscores the need to respond to the suffering of the Other with compassion. For Levinas, the vulnerable, suffering Other compels a (re)evaluation of the concept of ethics. As Edelglass (2006:45) observes, "Ethics, then, is the response to the Other who is vulnerable … ethics, according to Levinas, is painful" since it enlists "the very compassionate suffering for the suffering Other". Levinasian compassion is, Edleglass argues, "a wounding, a sensibility that is not the affectivity of sympathetic feelings but the affectivity to the moral command of the Other" (52).

The exercise — proposed in Nussbaum and Levinas's philosophies — of the compassionate gaze that recognises in the suffering of the Other a command to act, an entreaty to intervene in the Other's predicament, is echoed in the radical proposal underpinning the philosophy of *ubuntu*. The conviction that a human being is human through other human beings engenders a predisposition to embrace the suffering Other, to take responsibility for the restitution of his/her dignity. Compassion revitalises the community-centred concept of *ubuntu* geared towards the values of responsibility and reciprocity, thereby paving the way for a much needed reconfiguration in the web of human relationships. The strength of the compassionate gaze resides in its capacity to radically transform restraint, mistrust, hostility and a sense of alienation towards the Other — endemic to the apartheid's pathological construct of race relations — into a sense of communion, of fraternity and solidarity, with the Other.

Using Levinas and Nussbaum's different theoretical frameworks to consider the drastic changes of paradigm taking place in South Africa during what might be classified as a first period of transition to democracy enables us to examine the milestones which the TRC project proposed to achieve. On the one hand there was an absolute necessity to infuse interpersonal relations with a sense of ethical responsibility for the Other on which the Levinasian model is based. On the other hand there was a definite need for healing, for moving forward and putting past injustices and injuries behind. This milestone could only be reached, I argue, via the language of compassion to which Nussbaum's project subscribes. Nussbaum's ethical construct on compassion allows us to think about an ethical responsiveness to the Other that transcends the paradigm of responsibility stemming from an originary moment of violence — a type of responsibility that holds one hostage, Levinas claimed, because of the radical asymmetry that it generates.

During the first phase of the transition to democracy observers (particularly foreign observers) frequently expressed their surprise at, as Graybill (2002:ix) puts it, "the goodwill, compassion, and magnanimity of black South Africans towards their former enemies. No one … spoke of bitterness, vengeance, or hatred; expressions of a desire to move on, to forgive, and to build a united 'rainbow nation' were typically heard". Similar words have been used to describe the TRC process. In his account of the TRC, Desmond Tutu (1999: 76) writes, "as I listened to the stories of victims I marvelled at their magnanimity, that after so much suffering instead of lusting for revenge they had this extraordinary willingness to forgive".

Yet, to formulate the complexity of the confrontation between victims and perpetrators, as Tutu (1999:91) does, in the terms, "Forgiveness will follow confession and healing will happen, and so contribute to national unity and reconciliation" is to understate the pain, sorrow and rage of victims and (as was often the case) the arrogance, callousness and indifference of perpetrators. Compassion was seldom expressed and forgiveness was often declined. People's "generosity of spirit", as Tutu (1999:91) called it, was not obvious or immediate. When it did take place, it was as a result of great personal sorrow, struggle and release. But when it did happen, it established the possibility of deep transformation and hope. This process was masterfully explored in the segment dedicated to the mothers of the Guguletu Seven in Reid's (2000) *Long Night's Journey into Day*.

On 3 March 1986 seven young men were shot by the police in the township of Guguletu. The official police report stated that the seven men were ANC guerrillas who had planned an attack on a police bus transporting eleven senior officers and other members of the police force to Guguletu. Consequently, the police had opened fire in self defence. Video footage showed the bullet-riddled corpses of the men lying in pools of blood on the road and in the bushes nearby the police van. Doubts about the official version of the event occasioned two consecutive inquests, but in both the police had been absolved.

Cynthia Ngewu described how she had seen her son Christopher Piet, one of the seven youths who later became known as the Gugulethu Seven, on the news on television,

> I heard the people saying that there were people who were shot but I just ignored it. The news bulletin would be at six o'clock those days. I switched on the TV. As I was still watching the news, I saw Christopher. He was being pulled with a rope that was tied around his waste.

In an external interview, Zandisile Sammy Mjobo's mother, Edith Mjobo, expressed her resentment that she had seen her son on television; nobody had gone to tell her that he had been killed. She and her husband had been arrested and beaten up during interrogation after their son's burial. She continued, "I was weeping for my child and I never looked at who was speaking. My heart was too sore".

The film continues with a disturbing scene: the screening of a police video of the shoot-out at the TRC hearing where the nine policemen subpoenaed by the TRC (as witnesses to the Guguletu Seven incident), as well as the mothers of the murdered

men, are present. This video was made by the police to demonstrate to the government the efficiency of the security police in dealing with potential threats to the state, thereby securing funding for their unit. When faced with gruesome images of the men's corpses, accompanied by detailed explanations in Afrikaans by police officers at the scene, some of the mothers lose control of their emotions and begin to wail and gesticulate wildly. The screening is brought to a halt while the mothers and the policemen are escorted out of the room.

Tension mounts when Sergeant Bellingan and Constable Mbelo testify. The two policemen[57] who applied for amnesty provide very different accounts of the event. Sergeant Bellingan's is a calm, detached and unrepentant narration of the brutal murders. What surfaced from the investigations carried out by the team of TRC investigators was that the security police unit at Vlakplaas[58] had plotted the whole operation, infiltrating the ANC cell at Guguletu, providing weapons to its members and then planning the ambush of 3 March 1986[59]. In his testimony Thapelo Mbelo describes the savage killing of the men: "The words that we used is that 'they should be eliminated'. A man approached us, raising his arms. He never tried to shoot us or even reach for his firearm. I shot him once. He was lying on his back. I shot him in the head".

The camera cuts to a meeting between the mothers and Pumla Godobo-Madikizela, a TRC commissioner who counselled the mothers about the subsequent meeting with Mbelo. Enraged, Cynthia Ngewu stresses,

> Whatever he's been saying, it's just eating me up inside. He was the cause of this whole thing. He's like a wolf wearing sheep's clothing. The informer was meeting with them … and milking them for information. The children poured everything out …

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[57] Of the more than twenty-five police involved in the Guguletu Seven incident only two applied for amnesty.

[58] Vlakplaas was a farm, known as the "death farm", outside Pretoria that served as the headquarters of a counter-insurgency unit of the South African Police. Set up in 1979, the unit was originally established to "rehabilitate" former ANC and PAC activists by turning them into police informers known as "askaris" who were then used to infiltrate liberation movement cells and provide the security police with information. In the 1980s death squads consisting of three or four "askaris" and a white policeman targeted and eliminated activists that might pose a threat to the apartheid state. Two of the most dreaded commanders at Vlakplaas were Captain Dirk Coetzee (1980-1981) and Colonel Eugene de Kock (1985-1993). The latter ordered the Gugulethu Seven ambush. Eugene de Kock, who was nicknamed "Prime Evil", was convicted of 89 charges, including six of murder, alongside other charges of gun-running and fraud. In 1996 he was sentenced to 212 years, in addition to two life sentences in prison.

[59] An article titled "Guguletu ambush a Vlakplaas operation, Truth Commission told", published by the South African Press Association (SAPA), details the event.

Every time they say something, the informer goes and reports it to the authorities. It makes me so bitter and angry.

Cynthia Ngewu's impassioned outburst is validated in the next shot when in an external interview Mbelo admits, "We didn't have feelings. It felt just like a day's work had been done … Of course I remember I even drove back to Pretoria … The only time when you think something is going to bother you, the nearest thing to do was to take booze". Again the camera focuses on Cynthia Ngewu, capturing the words: "Whatever he feels about what he did is his business; what he has done he has done. My child is dead. Whatever he says will not alter that".

The last scene of this segment focuses on Mbelo meeting privately (at his request) with the families of the murdered men. Speaking in a calm and quiet tone, and looking the women in the eyes, he addresses them with the following plea:

My name is Thapelo Mbelo. I am ashamed to look you in the face. I know that it is painful for you to be faced with a person who has done you wrong and talk to him. I know some of you may forgive me, others may never forgive me. I know that I have done wrong, that I have done evil things here on earth. And I want to say to you as parents of these children who were there that day, I ask for your forgiveness from the bottom of my heart. Forgive me, my parents.

Edith Mjobo responds contemptuously with an attack,

Those bodies lying in a heap, trampled. And then that child raised his hands and said he was surrendering. You shot him while he was in the act of surrendering. You shot that child. So how do you feel? And that day when you saw it on that video, how did you feel?

Confronted with the mothers' inevitable rage, Mbelo is only capable of voicing, "I feel bad". Edith Mjobo is not appeased and continues to accuse him mercilessly, "It's clear to me that you have food because you're getting money for selling out your own blood. How do you feel about selling out your own blood instead of defending it? And to think you did it just for money!" Mbelo tentatively argues in his defence that he had been forced to do what he did. This only seems to infuriate the mothers even further. What they cannot accept is, as Cynthia Ngewu states bitterly, the fact that he betrayed his own people. Visibly disturbed, all Mbelo can add is, "Mama, I don't know what to say. We have hurt you". Mbelo's respectful address triggers an emotional response in Cynthia Ngewu: "It is so painful for me. No matter what he had done, my child was thrown away like a dog. The whites wanted to diminish him,

to drag him through the dirt with that rope, to kill my child. They dragged him with that rope. They dragged him!" Another mother snorts, "Your face is something I will never forget. I have no forgiveness for you!" Then, unexpectedly, Cynthia Ngewu turns to Mbelo as if she were seeing him for the first time, addressing him as she would her own "child",

> Just a minute my son. Doesn't the name Thapelo mean 'prayer'? I see what your name means and I don't know whether you follow it or not. Speaking as Christopher's mother I forgive you my child because you and Christopher are the same age. I forgive you my child, and the reason I say I forgive you is that my child will never wake up again. And it's pointless to hold this wound against you. God will be the judge. We must forgive those who sin against us, even as we wish to be forgiven. So I forgive you, Thapelo. I want to go home knowing the mothers are forgiving the evil you have done, and we feel compassion for you.

The anger and resentment expressed by the mothers at the beginning of the meeting are transformed into compassion and forgiveness at the end, culminating in an embrace between victims and perpetrators. This illustrates the movement towards resolution, catharsis and reconciliation which the TRC urged upon all the participants in this process. The cases of Amy Biehl and the Guguletu Seven offer some sense of the painful emotions occasioned by the face-to-face encounters between victims and perpetrators, and by the process of bearing witness and being confronted with the testimony of those who committed indescribable atrocities. Feelings of anger, hatred and revenge were dispelled by the perpetrators' sobering reflection on the deeds they had committed and the pain they had caused. The appeal for forgiveness, and the dialogue between victims and perpetrators provided the foundation for a new paradigm of human relations. However, it is important to stress that the TRC project of healing was riddled by asymmetries and inconsistencies. Each victim — and perpetrator— came before the TRC with a distinct story and worldview, intermeshed with an individual (in)capacity to deal with grief, resentment, guilt or shame.

Whereas for some victims it was possible — even desirable — to seek healing and closure, and perhaps even forgiveness, for others, it was impossible to engage in a project of healing that required compassion and forgiveness[60]. Feelings of hatred,

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[60] This was the case with Nomonde Calata and Nyameka Goniwe, the widows of Fort Calata and Matthew Goniwe respectively. In the documentary film *Long Night's Journey Into Day*, Nomonde Calata recalls her words to Eric Taylor, the man who was directly responsible for the murder of her husband, "I told him, 'Mr Taylor, it's going to be very difficult for me to say I forgive you for what you did to me because you have caused so much pain to me and my family. You actually robbed my children from their father's love because Fort loved his

revenge or resentment against those who had hurt them irreparably were more easily sustained. In a lecture delivered at the Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion and Public Life in January 2004[61], Pumla Godobo-Madikizela explains this reaction in the following way:

> One reason people hold on to hatred is to distance themselves from those who are responsible for their pain. They are afraid that if they engage them as real people instead of the evil monsters they perceive them to be, they will be compromising their moral stance and lowering the entry requirements into the human community.

 A murderous response to the Other is, as Levinas states again and again in his work, more immediate and natural than a forgiving or compassionate one. Conflict, tension and intolerance are part of our very makeup as human beings. Hence, Levinas's (1998b:92) answer to man's propensity to violence, injustice, hatred and the perpetration of evil against another human being is the development of an ethical philosophy centred on a responsibility for the other, "even when he or she commits crimes". Only then, he claims, can there be "the awakening to humanity" (95). This responsibility to the other consists in my constant attempt to transcend myself and to maintain an ethical vigilance against my desire or temptation to hurt the Other. What I must constantly strive for is to comprehend the Other. According to Levinas, this ethical stance is the source of a humane society.

Levinas entreats for "the awakening of humanity" through the responsibility for the other even — or, especially — when he/she commits unspeakable deeds. This echoes the ethical demand expressed in the philosophy of *ubuntu* that those who have lost their humanity should be helped to recover it so that they may "be readmitted to the world of moral humanity" (Godobo-Madikizela, 2002b:5). Although this is the goal all societies should strive for, at a personal level, feelings of empathy and compassion towards someone who has perpetrated terrible acts — leading to a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation — are neither immediate nor easy to negotiate. In fact, they are a source of deep internal struggle, as Godobo-Madikizela (2003) exemplifies in her book *A Human Being Died That Night*.

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children very much'". Nyameka Goniwe had a similar response to Eric Taylor's plea for forgiveness. She stresses, "I'm not going to absolve him. If he wants to feel lighter, I'm not the person who's going to do that. I refuse to do that. He can use the TRC for that". Teachers Fort Calata and Matthew Goniwe, activists of the United Democratic Front (UDF), along with Sicelo Mhlauli and Sparrow Mkhonto, were murdered in June 1985 as they were driving from Port Elizabeth to Cradock. The men, who later became known as the Cradock Four, were assaulted, killed and their bodies and the vehicle on which they were travelling were burnt.

[61] This Lecture may be found at the Walter H. Capps Centre website, available at http://www.cappscenter.ucsb.edu/videos.html

As a psychologist serving on the Human Rights Violations Committee of the TRC, Godobo-Madikizela has explored questions about the nature of evil and forgiveness in the context of the TRC process. The book is a detailed account of the interviews between the author and Eugene de Kock, a former commander at Vlakplaas, who was usually referred to as "Prime Evil", the embodiment of all that was evil about apartheid. Godobo-Madikizela writes that the motivation for interviewing de Kock at the maximum-security prison in Pretoria emerged after he first appeared at the TRC in September 1997, where he testified about his role in the killing of three black policemen to prevent them from exposing the white policemen involved in the murder of the Cradock Four. At the end of the TRC hearing, de Kock asked to meet privately with Pearl Faku and Doreen Mgoduka, the widows of the men he had killed. In a subsequent interview with the widows, in which they spoke of their meeting with de Kock, Godobo-Madikizela (2003:14-15) was deeply moved and disturbed both by the women's demonstration of empathy and by their capacity to offer forgiveness. She recalls Mrs. Faku's words,

> 'I was profoundly touched by him,' Mrs. Faku said of her encounter with de Kock. Both women felt that de Kock had communicated to them something he felt deeply and had acknowledged their pain. 'I couldn't control my tears. I could hear him, but I was overwhelmed by emotion, and I was just nodding, as a way of saying yes, I forgive you. I hope that when he sees our tears, he knows that they are not only tears for our husbands, but tears for him as well … I would like to hold him by the hand, and show him that there is a future, and that he can still change.'

Godobo-Madikizela felt the need to understand more about de Kock's apology; in particular, whether he was in fact remorseful and therefore worthy of forgiveness. According to Godobo-Madikizela (2002b:5), "there are certain basic elements that are common in most acts of forgiveness: acknowledgment of wrongdoing, contrition, apology and remorse". She considers all these elements necessary for forgiveness to happen, but thinks that "crucial among all of these are expressions of remorse". This explains her reaction to de Kock's display of emotional vulnerability when he referred to the widows during their meeting in prison,

> There were tears in his eyes. In a breaking voice he said: 'I wish I could do more than [say] I'm sorry. I wish there was a way of bringing their bodies back alive. I wish I could say, 'Here are your husbands,' he said, stretching out his arms as if bearing an invisible body, his hands trembling, his mouth quivering, 'but unfortunately … I have to live with it' (32).

De Kock's expression of remorse evoked a spontaneous response in Godobo-Madikizela. She writes, "Relating to him in the only way one does in such human circumstances, I touched his shaking hand, surprising myself" (32). This act of compassion engenders a torrent of emotions. In the following pages — in fact, chapters —Godobo-Madikizela describes and analyses her perplexity, confusion and anger; her feelings of guilt and need for self-justification at having reached out to someone who, as she stresses, "not too long ago had used these same hands, this same voice, to authorize and initiate unspeakable acts of malice against people very much like [herself]". She questions whether "[her] heart had actually crossed the moral line from compassion, which allows one to maintain a measure of distance, to actually identifying with de Kock" (32-33). The memory of having touched de Kock's "trigger hand" provokes a spate of physical, visceral reactions, and, yet, she cannot help but marvel at the thought that "[Her] action may well have been the first time a black person touched him out of compassion" (42). In her 2004 lecture, Godobo-Madikizela shared how she struggled with the thought of having extended the gift of compassion to someone who might not have been worthy of it, then formulated some questions which leave us with a thought-provoking answer:

> Is it possible to connect, truly connect at a human level with a person who has committed indescribable crimes? How can we extend our compassion to people who are responsible for unspeakable deeds in society? At the same time, how can we not, when their hearts are bleeding, when at last their conscience speaks?

The cases discussed at length here raise perplexity at how it is humanly possible to forgive the unforgiveable, but essentially they exemplify the limits and possibilities of compassion and forgiveness. They also illustrate that when a society is capable of creating and nurturing the conditions that make forgiveness conceivable and possible, it is paving the way for perpetrators and victims to share a common idiom of humanity, and ultimately enabling the rehabilitation of individuals who had come to be seen as the embodiment of evil. Restorative justice — rather than retributive justice — advances the possibility of restoring the dignity of both victim and perpetrator. To return for a moment to the meeting between Thapelo Mbelo and the mothers, in which he acknowledged wrongdoing and humbly asked for forgiveness, Cynthia Ngewu was able to see past his evil deeds and embrace him as she would her own son. Symbolically, this embrace was the gesture that readmitted the perpetrator back into the world of humanity.

The resolution of conflict between Thapelo Mbelo and the mothers seemed to hold a credible promise of the development of relations based on mutuality, reciprocity and regard. Central to the restorative justice model is the shift from equating justice with punishment to equating justice with the restoration of the equilibrium in relationships, enabling the offender's reintegration into the community. This was, in fact, Mbelo's most urgent request: to be able to once again "face his black brothers and sisters". Mbelo's expression of regret for his actions confirms Acorn's (2004:18) claim that

> Restorative justice is possibly the perfect solution to crime where the offenders have the capacity for serious critical self-reflection, the resources and ability to repair the damage caused, and a bona fide desire, along with sufficient self-command, to behave respectfully in their relations with their victims and their communities in the future.

Although it takes place on camera, the meeting between Thapelo Mbelo and the mothers is framed as if it were a private experience, quite different from that of the audience-packed halls where the hearings were held. In the hall, the stunned silence and self-contained expression of the onlookers seemed to disperse the mothers' outburst of emotion during the screening of the police video. The policemen had their backs to the mothers who were sitting in the audience, and were therefore screened from the women's rage. In the confined space of the private meeting, Mbelo is deprived of the support of his colleagues; he faces the women on his own. The camera dramatises the underlying tension in this face-to-face encounter. Mbelo is met by the accusing looks, the hostility, resentment and sorrow, and the angry words of the mothers who hold him accountable for their sons' murder, demanding an explanation from him. Released from the carefully structured model of the hearing, the mothers let their emotions run free. The camera introduces a mode of ethical seeing and listening. Tempo is established as the camera explores, to use Max Kozloff's (2007) metaphor, the "theatre of the face". The camera alternates between Mbelo's face and that of the mothers, zooming in for a close-up, lingering there as the speaker looks the Other in the eye, commanding attention and demanding the type of response that stems from an ethic of responsibility.

This reflection prompts consideration about how notions of "public" and "private" are manifested, first in Reid's (2000) documentary work on the TRC, and second in Edelstein's project. Jeff Weintraub (1997:5) suggests that these categories can be addressed from two different perspectives: on the one hand, "what is hidden or

withdrawn versus what is open, revealed and accessible", and on the other hand, "what is individual, or pertains only to an individual, versus what is collective, or affects the interests of a collectivity of individuals". Of importance also is "the civic perspective, which sees the 'public' realm (or 'public' sphere) in terms of political community and citizenship" (xii).

Hannah Arendt's conception of the public sphere as linked to political agency provides a platform for examining how the TRC enabled individuals who had been deprived of civil and political rights during apartheid to exercise their agency. As previously stated, in light of a legacy of repression and silencing of the majority of the citizens, the post-apartheid political dispensation championed a politics of visibility and audibility out of which an active and democratic political culture could be fashioned. The TRC hearings produced a public arena where victims and perpetrators could speak out and bear witness to deeds committed in the past, bringing out into the open what had until then been hidden or withdrawn. The TRC encouraged relations of civility and solidarity among citizens. A new model of citizenship, created within a framework of political freedom, solidarity and equality, emerged out of this climate. Understood from the perspective of Arendt's conception of the public sphere as the "sphere within which the activity of citizenship can flourish", as d'Entreves (2000:69) notes, hitherto politically invisible individuals were now actively participating in social and political life.

Reid's work, together with Edelstein's, reinforces the sense that a civil space has been created where the subject can exercise his or her political agency by actively choosing how to represent him/herself in public. But there is also another dimension of the public and private through which to examine both the meeting between the mothers and Mbelo in the film segment and Edelstein's photographs. If we consider the distinction between "private" and "public" in terms of "the distinction between the family and the larger political and economic order" (Weintraub 1997:xii), Edelstein's photographs capture a sense of the "private" that is normally kept in the domain of the family, of personal relationships. We feel that the filmmakers and photographer respectively have entered the domain of private life, the special preserve of the family and friends, where individuals express their grief. Consequently, grief and the act of grieving, a deeply intimate and private process, becomes a concern of the collective.

By allowing us, the viewers, to witness the grief and intensity of emotion that is normally reserved for the private sphere, the witnesses bring out their pain and

anger into an arena where "they will assume a kind of reality which, their intensity notwithstanding, they never would have had before" (Arendt 1998:50). Of extreme importance in the context of the TRC is that, as Arendt put it, "The presence of the others who see what we see and hear what we hear assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves" (50). Therefore, what some observers considered the "highly charged spectacle of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (Bennett 2005:104), was an opportunity for those directly involved to receive validation of and respect for grievances never before expressed in public. The public arena becomes the primary site for replacing apartheid's politics of violence and concealment by a new language and practice of "seeing and hearing others, of being seen and being heard by them" (Arendt 1998:58). Crucially, from the perspective of the onlooker (the viewer, the 'passive' participant) the TRC engendered an unprecedented ethic of interacting with the Other. For filmmakers and photographers, the TRC introduced a new economy of documentary work in the socio-political history of South Africa.

At this point, we return to the photograph of Archbishop Tutu discussed earlier in this chapter to consider how the compassionate gaze of the photographer, followed by that of the viewer (which derives, in Levinasian terms, from the face-to-face concrete encounter with the suffering of another human being), yields an ethic of responsibility. As Peperzak (1993:31) underscores, "In this other's face, I see the virtual presence of all men and women". If we perceive the representation of Archbishop Tutu's sorrow as a synecdoche of the suffering expressed by all the victims at the TRC, our mode of engagement (our encounter with this human other that addresses us and calls to us) will be both responsive and responsible. As Gibbs (2000:3) defines it, "Responsiveness is thus the fulfilment of a responsibility". Drawing on Levinas, he continues,

> Responsibility in this ethics is asymmetric: I am responsible for others in a way that they are not responsible for me. Indeed, this ethic requires me to respond for actions of others, actions I could neither cause nor control … Responsibility extends asymmetrically into the past … For some things we are to blame, but for much more we are responsible — called to respond for the sake of the future. (4)

I propose that the face-to-face encounter with the suffering other generates two interconnected layers of responsibility. The first is the ethical exigency binding the photographer to a sensitive and respectful portrayal of the Other's suffering. The second layer concerns the viewer whose response to the appeal of the suffering Other furthers the continuum of consciousness — "the specifically human mode of

participation in reality" (Voegelin, 1990:ix) — and affectivity initiated by the photographer. Responsibility claims on both photographer and viewer the ethical demand of remembering the damage done to this human other in the past. Aided by the photographic representation, the practice of remembrance institutes an indissoluble relation with the Other; it transforms the 'passive' viewer into an 'active' participant since, as Ricoeur (2006:56) argues, "remembering is not only welcoming, receiving an image of the past, it is also searching for it, 'doing' something". Situating the phenomenology of memory within the tradition of the Greek classics, most notably Aristotle's thought, Ricoeur identifies memory with affection (*pathos*).

From this viewpoint the affective dimension of memory both introduces into one's field of experience an understanding of the importance of one's capacity to act for another as for oneself, and the validation of an emotional response to the memories of the suffering Other. In acknowledging the Other as someone like myself, as an equal, I will become indignant about the evil and injustice done to a fellow human being. In this context the "duty of memory", as Ricoeur (2006:30) calls it, which "consists essentially in a duty not to forget" stems from the commitment to this Other who summons me. The Other holds me responsible for not forgetting his/her suffering and consequently (in honouring this memory) for restoring his/her dignity. I subscribe entirely to Andrea Liss's (1998:xiii) view that "the demand to never forget is not directed at survivors, who can never forget, but at those who never experienced the events". In essence, the act of remembering prevents the institutionalisation of a climate of denial and amnesia, and institutes in its place a climate of respect for human and civil rights.

In this regard, Edelstein's photographic representations of victims personalise apartheid's atrocities, obliging the viewer to eschew forever the role of bystander. What is shattering about these photographs is that the face that looks out at the viewer (me) is tangible evidence of the horrendous effect of apartheid on individual lives. Indeed, the sorrow, sullen anger or even resignation etched on the photographed subject's face leaves an imprint on the viewer's mind, imbuing previously acquired homogenised and impersonal narratives of anonymous victims with the specificity of concrete identities, experiences and memories. This understanding brings into sharp focus Susan Sontag's (1977:20) much quoted reflection on the encounter with "the photographic inventory of ultimate horror". As she writes,

Nothing I have seen — in photographs or in real life — ever cut me as sharply, deeply, instantaneously. When I looked at those photographs, something broke. Some limit had been reached, and not only that of horror; I felt irrevocably grieved, wounded, but a part of my feelings started to tighten; something went dead; something is still crying. (20)

This insight prompts an examination (which forms the core of this chapter) of the triad of affect, photography and ethics. Many of the questions about the triangulation of affect, photography and ethics have emerged from studies of Holocaust photography. Central to most discussions is the testimonial function of photography, with particular focus — as is the case of Liss's (1998:xiii) work — on "the traditional mandate of the documentary photograph to 'bear witness'". What makes Liss uncomfortable, however, is that "photographs depicting events, moments, and lives ruined by Nazi crimes in the Holocaust" should be called "documentary", since she claims,

Holocaust photographs do not function solely as objective documents: on a deeper psychic level, they set up the shock of the unimaginable made visible. By the very nature of their extremity and the ways in which they test the viewer's empathy, Holocaust photographs challenge and expand the limits of documentary. (1)

More than the information value or the documentary evidence of the photographs what is at stake for Liss, in "the photographic seeing" of Holocaust-related photography is the psychic journey occasioned by the encounter between photographer and subject, and between viewer and photograph. Parallel to performing as history lessons which inspire thought, reflection and learning, the photographs provide sites for mourning. Just as significant as affording a historical record, depictions of skulls and unidentified stacks of corpses, camp courtyards lined with thousands of bodies awaiting burial, crematorium chimneys and furnaces inspire a sense of mourning for the degradation of humanity. The affective presence or power imbued in these representations by the magnitude of Holocaust suffering and atrocity brings the images' signifying effects into present currency by virtue of "their enduring force as emblems that enable memory of the past" (Zemel, 2003:201). Importantly, Zemel argues, "in the six decades since their making, these images have become more than evidence. For many viewers, they invoke the limits of human endurance; they call for moral reflection on human nature and the capacity for evil" (203).

According to Barbie Zelizer (1998), atrocity photographs have a dual function in the context of memory studies. They constitute important vehicles of remembrance. As Zelizer (1998:13) writes, they are "a powerful building block to the past that connects the unimaginable with the imagined". They "have also been particularly instrumental in shaping the act of bearing witness" (11). Hence, in keeping brutality before our eyes, atrocity photos of the past promote a better understanding of instances of atrocity in the present. Repeatedly surfacing in the literature on Holocaust photography is the idea that language is limited in its capacity or adequacy to convey what goes "beyond the scope of human understanding" (82). Hornstein and Jacobowitz (2003:3) reflect that "language is limited by what is known and that events that test these limits and exceed them demand a new language". Photography, then, accomplishes what words cannot. As Zelizer argues, "Using images to bear witness to atrocity requires a different type of representation than did words. Images helped record the horror in memory after its concrete signs had disappeared" (86).

The brutality of apartheid is often compared to that of the Holocaust in the powerful emotional response that it produces. During the apartheid years, photojournalism and struggle photography (discussed in Chapter 1) played an important role in giving indisputable testimony of the cruelties inflicted on black South Africans. Although extensive verbal accounts of events were published in the international press, the photographs that were published alongside those articles and news reports — especially those representations which have since then been classified as the iconography of apartheid[62] — superseded the ability of words to convey apartheid brutality. The weight of pictorial evidence was understood from the international community's response to the apartheid government's crimes against human rights. Following the demise of apartheid during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process, photography documented the act of witnessing. The images produced then — as is especially the case with Jillian Edelstein's project — accommodate a broader story about the effects of apartheid on individuals who, for the first time, are treated as citizens, called by their names and given space to tell their stories.

Working within the framework of the theory of testimony and trauma, the psychoanalyst Dori Laub identifies three separate distinct levels of witnessing: "the level of being a witness to oneself within the experience; the level of being a witness

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[62] I will take recourse to Zemel's (2003:203) definition for icons, namely, "familiar pictures that emblematically compress or condense the data of events".

to the testimonies of others; and the level of being a witness to the process of witnessing itself" (Felman and Laub, 1992:75). Guided by this formulation, I suggest that the photographer's primary role is that of witness to the survivor's witnessing activity of relaying a traumatic event. Bearing witness, from the photographer's standpoint, implies attention not only to the pictorial depiction of the act of witnessing but also to the context framing the graphic representation of such a moment. Seen from a psychoanalytical perspective, for trauma survivors, central to the process of dealing with and minimising the effects of trauma is the act of narrating. Inhibiting the release from trauma is, as Laub argues, the conviction that

> Trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every respect (69).

Laub's most urgent and essential claim is that release from the entrapment of trauma is accomplished through the construction of a narrative and the subsequent re-externalisation of the event. Essentially, "this re-externalization of the event can occur and take effect only when one can articulate and *transmit* the story, literally transfer it to another outside oneself and then take it back again, inside" (emphasis in the original)(69). Laub's thesis is grounded on the premise that for the testimonial process to take place effectively there needs to be an empathic listener, "an other who can hear the anguish of one's memories and thus affirm and recognize their realness" (68).

Especially valuable in Laub's elaboration of the role of narrative in the alleviation of suffering is the focus on the responsibility of the "empathic listener" in the testimonial process. Inasmuch as this constitutes a strength in his theory, I argue that it is also a weakness since his thesis acknowledges the role of empathy — but not of compassion — during the therapeutic setting of transference, the process whereby emotions are passed or displaced from the testifier/survivor to the listener. Laub's thinking on trauma fails to account for the limitations of the feeling of empathy which are brought into relief in Nussbaum's study. As Nussbaum (2001:302) argues, "psychologists and psychoanalysts sometimes use the term 'empathy' to mean some combination of imaginative reconstruction with the judgement that the person is in distress and that this distress is bad". I argue, borrowing Nussbaum's words, that "'compassion'[which] seems more intense and suggests a greater degree of suffering, both on the part of the afflicted person and on the part of the person having the

emotion" repairs severed relationships and navigates pathways towards more humane practices of social relations.

The intersection of Laub's theory of trauma with Nussbaum and Levinas's critical vocabularies provides a method for thinking about the testimonial process in terms of an ethic of responsibility contingent upon the understanding of justice as compassion. The emotion demonstrated by Archbishop Tutu during Singqokwana Ernest Malgas's testimony exceeded the boundaries of empathy when it became "a painful emotion occasioned by the awareness of another person's undeserved misfortune" (Nussbaum, 2001:301), in other words, compassion. More than "carry out his function of a witness to the trauma witness [who, nevertheless,] preserves his own separate place, position and perspective ", as Laub (Felman and Laub, 1992:58) describes the role of the empathic listener, Archbishop Tutu established — through his compassionate response to the suffering Other — a sense of communion between himself and the Other. He felt what the Other felt, and the Other's suffering became his own, each fusing into the other and becoming, therefore, indistinguishable, inseparable. The photographic representation communicates then what Judith Butler (2009:63) terms "the representability of the human" (an aspect that is common to the photographs in *Truth & Lies*).

The TRC hearings were the site where, to use Caruth's (1996) powerful metaphor, "wound becomes voice" and, I would add, where wound becomes expression. Edelstein's photographic practice plays a vital role in mediating expressions of intense personal suffering, and conveying what eludes human capacity to represent or transmit (in words) the nature of trauma, or the impact of events on the human psyche. Shoshana Felman's (1992:3) insight about the position of the witness in the act of testimony can be applied to the photographer who takes on the responsibility of conveying the solitude of the witness. In doing so, the photographer becomes him/herself a witness who "*bear[s] the solitude* of a responsibility". In accepting "the *appointment* to bear witness", the photographer accepts "paradoxically enough, an appointment to transgress the confines of that isolated stance, to speak *for* other and *to* others" (emphasis in the original).

The viewer's affective response to the photograph of Archbishop Tutu is triggered by the experience of the alterity of the Other. The face that is hidden in grief is the element that establishes a connection between viewer and subject, becoming the conduit for a process of recognition and identification, of compassion. Hence, as Barthes (2000:27) articulates in *Camera Lucida*, the viewer's detached analytical

stance — that "*polite* interest … that very wide field of unconcerned desire, of various interest, of inconsequential taste" — gives way to a more intuitive and emotive form of engagement. Subjectivity, the personal or individual response to the photograph, enables the viewer to be drawn into an affective mode of photographic interpretation that is attentive to a particular photographic detail that "pricks" or "wounds" him/her.

Both Barthes and Sontag conflate the encounter with emotionally charged photographs and the experience of being physically or psychologically wounded, thereby envisioning and enacting "the very compassionate suffering for the suffering Other" expressed by Levinas (Edelglass, 2006:45). The photograph of Archbishop Tutu elicits from the viewer an authentic sense of loss, grieving and mourning for the lives desecrated by the dehumanising practices of apartheid. More importantly, though, it serves as a powerful and poignant historical record of the witnessing process at the core of the TRC. On its own the photograph impacts on the viewer. However, its "witness" and historical value is strengthened by its contextualised and articulated use with other representations in a larger project.

2.5 The genesis and genealogy of *Truth & Lies*

The photograph of Archbishop Tutu (Fig.6) serves as a point of departure for the discussion of Jillian Edelstein's (2001) photography project titled *Truth & Lies*. Central to the project is the use of the portrait genre to expose the crucial moments of rupture during the TRC proceedings, most notably when language proved ineffective or revealed its limitations in accurately conveying the anger, anguish, grief and resentment arising from the overwhelming and wrenching experience of bearing witness to massive trauma. Of significance in this work is the agency conferred on the photographed subject by the conventions of portraiture, coupled with the deliberate, slow, movements of the photographic act, which enables the subject to consider and negotiate his/her role in the meaning-making process.

Common to the black and white headlong shots published in *Truth & Lies* is the dignity and composure with which the subjects (re)present themselves, facing the camera with unwavering determination and strength. One photograph in particularly evinces the subject's fragility and emotional collapse, highlighting the most notable

feature about this work — the photographer's ethics. The photograph depicts Fikile Mlotshwa (Fig.8), one of the "comforters" who supported both victims and perpetrators before and after their testimonies. Edelstein (2001:92) writes,

> When victims were overcome with emotion because of the stories they were telling, the comforters would use human contact to support them — stroking them, holding them, providing them with tissues to dry their tears and glasses of water to help them recover.

In this representation, the face is the locus of grief and compassion for the suffering Other. With eyes closed and lips drawn into a straight line, the subject wraps her hands around her cheeks in a gesture of sadness and disbelief. The closed eyes suggest the need to block out images of the source of her distress. In contrast to most of the subjects in Edelstein's photographs, who determinedly face the camera with a direct intense gaze seemingly fixed on the viewer, Fikile Mlotshwa avoids any eye contact. The emotion that cascades across her face expresses total helplessness. Rather than be in the position to offer comfort, she seems to be the one who needs comforting. As psychologist Paul Ekman (2003:105), who has carried out extensive study on emotions and facial expressions, explains,

> Each expression conveys a set of related messages. The messages for sadness and agony revolve around 'I am suffering, comfort and help me.' Our reaction to seeing these expressions is not typically a detached intellectual matter, even when they are manifest in such an abstract fashion as a still photograph … We are constructed to respond with emotion to emotion.

There is an honesty and directness in Edelstein's approach which is, at the same time, non-intrusive and respectful of the subject's fragility and expression of pain. Key to Edelstein's style of portraiture is the use of a large format, images which occupy a page by themselves, thereby maximising the subjects' dignity and self-reliance.

Fig.8 Jillian Edelstein, *Fikile Mlotshwa, a comforter for hearings in the Johannesburg area*, 29 May 1997

The narrative structure in *Truth & Lies* comprises double-paged spreads in which text and image often complement each other. Landscapes and townscapes (which contextualise both the TRC proceedings and some of the stories that emerged in and around the hearings) are intermeshed with portraits of victims and perpetrators, resulting in a vast interrelated web of circumstances and human relationships. Thoughtful attention has been paid to the selection of scenes, close-ups and wide-perspective establishing shots, vertical and horizontal compositions. We are made aware of the arranging and posing around the portraits, an approach that aims to short-circuit any references to victimisation and create, instead, a metaphor of strength, dignity and hope. The Foreword establishes the photographer's motivation and methodology, along with her personal feelings about apartheid, about the TRC proceedings and about the participants in this process who became the subjects of her book. In Edelstein's (2001:12) words, "Back in South Africa for my sister's wedding in 1996, I was gripped by the TV footage of the early scenes from the Truth Commission. I promised myself I would return to document the process".

In his Introduction to *Truth & Lies*, Michael Ignatieff (2001a) stresses the specificity of the South African TRC in relation to other truth commissions and considers its impetus to mobilise the testimonial process as a vehicle for the disclosure of abuses committed during the apartheid era. The merit of this process resides in its focus on bringing the truth of past crimes to light. Paradoxically, this mandate ultimately results in one of the TRC's most serious shortcomings. Both testimonies and investigations carried out at the time revealed that truth and lies prove to be compatible bedfellows when political agendas are incompatible with the consequences of the full disclosure of truth. Ignatieff (2001a:21) writes that in these circumstances truth becomes a gnawing reminder of "a system, a culture, a way of life that was organized around contempt and violence for other human beings". According to Ignatieff, notwithstanding the several pitfalls encountered by the commissions, the South African TRC was successful in weeding out a set of "impermissible lies" that attempted to justify the atrocities committed not only in the name of apartheid but also in the name of the liberation struggle. Hence, the TRC's most notable accomplishment may be, as Ignatieff notes, that it "has rendered some lies about the past simply impossible to repeat" (21).

Whereas Ignatieff focuses on the tension between truth and lies emerging in and around the hearings, Pumla Godobo-Madikizela foregrounds the tension between remembering and forgetting. Her text considers the role of memory as an instrument

of response to — and a form of release from — the histories of struggle and suffering wrought by the injustices and violent practices induced by apartheid's authoritarian government. Challenging the prevalent official narrative, Godobo-Madikizela's own memories of the state-orchestrated violence underpinning two of South Africa's historic traumatic events (namely the 1960 protests led by the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the 1976 student uprising in Soweto) illustrate the notion that "old memories fuse with new ones and the accounts given by victims and survivors are not simply about facts. They are primarily about the *impact* of facts on their lives and the continuing trauma in their lives created by past violence" (Godobo-Madikizela, 2001:26).

The subjectivity of testimony engenders much debate in the literature on memory studies and represents cause for questioning both the accuracy of victims' accounts of past events and the depth of truth uncovered. This subjectivity is what, for Godobo-Madikizela, validates the testimonial process. In her understanding as a psychologist, the narration of one's lived experience "provides a way of returning to the original pain and hence a reconnection with the lost loved one. Evoking the pain in the presence of a listening audience means taking a step backwards in order to move forwards" (27). Whereas for Ignatieff the TRC's work merits recognition for unveiling hitherto silenced truth(s) about the apartheid years and answering a number of questions previously left unanswered, for Godobo-Madikizela the TRC's most valuable contribution resides in its attempt to bring closure to the trauma of the past, since "[I]f a memory is kept alive in order to transcend hateful emotions, to free oneself or one's society from the burden of hatred, then remembering has the power to heal" (30).

Following the Foreword by Jillian Edelstein, the Introduction by Michael Ignatieff and the "Memory and Trauma" essay by Pumla Godobo-Madikizela, the book is divided into ten sections. The first section, titled "The Hearings", establishes in written text the mission, functional bodies, and members of the TRC. In images, it conveys a metaphor — accomplished by a close-up shot of a heap of tangled headphones — for the myriad of people attending the hearings and the linguistic challenge posed to translators whose mission it was to make the hearings accessible in (among other languages) English, Afrikaans, Xhosa and Zulu. A double page spread shows a hall with a multiracial audience and an empty seat reserved for the family of witnesses.

The next section, titled "The Mandela United Football Club", pivots around the hearing of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and, particularly, the Mandela United Football

Club. An investigative unit appointed by the Commission revealed that members of the Football Club were responsible for the abduction, torturing and murder of people believed to be police informers in the late 1980s. This section includes a portrait of Joyce Mananki Seipei, the mother of Stompie Seipei, a fourteen year old activist who was kidnapped and murdered by members of the Mandela Football Club in 1989. Another portrait reveals Mrs Seipei standing side by side with Jerry Richardson, the man who (acting on Mrs Mandela's orders) tortured and murdered Stompie Seipei by throwing him up in the air like a ball and letting him fall freely onto the ground.

In the section titled "The Death of Steve Biko", portraits of Ntsiki Biko and Belgium Biko, the widow and younger brother of Steve Biko (the leader of the Black Consciousness movement who was beaten into a coma during interrogation by security officers in 1977) contrast with that of his murderer, Gideon Nieuwoudt (Fig.11). The section on "Robben Island", the prison where Nelson Mandela spent eighteen of the twenty-seven years in prison before his release on 11 February 1990, contains images of the island, of the courtyard, of a communal dormitory, of Nelson Mandela's cell and, finally, of Nelson Mandela himself.

A landscape of the road between Cradock and Post Chalmers in the Eastern Cape opens the section on "The Cradock Four", the name that was given to the four men from Cradock, a small farming town in the Eastern Cape, who were murdered on 27 June 1985 and whose death sparked the resistance against apartheid during the late 1980s. Their widows, Nombuyiselo Mhlauli, Nyameka Goniwe, Sindiswa Mkonto and Nomonde Calata, are the focus of Edelstein's portraits in this section. Lizzie James and Eunice Nombulelo Ngubo, who gave evidence of the death of their son and brother respectively, are also portrayed. In the sixth section of the sequence, three "comforters" — all women — Pumla Ndulula, Fikile Mlotshwa (Fig.8) and Nocawe Mafu, are depicted providing comfort: Pumla Ndulula with a jug of water, a glass and tissues; Fikile Mlotshawa feeling the victims' distress; and Nocawe Mafu holding the hands of Mrs Nomonde Calata, one of the widows of the Craddock Four.
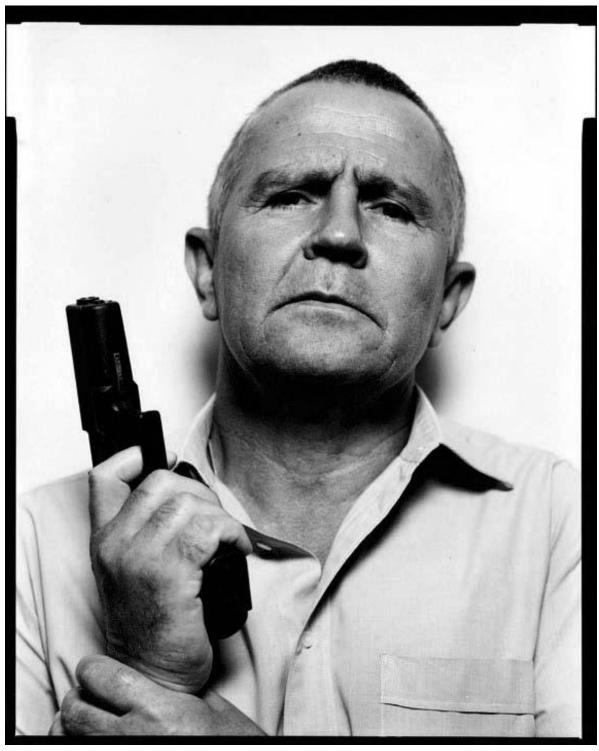
Fig.9 Jillian Edelstein, *Dirk Coetzee*, Pretoria, 26 February 1997
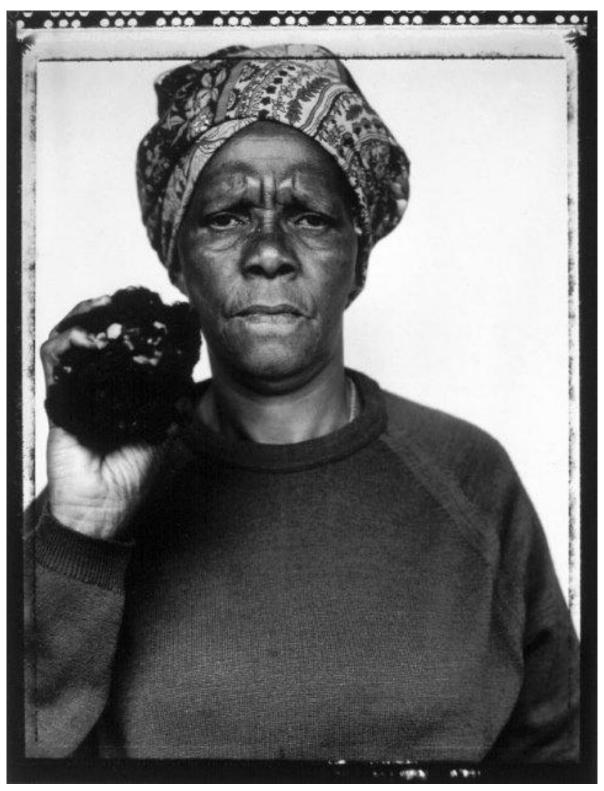
Fig.10 Jillian Edelstein, *Joyce Mtimkulu*, Port Elizabeth, February 1997

Fig.11 Jillian Edelstein, *Gideon Johannes Nieuwoudt (left) and Mike Barnardo, a member of the witness protection team,* Cape Town, 31 March 1998

The next three sections are the most extensive in the book. The section titled "Vlakplaas" is composed of photographs of the former headquarters of the Vlakplaas counter-insurgency unit, a group photo of four members of the security police with a commander, and a headlong close-up of Dirk Coetzee (Fig.9). Immediately following the photograph of Dirk Coetzee are the portraits of two victims, whose brother and son respectively were murdered by the first commander of the special "counter-insurgency" unit at Vlakplaas. Post Chalmers (the former police station near Craddock in the Eastern Cape where people were interrogated and beaten to death) is carefully framed to exclude any signifying elements other than the white building and the black clouds hovering threateningly above it, which lend the composition a threatening atmosphere and dissuade the reader from believing the sign on the wall: "Post Chalmers Holiday Farm"[63]. Expressions of extreme sadness characterise the portraits of the relatives of the Pebco Three[64]: Lehlohonolo Galela, Mrs Elizabeth Hashe, Monica Nqabakazi and Pamama Godolozi. The hardest image to take in is that of Joyce Mtimkulu (Fig.10), which will be discussed at greater length later in the chapter. Perhaps because of the intense emotions conveyed in this photograph, the smiling countenances in three portraits closing this section (including that of Singqokwana Malgas) come as a shock to the viewer.

The section titled "The Guguletu Seven" focuses on the case of the seven men who were killed by the security police from Vlakplaas in 1986 in the township of Guguletu in the Western Cape, but expands into the killings resulting from the violence between members of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the ANC in KwaZulu Natal. The portraits of victims are mostly of women; those of perpetrators are of three men: General Magnus Malan, former Minister of Defence; David Zweli Dlamini, a member of the guerrilla unit of the IFP, the Caprivi Trainees; and Eugene Terre Blanche, the former leader of the extreme right party, the Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging (AWB). "Orania", a town near the Orange River in the Northern Cape populated exclusively by white Afrikaners, was the title chosen for the second last section in the book. The most chilling photographs and stories in this section are of high-ranking officers of the security police who either masterminded or were

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[63] According to an official statement released on 17 April 2009, investigations carried out during and after the TRC amnesty hearings unearthed two fire sites containing human remains at Post Chalmers. An underground septic tank was drained and found to contain burnt human bone fragments, fire residue and multiple artefacts.

[64] Qwaqwahuli Godolozi, Sipho Hashe and Champion Galela became known as the Pebco Three. The three leaders of the Port Elizabeth Civic Organization (Pebco) were taken to Post Chalmers on 8 May 1985 where they were tortured and killed. Their bodies were burnt on wood and diesel fires, and the remains were thrown into the Fish River.

involved in bombings and numerous murders. The last section in the book, titled "Exhumations", is a compilation of photographs taken during the exhumation of corpses in Vlakplaas and at Boshoek in the Northern Province.

Forming the core of *Truth & Lies* are the representations of victims — mostly women — who went to the TRC in the pursuit of truth, namely factual objective information about what had happened to their husbands and sons; many wanted to see the remains of relatives who had been abducted, killed and buried secretly. Juxtaposed with photographs of angry women who face the camera with fierce and bold determination are the photographs of perpetrators who gaze back defiantly while nonchalantly holding an 'amulet' in one hand: either a cigarette or a porcelain cup, or even a small soccer ball. The result is a disturbing contrast of emotion and callousness, of integrity and deceit. As a witness to the tension between the sorrow expressed by witnesses as they remembered and recounted experiences of violence, and the indifference displayed by perpetrators as they crafted performances of half-truths and blatant lies, Edelstein adds her own response to the narrative of the TRC. The cohesion of *Truth & Lies* results from the balanced sequencing of photographs, factual texts, fragments taken from testimonies at the hearings, and extracts from Edelstein's diary, reminding us that "You may know a truth but if it's at all complicated, you have to be an artist not to utter it as a lie" (Iris Murdoch, 1973:107).

The seriousness of this work is undeniable, but knowledge of Edelstein's formative experience and evolving political consciousness elucidate a number of its facets: the photographer's interpretation of the tensions inherent in the TRC process; her engagement not only with the stories of suffering told by victims, but also with those of brutality and cruelty voiced by the masterminds of heinous crimes; and her manipulation of form and meaning. Born in Cape Town but based in London since 1985, Edelstein's engagement with apartheid's institutionalised practices of injustice, exclusion and repression may be traced back to her experience of photographing the demolition of the Crossroads squatter camp in Cape Town in 1977 when she was still a student at the University of Cape Town. Later, as a press photographer in the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Star* between 1981 and 1984, Edelstein gained a deeper understanding of the cleavages between blacks and whites when she was sent to photograph sporting events, fashion shows and military parades. In a personal interview, Edelstein recalled the contrast between the atmosphere in these events that she was commissioned to cover and that of family gatherings in townships

where news had been received that a relative had been sentenced either to death or to life in prison. To photograph these circumstances was to reflect on the irony of the joy, excitement and relief with which news of a life sentence was often received.

Back in South Africa in 1996, enthralled by Max du Preez's television programme on the TRC, Edelstein approached the Commission for permission to become the TRC official photographer, but was turned down. Immediately after that she found the support she needed from Kathy Ryan, the picture editor of *The New York Times Magazine*, enabling her to approach the subject matter as she had envisaged. In 1997 *The New York Times Magazine* published a seven-page reportage penned by the South African journalist Mark Gevisser and illustrated by Edelstein[65]. The reportage is titled "The Witnesses" and suitably subtitled "Day after day, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa listens to the pain of apartheid's victims and offers amnesty to its villains".

The victim depicted on the first page is Mhleli Mxenge who is seen frowning furiously as he holds up a large framed studio portrait of a smiling couple. The caption lets us know that the couple are Griffiths Mxenge and his wife. Griffiths Mxenge, Mhleli's brother, was an ANC civil rights lawyer who, after serving a three year sentence on Robben Island, was placed under banning orders and continually persecuted until he was brutally stabbed and mutilated in 1981[66]. His wife, Victoria Mxenge, was an anti-apartheid activist and human rights lawyer who devoted herself to representing youth, students and activists detained and tortured by the security police. In 1985 she was shot and axed to death in front of her children. In 1987 a Durban magistrate refused to open a formal inquest into Victoria's murder, stating that she had died from head injuries, and had been murdered by persons unknown.

The villain in this story is former Vlakplaas security police base commander Dirk Coetzee (Fig.9) portrayed in a full-page head shot taken against a white backdrop to obviate any distracting glance away from the face. The photograph is a character study, depicting posture, gesture and gaze with razor-sharp precision. Giving the

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[65] See other publications of Edelstein's work: in 2001 *The Guardian* published a nine page edited extract from Michael Ignatieff's (2001b) introduction to *Truth & Lies* titled "Something Happened". *Image*, the magazine of the Association of Photographers, published a review by Laura Noble (2001) titled "South Africa's Legacy". Keith Wilson (2001) wrote a six page reportage titled "Confronting Evil" for *Black & White Photography*. Edgar Allen Beem (2002) reviewed *Truth & Lies* for *PDN*.

[66] According to the statement released by the Amnesty Committee on 4 August 1997, "[Mxenge] had been disembowelled; his throat had been cut and his ears had been practically cut off. His body was found to have 45 lacerations and stab wounds".

impression that he feels trapped by the camera, with nowhere to hide, Coetzee holds his gun close to his face as if he intends to aim it at us at any moment, transfixing the viewer with his unflinching fierce stare and offensive stance. The severe scrutiny of the large-format camera, coupled with the intensity of the straight-to-camera pose — ironically reminiscent of a police mug shot — produces a final result that is disturbing in both its sharpness and proximity. The detail of the facial features, most notably the texture of the skin, the flaring nostrils, the eyebrows knitted together into a straight line, the tight-lipped mouth and the threatening and invasive stare are too much to take in, tempting me to recoil in a defensive gesture. Upon recovering from this first impulse, I continue studying the face and the eyes that look out at me, and I cannot help thinking that if evil had a face, this would be it.

As I return to this photograph again and again I am struck by the visceral reaction it produces in me. A disturbing question comes to mind. What is it in Dirk Coetzee's pose that triggers feelings of anger, repulsion and fear instead of the compassionate gaze I believed I was capable of? Archbishop Tutu and Fikile Mlotshwa's expressions of pain and surrender to both the photographer and the viewer's gaze evoke, quite spontaneously, a compassionate gaze, but Dirk Coetzee's aggressive stance intimidates me. I become aware of a radical transformation — a hardening and rejection — in my gaze. What kind of man, I ask myself, responds by holding up a gun when faced with a photographer's camera? Does it take so little to intimidate him? Can he only look at people through the barrel of a gun? The gun, a signifier of violence, encodes Dirk Coetzee as a perpetrator, a man capable of indescribable cruelty, one who would not hesitate to aim, shoot and kill were he to feel threatened. If he had wanted to be seen as someone other than a murderer, how might he have chosen to represent himself? Was I looking for some presence of remorse, of anguish, of pain, of a conscience, a trace of humanity? Yes.

This photograph invokes the ambivalence we find in Levinas's thinking, most notably the tension between the temptation to respond to man's inhumanity to his fellow man with intolerance and contempt and the ethical imperative that demands identification with the Other's capacity for evil — a recognition that the line that separates good from evil, right from wrong, or "us" from "them" can, at times, be almost imperceptible, prompting us to admit that perhaps "they" are not that evil and "we" are not that good. This inner wrestling with emotions might lead us to consider the mental, social and cultural processes that produce such immediate and unequivocal disdain for those we judge as having no moral compass.

Judith Butler (2009) analyses this type of response by distinguishing between those lives, the valuable lives which we would consider worth mourning, were they to be lost, and those whose death we would respond to with indifference, simply because they do not touch us. She puts it in these terms: "An ungrievable life is one that cannot be mourned because it has never lived, that is, it has never counted as a life at all" (38). Butler and Levinas argue cogently (taking us back to the philosophy of *ubuntu*) that the only way to counter indifference is to cultivate an ethical responsibility for others, even (or especially) "those we do not know,… those who seem to test our sense of belonging or to defy available norms of likeness" (36). Ultimately, in accepting responsibility for others, I am recognising that "the subject that I am is bound to the subject I am not, that we each have the power to destroy and be destroyed, and that we are bound to one another in this power and in this precariousness" (Butler, 2009:43).

Notwithstanding the appeal of Butler's argument, I would like to return for a moment to the interpretive process occasioned by the frame of the photograph, which encourages one type of affective response and discourages another. The perspective, the angle, and particularly the pose, favour rather than discourage the thought that this life is a threat to other lives. Hence, it is undeserving of recognition of its worth, much less of its interconnectedness with the lives of others. This interpretation is compounded by the knowledge we already bring with us; by our individual subjectivity, worldview and personal experience; by the social, cultural and intellectual matrices upon which we draw when we engage with a particular photograph. The encounter with a photograph — especially one that acts upon the affect — instigates, in a first moment, a primary affective response. A deeper analysis will invariably rely on what we already know and, importantly, raise questions about what we do not know. The intellect responds to the visual information inside the frame, but its restless and persistent nature thrives on more than one layer of meaning, constantly craving ancillary information that might open up new interpretive avenues and fields of perception.

During their amnesty hearings in November 1996 and in January 1997 Dirk Coetzee[67], David Tshikalange and Butana Almond Nofomela confessed to the murder of Griffiths

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[67] In 1989 Dirk Coetzee, who had been dismissed from the South African Security Police, gave an exclusive interview to Max du Preez and Jacques Pauw, journalist and editor respectively of the struggling independent anti-apartheid newspaper *Vrye Weekblad*, in which he revealed the existence of death squads within the South African police and disclosed the activities of the Vlakplaas unit. The publication of his story lead to an exposé of apartheid's violent ideology and ultimately resulted in the newspaper's forced closure.

Mxenge for which they were subsequently charged and convicted during a trial in Durban. However, in August 1997 they were granted amnesty by the TRC since the Committee found that, according to a statement released on that date,

> [The applicants] did what they did because they regarded it as their duty as policemen who were engaged in the struggle against the ANC and other liberation movements … they relied on their superiors to have accurately and fairly considered the question as to whether the assassination was necessary or whether other steps could have been taken.

The caption accompanying Dirk Coetzee's photograph in the *New York Times Magazine* reportage identifies the subject, providing information about his role in the murder of Griffiths Mxenge and transcribing a statement produced during his amnesty hearing in November 1996 in which he admits: "I will have to live with my conscience for the rest of my life and with the fact that I killed innocent people … In all honesty I don't expect the Mxenge family to forgive me" (quoted in Gevisser, 1997:32). Mhleli Mxenge, who is known to have opposed Coetzee's application for amnesty and levelled stringent criticism at the amnesty proceedings, is also quoted in the same caption: "The system is so completely in the interests of the perpetrators that it denies the victims their rights to justice … They say offering amnesty helps the truth come out. But I don't believe it, you want the next thing — you want justice!"

Dirk Coetzee disclosed the truth not only about Griffiths Mxenge's brutal murder but also about how the bodies of victims were disposed of at Vlakplaas. During his amnesty hearing on 7 November 1996 (Case n° 0063/96)[68], when questioned about the murder of Sizwe Khondile, Coetzee testified matter-of-factly:

> Now drops were administered to Sizwe Khondile in a drink whilst we were sitting around drinking ourselves … He eventually fell over backwards … [O]ne of Major Archie Flemington's men … took a Makaroff pistol with a silencer on, and whilst he was lying — Mr Khondile was lying on his back, shot him on top of the head … The four junior non-commissioned officers … each grabbed a hand and a foot, put it onto the pyre of tyre and wood, poured petrol on it, and set it alight. Now, of course during — the burning of a body to ashes takes about seven hours. It is — and whilst that happened we were drinking and even having a *braai*[69] next to the fire … And a body takes about seven hours to burn to ashes completely, and the chunks of meat,

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[68] Coetzee's testimony was the focus of Episode 27 of *Special Report*, Max du Preez's television programme on the TRC, which was aired on 10 November 1996. This episode, along with another 83 episodes of *Special Report*, can be accessed at the Yale Law School Lilian Goldman Library website.

[69] *Braai* is the Afrikaans word for barbecue.

especially the buttocks and the upper part of the legs, had to be turned frequently during the night to make sure that everything burned to ashes. And the next morning, after raking through the rubble to make sure that there was no big pieces of meat or bone left at all, we departed and we all went our own way.

Coetzee's callous indifference, the extreme clarity and graphic detail of his detached testimony, provides some insight into the psyche of a cold-blooded murderer, evoking Hannah Arendt's (1977:252) analysis of Eichman[70]: "It was as though in those last minutes he was summing up the lesson that this long course in human wickedness had taught us — the lesson of the fearsome, word-and-thought — defying *banality of evil*" (emphasis in the original). We might recognise in Coetzee the same "diligence" in carrying out his orders that Arendt recognised in Eichman, but we might have difficulty in affirming, as she did, that "He *merely*, to put the matter colloquially, *never realized what he was doing*" (emphasis in the original) (282). As a witness to Eichman's trial, Arendt, for whom the *meaning of evil* had no immediate or definite answers, could only understand the extent of his evil if it were attributed to blind loyalty and "sheer thoughtlessness", a failure or absence of the faculties of sound thinking and judgement. Arendt concluded that Eichman must have failed to consider the effects of his deeds and that he was incapable of exercising the kind of judgement that would have made his victims' suffering tangible for him. The same might not be said of Dirk Coetzee who seemed at all times very conscious that the orders he had carried out resulted in deeds of incalculable evil.

This raises the question of how one faces — and photographs — another human being who is the epitome of evil. The victim's condition — his/her story of grief and loss, specific circumstances and bereavement — elicits, quite naturally, an empathic or compassionate response, but how does one engage with a perpetrator whose deeds of unspeakable violence triggers a visceral reaction? How can victim and perpetrator be approached with the same ethic? In a personal interview, Jillian Edelstein reflected on the importance of retaining objectivity, stating,

> I knew when I started taking pictures there was that temptation to photograph with
> wide angles … you can do that with a camera, but I just stood eyeball to eyeball and I

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[70] Karl Adolf Eichman was head of the Department for Jewish Affairs in the Gestapo from 1941 to 1945, and was the chief architect and executioner of Hitler's genocidal "final solution" for the "Jewish problem", resulting in the deportation of three million Jews to extermination camps. At the end of the war, Eichman was arrested and confined to an American internment camp but escaped. Israeli Mossad agents captured him in Argentina where he had been living for ten years. In 1960 Eichman stood trial in Jerusalem, was sentenced to death and executed in 1963.

gave everybody the same frame and the same rules. I put my large format camera on a tripod and I was behind it. That was what they would be engaging with. I mean, of course I was there and there was an influence, but I would give everybody the same kind of dignity and I think that is what happened.

The photographer's ethic, then, begins with her responsibility to the photographed subject and ultimately to the viewer. In Edelstein's words,

When I'm photographing, the feelings, the emotions, are kind of palpable, but I keep them slightly distanced so that I can actually focus on trying to capture something that is meaningful to that person, without being threatening, and meaningful to me, and meaningful to the person who is going to view it in the final analysis.

However, as much as Edelstein remains conscious of her responsibility, and therefore focused and objective during the shoot, the diary entry accompanying Dirk Coetzee's photograph in the book suggests that Edelstein needed to write down her feelings and thoughts to purge herself of the contact with someone whose deeds go beyond the limits of human ability — or willingness — to grasp the enormity of their inhumanness. The diary entry describes the experience of coming face-to-face with the perpetrator and — as if to orient herself — building a psychological profile of this man which would enable her to accurately capture "something that is meaningful" about his character. Dated 26 February 1997, the entry reads,

I follow Dirk Coetzee's detailed instructions down jacaranda-lined Isipingo Street. For a few short weeks every year, this dull brown town is turned purple by a mass of exquisite blossom. My first impression is of how heavily Coetzee has incarcerated himself. His Rotweilers are snarling, and the barbed wire around the metal gates glistens in the sunshine. Tea is served in china cups on a floral tray. So civilized, I think, holding my cup and saucer. I notice that wherever Coetzee goes, the leather purse which hangs off his wrist like a little handbag goes with him. 'It contains my gun', he informs me. 'I take it everywhere, even when I go to the toilet' (Edelstein, 2001:110).

We may infer from this account that during the photographic act the ethical relation of responsibility takes precedence over the photographer's personal feelings towards the subject. Photographer and photographed subject enter a mutual agreement, a relation of exchange that stems from what Ariella Azoulay (2008) has termed "the civil contract of photography". Azoulay addresses the roles of the photographer, the photographed person and the viewer/spectator, separately and in conjunction with each other, drawing on the social contract theory to develop the concept of "the

civil contract of photography" within the framework of the political and social theory on citizenship and civil society. The author bases her discussion on an understanding of citizenship as "not merely a status, a good, or a piece of private property possessed by the citizen, but rather a tool of struggle or an obligation to others to struggle against injuries inflicted on those others, citizens and noncitizens[71] alike" (14).

Central to the concept of citizenship endorsed by Azoulay are the notions of political rights and entitlements on the one hand, and social obligations and responsibilities on the other. Equally important are the power relations governing questions of inclusion and exclusion in the polity, of visibility and invisibility. What is at stake in the project of "the civil contract of photography" is the role of photography in giving visibility to dispossessed people, thereby rehabilitating the citizenship of those who have been stripped of it and opening up possibilities for political action. Crucially, the Other is offered a place — as opposed to the no place within which he/she was made to (non)exist politically and geographically, being progressively and systematically dehumanised and rendered invisible.

From this viewpoint, photography equates with a global politics of visibility where a citizenry without sovereignty and without borders gains expression. In the citizenry of photography each participant in the photographic encounter is held accountable, since what Azoulay calls "this civil political space" binds the participants in a political relationship which extends beyond the photographic event, and certainly beyond national boundaries and language. The viewer, then, has the civic responsibility — the obligation — of *seeing responsibly*, that is, of adopting an active and/or interventionist role which "requires more than just identifying what is shown in the photograph" (14). As she points out, "Not everyone who looks effectively sees. Seeing requires special intention, which is manifested by a certain responsibility on the part of an addressee toward what is in fact seen" (196). More than the *attention* required of the viewer, the *intention* in photographic seeing is what transforms detached spectatorship into an ethics of viewing.

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[71] Azoulay (2008:32) stresses three dimensions in the characterisation of noncitizens. Noncitizens are members at the margins of a community to "whom only a limited number of rights and obligations apply". Ultimately, a noncitizen is "someone who cannot participate in the political game" nor is he or she "entitled to the protection of the sovereign". Fitting this description are, Azoulay contends, women in Western societies, as well as the Palestinian residents of the territories occupied by Israel. These are "flawed" or "impaired" citizens, but the latter are more than that. They are "on the verge of a catastrophe" since the sovereign state on whose territory they live denies them citizenship status and subjects them to perpetual emergency measures.

Of the photographed person, Azoulay expects the type of participation and/or intervention afforded to those who are involved in the performance of citizenship. The photographed subjects are expected to find ways to express their citizenship within the photographic arena (a civil space energised by a complex of relations), challenging, if need be, both the photographer's and the viewer's gaze and demanding a response that measures up to the accord established between photographer, photographed subject and spectator. Subjects in the photographs selected by Azoulay recognise the potential of photographic testimony. A Palestinian woman displays the scars left by Israeli rubber bullets on her legs to the photographer, who, as Azoulay puts it, "is not the final addressee of the photograph itself or its 'true' addressee [but] is, rather, the addressee's proxy" (390). Clearly aware of the meaning of the photographer's presence, a crowd of angry men lean over a dead man in an open casket, stretching their hands in a V-sign. The photographic space is used, in these instances, as a tool of insurgency and resistance, to frame an appeal or address that will unsettle the viewer and engender moral outrage at the injustices meted out to fellow human beings.

In Azoulay's assessment of the photographer's role, there is a tension or undercurrent which is not present in her analysis of either the spectator's or the photographed subject's positioning within what she calls "the community of photography" or "the citizenry of photography" (97). Azoulay alludes to a measure of violence implicit firstly in the "instrumentalization of the photographed person in order to produce an image of him" (99), and secondly in the "appropriation of the photographed person's rights" (105) once the photograph has been taken. *In extremis*, the author is partial to the analogy proposed by Michal Heiman, an Israeli artist, between the photographic event and rape. The photograph is depicted "as an invasion, as a photograph illicitly captured by use of force, given that even if the [subjects] found themselves consenting, the conditions in which this consent was obtained are such that their civilian autonomy has been breeched, and even consent is a form of coercion" (351).

Azoulay's thesis has antecedents in Susan Sontag's (1977) discussion of the predatory nature of photography in her essay "In Plato's Cave". Sontag argues that "to photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed", even though, she continues, "the camera doesn´t rape, or even possess, though it may presume, intrude, trespass, distort, exploit, and, at the farthest reach of metaphor, assassinate — all activities that, unlike the sexual push and shove, can be conducted from a distance,

and with some detachment" (13). Critical theory in photography (particularly from the perspective of feminist studies) has taken this relationship of power, domination and subjection further. It has explored — and exploited — the analogy between the photographic act and the sexual act by advancing the metaphor of the camera as a weapon of phallic power, a tool of voyeurism and sadism that disempowers those before its gaze. The (male) photographer and/or spectator is likened to a *voyeur* whose pleasure stems from the act of gazing at the object on display (women).

Recent literature has continued to critique the violent nature of some types of photography — not only because they have emerged from scenes of war, physical violence, human degradation and subjugation, but also because of the way the photographer has appropriated or instrumentalised the suffering other, and the way photographs have been disseminated and consumed. In her essay "Torture and the Ethics of Photography: Thinking with Sontag", Judith Butler (2009:81-82) draws on Sontag's thought, but produces her own insights about both the photographer's and the viewer's unethical engagement with the photographed tortures of Abu Ghraib, posing the disturbing question: "Was the taking of the photo a way to participate in the event and, if so, in what way?" She reflects, "It would seem that the photos were taken as records, producing, as the *Guardian* put it, a pornography of the event", and concludes, "The problem, of course, is that the US soldiers seek to externalize this truth by coercing others to perform the acts, but the witnesses, the photographers, and those who orchestrate the scene of torture are all party to the pleasure" (90).

This discussion about the photographer's conduct, most notably about his/her role in inciting certain behaviour "*for* the camera" (and ultimately about how images of suffering are rendered pornographic by their production and consumption) was recently taken up again when the World Press Photo of the Year 2009 published a photo essay by an Associated Press photographer, Farah Abdl Warsameh, entitled "Stoned to Death, Somalia, 13 December". The four images show, in sequence, how a man was first buried up to his neck in earth, then stoned by a group of men whose faces were concealed by headscarves, then dragged out of the soil and finally stoned again until his body was left covered in blood, lifeless. Sean O'Hagan (2010) writing for the *Guardian* observes,

> [T]he photographer did not collaborate with the killers, though he almost certainly
> gained permission from someone to shoot the stoning. He also shot every stage of the

killing in all its protracted and torturous barbarity. What it takes to do that, and at what personal cost, only he can say.

It is undeniable that some genres, or perhaps some photographic practices, are morally questionable and exploit violence and dehumanise their subjects. In his analysis of portraiture, Paul Ardenne (2004:5) considers that to be photographed is to be taken hostage by the photographic image; to be imprisoned in the film frame and become hostage to the photographer's purpose. I agree that some *photographies* are violent and do not take issue with either Sontag or Butler, or Azoulay on this level. However, I insist that there *is* another type of photographic practice, illustrated by Edelstein's ethical approach to her subjects, which employs a different kind of visual language. This practice sets up a distinct space for the photographed subject to express a certain kind of agency, and for the viewer to exercise an ethical responsiveness.

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag (2003:35) discusses the ethics of viewing, arguing that "The photographer's intentions do not determine the meaning of the photograph, which will have its own career, blown by the whims and loyalties of the diverse communities that have use for it". Sontag proposes an ethics of viewing images of suffering, in particular, premised on the understanding that "Perhaps the only people with the right to look at images of suffering of this extreme order are those who could do something to alleviate it ... or those who could learn from it. The rest of us are voyeurs" (37-38). In a similar vein, Azoulay's conceptualisation of the "civil contract of photography" pivots on an ethical spectatorship. But although she envisages a framework of partnership and solidarity underpinning the civic duty of the spectator towards the photographed person, she discards the possibility of "'empathy', 'shame', 'pity', or 'compassion' as organizers of [the spectator's] gaze" (17).

In contrast to this proposition, an ethics of viewing framed by Levinas and Nussbaum's critical thinking champions (as the reading of Edelstein's photograph of Archbishop Tutu suggests) a radically different gaze. The compassionate gaze, in this instance, shifts the emphasis away from an intersubjective relation centred primarily on the political act of recognising and potentiating the other's citizenship within the civil political space of photography (proposed by Azoulay's model of ethical spectatorship), to one geared by a continuum of cognition and emotion. The value of a Levinasian/Nussbaumian ethical conception is that it prioritises the encounter with

the human other and, most importantly, leverages this encounter on the understanding of one's humanity through the humanity of others.

I applaud Azoulay's gesture (which converges with that of Edelstein) in investing photography with a power of mediation in violent and confrontational relations, and most notably in highlighting photography as a visual advocacy tool for the disempowered. The civil contract as the organiser of the photographic encounter, proposed in her theoretical model, is successful in resolving questions about the legitimacy of both the photographer and the photographed subject in socio-political spaces dominated by violence and injustice. Its great merit is that it disrupts the order of political authority and establishes a type of civility that invests subjects with rights, enabling non-citizens to make claims on citizens. However, I differ with Azoulay's formulation of, on the one hand, the photographer as an opportunist, a manipulative and greedy exploiter of people's frailties, bereavement and gullibility, and of the photographed subject as a passive character in a plot over which he/she has no control, "a ghost in whose name photographs are taken, on whose behalf photographs are looked at, and for whose sake they are distributed" (352).

I am suggesting another set of readings, in opposition to Azoulay's, which focus firstly on the photographer's intent to cast the subjects as dignified individuals rather than as victims, and secondly on the photographed subject's capacity to have control over the outcome of the photographic encounter. I argue that human capacity for action enables the photographed person to face the camera not as an object but as an agent, taking his/her rightful place as a citizen within the civil space of photography. Hence, the politicisation of the photographic encounter frames the photographed subjects as political beings who are capable of taking initiative and setting something in motion (Arendt, 1998). The photographed person's choices about how he/she wants both to address the viewer and (re)present him/herself sets into motion an ethics in photography.

Jillian Edelstein's photograph of Joyce Mtimkulu (Fig.10) resonates strongly with this proposition. Centred in the frame against a white background, an elderly black woman in a headscarf faces the camera with vicious determination, holding up in her right hand what seems to be a clod of earth. Far exceeding the power of words, profoundly disconcerting and inviting thoughtful scrutiny, the black- and-white close-up creates immediacy and authority by insisting on the subject's expression. There is a deliberateness, and at the same time a disquietude, about the photograph that is perhaps its most intriguing aspect in that it reveals so much and yet keeps so much to

itself, showing so much about how the subject wants to be seen, and yet so little about what is going on in her mind. The force of personality alone conveys the character of the person. While some images do not provoke the desire to know more than what is revealed, the contempt and contained anger in the woman's expression, perceived in the furrowed brow, the tightly clenched lips, and the intent but sad and tired look, prompt the projection of the viewer's imaginative consciousness into the subject. The portrait epitomises the resilience and dignity of the victim, yet at the same time there is a profound sense of pain and suffering. The particular nuance and power of the photograph resides precisely in its ambiguity, in the play between what is revealed and what is concealed.

The subject's nondescript dark sweater isolates both her face and the clump held up close to it, excluding everything else except that. The floral print in the headscarf momentarily attenuates the underlying tension in the photograph, but what is most intriguing, what draws us in, is what the subject is holding up. Mirroring the proceedings in a court of law, the subject adopts the stance of a witness who takes the stand and, sworn under oath, holds up an exhibit while giving evidence. The gesture is perhaps an attempt to make visible that which language could never fully describe, transmitting a sense of the unutterable, the inconceivable, thereby provoking an immediately visceral response in the viewer. It is the visual translation of silence that shrouds this photograph in discomfort. But without further explanation we can only assume that the harshness and tension in her expression is directly related to what she is clasping. The meaning of the gesture is made clear only with the aid of the accompanying text.

Siphiwo Mtimkulu was a twenty-one year old student activist from Port Elizabeth who was arrested, detained for six months, interrogated, tortured and fed rat poison. After his release, Siphiwo's hair fell out and he was confined to a wheelchair. In 1982, three policemen, Gideon Nieuwoudt, Gerrit Erasmus and Nic van Rensburg, kidnapped Siphiwo and his friend Topsy Madaka, and interrogated and shot them in the back of the head. The bodies were then burnt on a wood pyre and the bones tossed into the Fish River. Siphiwo's family never learnt what had happened to him until Gideon Niewoudt (Fig.11) testified before the Amnesty Committee[72].

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[72] Gideon Nieuwoudt applied for amnesty and testified before the Amnesty Committee (AC) on 25 September 1997. The transcript of Nieuwoudt's amnesty hearing in the case of Topsy Madaka and Siphiwo Mtimkulu may be accessed at the official Truth and Reconciliation Commission website at http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/amntrans/pe/4madaka.htm .

What impacted on Ignatieff (2001a:19) was that Joyce Mtimkulu was "a formidable woman … She did not weep, she just listened, with a kind of ferocious, furious attention". Suspecting the truth, but deprived of it for so long, Joyce Mtimkulu[73] now wanted official, public recognition of her son's murder. During the TRC hearings one of the perpetrators, Gideon Niewoudt, approached the Mtimkulu family in their home to ask for their forgiveness, but was attacked by Siphiwo's son, who threw a brick (or flowerpot) at him. The family's anger, hurt and pain was still too raw, mistrust had been borne for far too long to suddenly result in forgiveness, especially since it seemed to the family that the whole truth had not been revealed, nor had the perpetrators demonstrated genuine remorse. The explanation provided in the text is brutal in its effect. Edelstein (2001:128) writes,

> Joyce kept a chunk of Siphiwo's hair, which fell out … She refused to believe the accused men when they said they had drugged her son before killing him. She felt that they would never have spared him the terror of knowing that he was about to die.

The knowledge that Joyce Mtimkulu is holding a fistful of her son's hair – kept for twenty years – affords a compassionate understanding of why the dignity and strength in this mother's suffering can be seen as a powerful symbol of all the women whose relatives were tortured and killed. In Miller's (2005:42) words, "violence done to children may be inscribed on the bodies and minds of their mothers". The photograph's meaning and impact, its emotional arrest, results largely from the juxtaposition of words and image, and from the knowledge of the reality that produced it, the flow from which it was taken.

Contrary to the experience of viewing the photographs of Archbishop Tutu discussed earlier, the viewer of this photograph needs words to help stabilise the photograph's meaning by connecting the unimaginable to the imagined. The accompanying text is instrumental in producing a concrete and grounded justification of the photographed subject's gesture, illustrating Arendt's (1998:179) view that

> Speechless action would no longer be action because there would no longer be an actor, and the actor, the doer of deeds is possible only if he is at the same time the speaker of words. The action he begins is humanly disclosed by the word, and though his deed can be perceived in its brute physical appearance without verbal

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[73] Joyce Mtimkulu testified before the Human Rights Violations Committee (HRV) on 26 January 1996. The transcript of the hearing may be accessed at the official Truth and Reconciliation Commission website at
http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/hrvpe2/mtimkhul.htm.

accompaniment, it becomes relevant only through the spoken word in which he identifies himself as the actor...

Understood together, image and text anchor the testimonial weight of the photograph. What seemed to be a clod of earth held before our eyes is now perceived as the undeniable evidence of a murder, validated by its exhibition in the public arena. Confidence is transmitted about the accuracy, authenticity and verisimilitude of what is depicted, conflating the truth-value and symbolic force of the photograph. Its authority stems from three sources. The first is lodged in the photographed subject's conscious negotiated positioning within the civil space of photography which harks back to Barthes's reflection about the agency of the photographed subject. In Barthes's (2000:10) often cited words, "Now once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of 'posing', I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image. This transformation is an active one". In a similar way, Joyce Mtimkulu designates herself — or, to use Azoulay's formulation, constitutes her citizenship — within the civil space of photography.

Secondly, from the perspective of form and meaning in portraiture, the extreme simplicity and directness of Edelstein's compositions — which leave no room for artifice — contribute simultaneously to its impact and to the empowerment of the subject. Most notably, the way the frame is set tight around the subject's face excludes any signifying context, guiding the viewer's attention to her gaze and countenance. The subject does not look away to the right or left, up or down, not even slightly. She looks directly at the camera and, by implication, at us, transfixing us with the harshness of her gaze. The camera position places us face-to-face on a level with the subject, giving the impression of physical — and social — proximity.

Thirdly, signification arises from the correlation of image and text. If viewed in the context of the historically specific circumstances generated by the TRC agenda and proceedings, this correlation propels the process of rewriting the self, "a process by which one's past and indeed oneself is figured anew through interpretation", as Freeman (1993:3) proposes. As both the introduction to this thesis and this chapter have suggested, central to the project of the TRC was the mediation of memory and trauma through testimony. Scholars have been unequivocal in stressing that the conditions created for black South Africans (who were considered "noncitizens" during the apartheid regime) to relay their personal stories in the public realm have both historical and political purchase.

Explained from the perspective of narrative theory, storytelling has the social value of enabling individuals to reconstruct the meaning and significance of past experience. For Jackson (2002:15), "To reconstitute events in a story is no longer to live those events in passivity, but to actively rework them, both in dialogue with others and within one's own imagination". The deployment of narrative as the matrix upon which both a sequence of events could be placed in time and space and a plurality of stories could intermesh to facilitate another understanding of the past allowed individuals to develop a sense of themselves as subjects and to perceive their stories as "something that endures and remains across that which passes and flows away" (Ricoeur, 1991:22).

Ricoeur's (1991:26) treatment of narrative focuses on how narrative acts upon the reader and how the reader acts upon it. He argues that "the process of composition, of configuration, is not completed in the text but in the reader and, under this condition, makes possible the reconfiguration of life by narrative". To transpose Ricoeur's theory to the workings of the TRC in South Africa, the experience of narrating, and/or reading into narratives opened before the several agents in the process a horizon of affective responses and interpretational possibilities capable of transfiguring social exchange and altering intersubjective relations. Within the fabric of the TRC structure was the way in which, to take Ricoeur's cue (1991:30) once again, "the story of a life [grew] out of stories that [had] not been recounted and that [had] been repressed in the direction of actual stories which the subject could take charge of and consider to be constitutive of his *personal identity*" (emphasis in the original). The multiplicity of the lived stories, shared across what de Kok (1998:62) terms, "the dialectic between language and the grieving mind", provided the locus for individuals to reinvent themselves – to (re)negotiate their identity – as they dealt with trauma, suffering and loss.

The import of Edelstein's work is that it interweaves image and text in its narrative structure to capture the dimension of trauma, suffering and loss to which Ingrid de Kok alludes in her essay. Implicit in the narrative structure of *Truth & Lies* is the juxtaposition of the representations of victims and perpetrators inscribed within the context of their (hi)stories. Connections and crossovers between victims and perpetrators and their individual stories traverse the project, suggesting the complex and layered nature of the subject of truth, forgiveness and reconciliation. Salient among these representations and stories are those of Joyce Mtimkulu and Gideon Nieuwoudt.

The photograph of Joyce Mtimkulu is unique in the way it activates the imagination to evoke the unimaginable. Indeed, to engage with its diegesis is to enter a site of mourning and feel that mother's anger, bitterness and sense of loss. The image is rendered all the more poignant when viewed in dialogue with the representation of Gideon Nieuwoudt (Fig.11), the man who was involved in the brutal killing and disposal of her son's body. This man on a different occasion claimed remorse for his deeds and requested to see the Mtimkulu family in their home to apologise and ask for their forgiveness. Here he (re) presents himself with nonchalance[74]. With one hand in his trouser pocket and the other holding a lit cigarette, the subject faces the camera confidently. From his relaxed expression, denoting a glimmer of a smile, the subject gives the impression of being completely at ease. Standing sideways, with his back to Nieuwoudt, another man, with his arms folded across his chest, turns his head to look at the camera. Were it not for the gun in the holster strapped around his waist, we could easily assume that the two men are friends. And, in fact, they might very well be friends. Edelstein's (2001:56) diary entry, dated 31 March 1988, reads:

> My son Gabriel and my friend Laura have come to visit me at the amnesty hearings in Cape Town. They find me downstairs photographing Gideon Nieuwoudt, the applicant and perpetrator. He asks me whether I would like to join him and his witness protector for a drink tonight in a bar in Belville (the conservative northern suburbs of Cape Town). I say I can't.

These are *Stories from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa*, as the subtitle to Edelstein's *Truth & Lies* aptly indicates. These are the stories that tell us of the tragedy of the human condition. They are expressions of trauma and loss which compel us to contemplate how past deeds reverberate in the present, fracturing the very experience of time. As Caruth (1995:9) argues, "[T]he impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time". The elegiac tone of Edelstein's work places us in a site of memorialisation. Contemplated with an ethics of viewing, *Truth & Lies* becomes a memorial space which addresses how victims and perpetrators of apartheid, along with their

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[74] Nieuwoudt's visit to the Mtimkulu family was documented in a film, directed by Mark Kaplan, titled *Where Truth Lies* (1998). The meeting between Nieuwoudt and Siphiwo's parents, alongside interviews with Joyce Mtimkulu and Gideon Niewoudt, and the reconstruction of scenes of torture based on Siphiwo Mtimkulu's affidavit, is treated in a thirty minute long documentary. Throughout the film Niewoudt's expression is impassive and his words contrived. The Mtimkulus's expression is remarkable: calm, strong and dignified. They reject his apology — it is fifteen years too late.

(hi)stories, should be remembered. Edelstein's work is a stark demonstration that *apartheid* should be remembered, in the words of Felman and Laub's (1992: xiv), "not as an event encapsulated in the past, but as a history which is essentially *not over*, a history … whose consequences are still *evolving* … in today's political, historical, cultural and artistic scene".

Chapter 3

A portrait of the "new" South Africa: Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin's *Mr. Mkhize's portrait & other stories from the new South Africa*

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Constitution has provided the compass that has steadily steered South Africa as a nation away from the dark days of apartheid to a future founded on freedom, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and in which there is hope for even greater realisation of social justice and prosperity for all South Africans.

Nasila Rembe

Clearly, the constitution by itself does not provide jobs, build homes and enable people to walk freely everywhere in the land. Nor does it eliminate inequality and unemployment. But it does create a coherent, functional value-based framework in which all these problems can be dealt with.

Albie Sachs

3.1 Representing the empowered subject a decade into democracy: a cultural-political intervention

In 2004 South Africa celebrated a decade of democracy. This occasion represented an opportunity for reflection on the major transformations that had taken place in the country at the social, political and cultural levels since the first multi-racial elections in 1994. Chief among these was the entrenchment of democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights underpinning *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (2009). Yet, while democracy as a form of government had been an exciting prospect for the new political dispensation, the majority of the population had difficulty grasping such concepts as democracy and citizenship — and, most importantly, how they applied to and improved citizens' lives. Ten years into democracy, the question of how much life in South Africa had changed evoked a

plethora of other issues related to the meaning and practice of democracy, spawning intensive discussion in the academia and across a host of political and civil institutions.

A confluence of factors — ten years of democracy and the government's commitment to a process of transformation at all levels of society — provided social actors and institutions with the opportunity to identify the key challenges and critical socio-economic issues facing South Africa. Different critical approaches have since then explored the development of democracy in South Africa, with particular emphasis on the democratic government's achievements and shortcomings during the first decade of policy changes and implementation. The resulting surveys and scholarly literature have strengthened the view that contemporary South Africa continues to be defined in terms of tensions, complexities and contradictions, since matters of race, power and material conditions continue to afflict interpersonal relations and hinder socio-economic progress. For many South Africans, whose hopes for a new democratic country were raised during the post-1990 political transition, this is proof of the fact that the electoral promises of a free, democratic, prosperous and peaceful South Africa have not been met. André Brink (2010), the distinguished novelist and professor of English at the University of Cape Town, sees the country's problems in the following terms: "What South Africa needs is to recover the respect and humanity we lost when the country turned away from Mandela's example. We had it all there for a while".

As was the case in pivotal moments in the history of South Africa, in the first decade after the demise of apartheid photography emerged as a powerful tool of critical engagement with the values and socio-economic conditions of a society transitioning from apartheid to democracy. In exploring the "representational role of a body of images" produced at the time, as Hamilton (1997:76) conceptualises it, it is important to consider that visual representation is rooted in interpretation that is underpinned by a framework of concepts, ideology and values. Accordingly, while some South African photographers have developed a common agenda of central themes which express their "world-view" of the major social issues facing the fledgling democracy — including HIV/AIDS, poverty, unemployment, social inequality and crime — others have sought to foreground the shifting visibility of South Africa's black citizens in the post-apartheid era, and to use photographic expression to convey dignity and a sense of agency in subjects who suffered under the political and social oppression of apartheid.

In this respect, Michael Godby (2004:37) has written, "[W]here Struggle photography had tended to be urgent and declamatory, dictating specific readings of the image, photographers emerging from this maelstrom wanted to create a more resonant, complex image of their subjects". Godby comments on an important change in post-apartheid photography with regard not only to photographers' concerns (and, hence, choice of subject matter) but also to style. He stresses, "[P]hotographers seemed to express a changed relationship to time, both in the suggestion of a greater familiarity between photographer and subject and in the sense that it should take the viewer time to discover layers or nuances of meaning in the image" (37).

An array of monographs or collections (too numerous to list) of established and emerging South African photographers have been published, along with other essays and volumes that have accompanied solo or group exhibitions curated in art galleries both in South Africa and abroad. Among these is "After Apartheid: 10 South African Documentary Photographers", a photo essay by Michael Godby (2004) published as a follow-up to the exhibition with the same title that was hosted in 2002 in Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Maputo. A two hundred and eighty page volume edited by George Hallet, and titled *Moving in Time: Images of Life in a Democratic South Africa* (2004), explores the complexities and contradictions of life in South Africa in urban and rural settings through the different approaches to photographic representation, choice of subject and aesthetic of twenty-eight photographers. Interestingly, there is a prevalence of colour images, suggesting that most photographers have moved away from the raw and dramatic quality of the black-and-white aesthetic that characterised the struggle images, and have now adopted colour as the preferred medium for producing visually rich representations that capture and comment on contrasts and contradictions underpinning the post-apartheid social environment.

The representations in the first half of the book seem to have been conceived out of a wish to revive the excitement experienced by most South Africans during, and following, the first democratic elections of 1994. The encoding of images with signifiers of youth, happiness and well-being, most notably energetic children and teenagers, smiling men and women, farm workers and well-dressed businessmen of different races, genders, ethnic and social backgrounds, cumulatively engender a vision of both a vibrant society and an ""inclusive new" South Africa intoxicated by the spirit of transformation. The everyday life of ordinary South Africans as represented in this photography clusters around a set of tropes or themes that include the street; the beach; the café; work, leisure and outdoor activities; love,

friendship and family life; religion and spirituality; tribal rites and customs; arts and culture. The result is a body of images that communicate the celebration of a national spirit, tolerance, renewal and cultural diversity. By contrast, a few images in the second half of the book contest this vision of well-being and harmony. Representations by Mujahid Safodien and Graeme Williams introduce a more pessimistic view of a society still grappling with the scourge of HIV/AIDS and the inequities of the legacy of apartheid: poverty, social and economic inequality, and crime.

These same issues are dealt with in *Then & Now: Eight South African Photographers* (2007), a collection of images put together by Paul Weinberg as both a travelling exhibition[75] and a book. Weinberg (2007:5), a founding member of the collective photo agency Afrapix that played a pivotal role in documenting the struggle against apartheid in the 1980s and early 1990s, envisioned articulating a dialogue "with eight photographers who have worked and continue to work in highly distinctive periods in South African history: before and after its transition to democracy". Consequently, the book's narrative interweaves the photographers' stylistic trajectories from "then" to "now" with the imperatives that drove their work "then" and drive their work "now", creating a bridge between past and present. The result of this effort is a collection of images by David Goldblatt, George Hallet, Eric Miller, Cedric Nunn, Guy Tillim, Paul Weinberg, Graeme Williams and Gisèle Wulfsohn, whose works, produced during and after apartheid, reflect social and ideological concerns. The turbulent run-up to the 1994 democratic elections; post-apartheid social continuities and change regarding poverty, housing, health, education and HIV/AIDS; questions of identity and expressions of spirituality form the subject matter of this body of work.

The photographic project by Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin (2004a) that constitutes the focus of this chapter resonates strongly with the socially-engaged publications I have been discussing. The import of these works lies in their capacity to produce dialectics of continuation and change in the socio-political landscape in South Africa during the first decade of political freedom through the medium of photography. Broomberg and Chanarin expand upon these concerns by using the conceptual and aesthetic sensibilities of portraiture to communicate the humanity they recognise in their subjects and frame possibilities of agency. Their work aims to redefine the power relations between photographer and subject that have

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[75] The project was on exhibit at different venues in South Africa in 2007-2008 and at five venues at Duke University in the USA from March to December 2008, and finally at Brisbane Powerhouse from April to May 2010.

traditionally been explored in the portrait genre — as several contributors to the critical theory of photography have underscored (Homberger, 1992; Clarke, 1997), and to which I will return later in the chapter — equipping the photographic encounter with a different set of expectations on the part of both the photographer and the subject. Approached from a theoretical perspective, Broomberg and Chanarin's project invites engagement with questions of power, which, having been lodged firmly in the history and politics of the country, have formed the staple subject matter of photography in South Africa since the era of colonialism and, subsequently, apartheid.

Michel Foucault's (2002) theory on power offers a point of entry into the discussion (begun in the last chapter and taken up again in this chapter) of the use of photography as a means of empowering the photographed subject, in opposition to well-known views — expressed by Susan Sontag (1977) in particular — that place the subject at the mercy of the photographer's predatory and exploitative intentions, and desire for control. Photographic practices like those of Jillian Edelstein, and Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, invite us to see the photographic encounter from the perspective of the ethical stance and integrity of each of the participants involved in the photographic act.

But before taking the discussion further it is important to conjure up the long history of the exercise of power in South Africa. As previously discussed, socially constructed racial identities underpinning the politics of apartheid not only constituted the cultural blocs on which society was configured, but became the driving force behind practices of power which polarised society and subjected mostly black people to forms of oppression and exploitation in ways that accord with Foucault's (2002) insight into the mechanisms and consequences of practices of power. Foucault's analysis highlights indisputable parallels with the South African reality:

> This form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience of self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to (331).

In response to structures of social and political subjugation of the individual, Foucault underscores the importance of social struggle against forms of domination

(be it ethnic, social or religious); against forms of exploitation; and against subjection and submission. South Africa's history of struggle against apartheid is informed precisely by a social and political praxis centred on individuals' active resistance to all forms of domination, exploitation and subjugation. Crucially, what the struggle against apartheid signified was that, rather than remaining "subject to someone else by control", previously dispossessed individuals (or "noncitizens", as Azoulay (2008) defines them) conquered positions of agency, thereby exercising their capacity to act and effect change. In this sense, rather than passively remaining "products" of social and political structures, subjects became "producers" of social and political change. The meaning of "the subject" as a politically submissive entity is thus reversed, acquiring a new meaning based on his/her capacity to engage in active praxis, as Hannah Arendt (1998) conceives it. As Arendt argues, "The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable" (178).

I wish to import this argument into the discussion about the photographic project at the core of this chapter, departing from the idea of the individual's capacity for action to challenge the position usually adopted in scholarly literature which casts the photographed subject as a passive or subservient individual incapable of resisting the power wielded by the photographer. On the contrary, the photographed subject is here understood as an active participant capable of resisting objectification through the conscious act of self-presentation or, to put it in other words, the construction of the self in front of the camera's lens. The photographer, in turn, plays a crucial role within the politics of representation by committing to an ethical praxis. An association or relation of interdependence is developed between photographer and photographed subject stemming from membership in "the community of photography", as Azoulay (2008:97) conceptualises it. Mary F. Rousseau's (1991:3) explanation of the concept of community crystallises the dynamics of a photographic encounter between members of the community of photography:

> *Community* joins two Latin words which, at first glance, contradict each other: the preposition 'com,' meaning 'with' or 'together,' and thus requiring a multitude of at least two; and 'unus,' the number 'one' with which we begin to count in Latin. A community, it seems is both one and many — a unified multitude … Community is a 'many turned into one without ceasing to be many.' (emphasis in the original)

From this perspective, community binds participants, encouraging them to negotiate their individuality and expectations within photography's civil space so as to achieve a common goal. While I do not discard the view — developed within the framework of cultural studies — that stresses, as Barker (2004:161) words it, "The construction of representation is necessarily a matter of power since any representation involves the selection and organization of signs and meanings", it is worth keeping in mind that, as he adds, "it is the organization of signs according to cultural conventions within a particular context that regulates meaning". Equally significant is the notion that when we look at a photograph, despite the fact that the image resembles the person it depicts, we do not confuse the image with the person itself. We do not believe that he/she exists before us, here and now; rather we see him/her as "represented rather than present", to borrow Robin Durie's (1998:14) formulation[76].

It is unquestionable that the photographer has a set of tools in his armoury — from lighting to choice of angle and composition — that may give him a sense of power. However, the photographic act is about much more than manipulation, the attainment of control or the subjection of an individual to the power of the photographer; otherwise it would translate into a mere exercise in narcissism. The photographic act is, instead, a complex collaborative process, "a moment shared with another person", as Richard Avedon acknowledges in a meditation about portraiture — his "serious work", as he called it (Leo, 1995). In fact, as Vince Leo (1995:10) suggests, "[Avedon] boils the issues of photography down to issues of portraiture in which the politics of the image are writ into the direct experience of one-to-one relationships". What interested Avedon most about this experience was the possibility of discovering something about himself through the process of photographing others. Far from aspiring to capture the character or essence of the subject — a recognizable "truth" about the subject — as most portrait photographers have done, Avedon claims to do something far less ambitious in his portraits. He states bluntly: "I don't think that I've captured the essence of anyone that I've photographed … I think I've photographed what I'm feeling myself and recognize in someone else" (quoted in Leo, 1995:10).

Ultimately, Avedon's understanding of the complexity of photographic interaction is rooted in an awareness of the human and social dimension of the act of representing

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[76] Durie (1998:14) calls this practice a "phenomenology of representation" or "a phenomenology of images", since "it insists from the outset on the *transparency* of images" (emphasis in the original). She continues, "When we view an image, what we see, what we look at, is not the image, but the object depicted by the image, what the image represents". Durie presents a valid case, which this thesis draws on in the interpretation of images.

someone while remaining cognizant of the photographer's subjectivity. As Leo (1995:10) writes, "Based on the unpredictable complexity of photographic interaction, his idea of subjectivity is a complex social metaphor in which his self is inextricably intertwined with the self of his subjects". By the same token, subjectivity underpins the viewer's interpretation and response to a photograph. In Glenn Jordan's (2008:335) words,

> We, the ordinary viewers, invariably seek to read faces — and to create narratives about the lives of those whose expressions we feel we have deciphered. We feel that, by virtue of our status as fellow human beings, we can discern or deduce what emotions, attitudes and experience lie behind — or beneath — photographed facial expressions.

These irreducible aspects of socially engaged photographic practice, most notably the human and social dimension of representations, together with the subjectivity inherent in the experience[77] both of photographing (on the part of the photographer) and interpreting (on the part of the viewer), conflate with the cultural and political intervention at the core of the photographic works discussed in this thesis. This is borne out by Edelstein and Broomberg and Chanarin's objective to render visible subjects who were denied social recognition or citizenship under apartheid laws by virtue of their racial background. Both works aim to honour "the civil space of photography", as previously discussed, by allowing the subject to face the camera with dignity and compose him/herself, thereby consciously constructing a narrative about the self through the pose. In particular, the photographer approaches the subject with the premise that all men and women are worthy of dignity and respect. In such projects the photographer(s) will inevitably be challenged with ethical decisions. Given South Africa's history of repression, the photographer is confronted with the difficulty expressed by Durie (1998:v): "Is it possible to represent the face of the other without doing violence to it?"

In an interview given to Joanna Lehan, curator of "Ecotopia: The Second ICP Triennial of Photography and Video" held at the International Centre of Photography

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[77] The concept of "experience" is used here within the theoretical and methodological perspective of phenomenology, which considers experience primarily in its lived and felt aspects, drawing attention to concrete and corporeal strata of experience. Constituting a central component of experience is "aesthetic experience", as prescribed by the French philosopher Mikel Dufrenne (1973) who, following the Greek tradition of *aisthēsis* or "sense experience", sought to wed feeling and perception to aesthetic experience. Although Dufrenne's thesis of aesthetic experience does not contemplate photography, I am suggesting that the phenomenological treatment of art forms like painting, theatre, dance and music proposed by Dufrenne can be applied to photography.

in New York from September 2006 to January 2007, Broomberg and Chanarin take this concern a bit further when they reflect:

> The process of making portraiture is inevitably rotten. We can easily just replace the role of the photographer with the author in Janet Malcolm's (2004) brilliant analysis of the subject-author relationship in *The Journalist and the Murderer*, in which she argues that 'Every journalist (read photographer) who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible … He is kind of a confidence man preying on people's vanity, ignorance, or loneliness.' The camera wields a strange sense of authority. Over and over again we have seen a sense of naïve trust that subjects seem to feel in the presence of a camera. We are aware of this moral impasse and we try to make our work with this struggle in mind[78].

This consciousness denotes a lucid understanding of a photographic practice that is rooted in the deployment of power. In this case, the photographic encounter is informed largely by the skilful orchestration and manipulation of the photographer — provided that the subject remains a passive participant during the exchange. I suggest that it is precisely this consciousness that motivates Broomberg and Chanarin's fidelity to portraying the dignity of their subjects. It follows that a nonviolent representation of the face/the subject is possible, as we have seen in Edelstein's work, and will see in Broomberg and Chanarin's work. As I have discussed extensively in the Introduction to this thesis, such nonviolent representation emerges when the conventions and specific photographic discourse of the portrait genre framing these photo projects are explored with the intention not of objectifying the subjects, but of creating powerful and meaningful images that privilege both their humanity and agency, thereby extending narratives of empowerment, emancipation, resistance and survival.

The photographers' close scrutiny of the face — the physiognomy and the expression — emphasises, on the one hand, the gaze of the subject and, on the other hand, the viewer's act of looking, encouraging complex and resonant readings of their images. This approach alerts us to the dialogical relationship that exists within the triad of the photographer, the photographed subject and the viewer who, I propose, consciously adopt an active and collaborative role of perceiving/conceiving, self-presenting and experiencing/responding to the stimulus/emotion each element triggers in the other. In this view, the photographic encounter is a multi-layered event strongly oriented by the ethical dimension of the purposive interaction among

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[78] This extract was taken from the transcript of the interview, which was provided to me by Adam Broomberg.

these three actors. Consequently, this approach (previously explored in Chapter 2 of this thesis) attends to an ethics of photographing, an ethics of the way subjects negotiate their presence in front of a camera, and an ethics of looking.

With these points in mind, I wish to draw attention to a frontal tightly framed shot of Mr. Mkhize (Fig.12), the subject who gave name to Broomberg and Chanarin's (2004a) photo project titled *Mr. Mkhize's portrait & other stories from the new South Africa*. The title directs the reader to consider not only the formal aspects of the photographic representation but also its narrative possibilities and socio-political context. Central to the work are the stories and the human experience inscribed in the images and/or told alongside the images. Unconventionally, the photograph appears on the back cover and not inside the book, enabling a strong first — and last — impression of the work. The portrait is infused with meaning by the dramatic depiction of the subject's tough, hard-edged masculine features. This effect is achieved through the use of a plain, decontextualising white background that contrasts starkly with the subject's dark skin, together with the lighting, which casts a shadow across part of his face and torso. The proximity of the photographer and the omission of the surrounding environment simplify the image to one monumental individual. A concern for sharp, clear detail is revealed by the use of focus and light, along with the fine grain and optical resolution of the photograph, which enable a perfect rendition of the details of the subject's face, most notably the skin texture, the pores, the fine wrinkles around the eyes, and the flared nostrils.

The camera position places us face to face with the subject, whose head fills our field of vision. The starkness of the composition focuses our attention on the subject's furrowed brow and direct and disconcerting stare that locks on to our gaze and holds us captive. The subject is alert, tense, aware of his surroundings, emitting an intense and almost uncomfortable presence. It seems that he is looking in on our world and not we on his. The gaze also adds a narrative element to the photograph: the subject seems to be confronting us, questioning us or even perhaps accusing us. The gaze sends an unequivocal message: via the gaze — at times more than via words — we make a statement or defend a position. The gaze is a powerful tool of resistance: through the gaze we command the other, rather than being commanded or dominated by the other. Clearly, as Durie (1988:30) underscores, "Whilst the subject of the photograph 'takes direction' from the photographer … s/he ultimately retains a degree of control in the way s/he is represented".

Fig.12 Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, *Mr. Mkhize*, Alexandra, South Africa, 2004

Other elements give the photograph a visual crispness, most notably the neatly trimmed moustache and greying beard that accentuate his flared nostrils and full unsmiling lips. The stretched ear lobes place him against an ethnic socio-cultural background that evokes ancestral ear-piercing customs of youngsters before puberty to symbolise a child's formal entry into the family, and consequently to the household chores and duties. Aside from this marker of ethnic identity, no other visual cues provide an understanding of either the subject or his circumstances. The forcefulness of the photograph derives from a harshness and stiffness in the pose that unsettles the viewer, prompting questions about the persona and the life he has lived. The artists' statement on the flyleaf both gives the viewer additional information about the subject and serves as an introduction to the work. It reads:

> Mr. Mkhize has been photographed twice before in his life. The first was for his Pass Book, which allowed the apartheid government to control his movements. The second was for his Identity Book, which allowed him to vote in the first democratic elections in 1994. Ten years later, we took his picture for no official reason.

Importantly — and, once again, accentuating the unconventional layout of this publication — instead of opening with the traditional title page, copyright and contents pages, the book goes directly to the heart of the matter. It opens with a carefully constructed biographical note about Mr. Mkhize, which both indicates the rationale for this photographic project and makes a bold statement about the democratisation of photography in South Africa. During the apartheid years, individuals like Mr. Mkhize would be photographed only for official purposes, which included identification and social control of black people by the state. In those circumstances, Mr. Mkhize's photograph, a mug shot used for purposes of rapid identification in an official document called the Pass Book, was inscribed with relations of power, conjuring up practices of surveillance and oppression.

In the context of apartheid, photography was used — to draw on John Tagg's (1993) theory on modes of representation and processes of social regulation — as a convenient tool for the government's strategies of power. More than a standardised image, the mug shot used in the Pass Book was, to borrow Tagg's (1993:76) expression, the "product of the disciplinary method: the body made object … When accumulated, such images amount to a new representation of society". By contrast, in 1994, on the occasion of the first democratic elections in South Africa, the same type of photograph — used in another official document called the Identity Book —

produced a different rhetoric centred on the empowerment of individuals whose human and civil rights had, until then, been denied by an autocratic political regime.

In 2004, Mr Mkhize's representation was published in a photography monograph and displayed at art galleries, gaining yet another type of status — that of art, since, as Greenberg et al. (1996:2) argue, "Exhibitions have become *the* medium through which most art becomes known" (emphasis in the original). We witness, then, to quote Tagg (1993:157) once again, a change in "the processes and procedures which constitute meaning in the photograph, [most notably, in] the social utility of photographs; and the institutional frameworks within which they are produced and consumed". This radical shift in purpose and use of photographic representations implies a shift in emphasis from the "evidential force" of the photograph, as Barthes (2000:89) called it, to its humanising force, which the Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographers — Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, Carl Mydans, Marion Post, Arthur Rothstein, Ben Shahn — learnt to explore in their documentation of the American people during the Great Depression, from 1935 to 1943. As Edward Steichen, writing at the time, remarked,

> [The photographers] found time to produce a series of remarkable human documents that were rendered in pictures … These documents told stories and told them with such simple and blunt directness that they made many a citizen wince … Have a look into the faces of the men and women in these pages. Listen to the story they tell and they will leave you with a feeling of a living experience you won't forget (quoted in Stott, 1973:11).

Bearing these considerations in mind, I argue that the photographic representations comprising Broomberg and Chanarin's body of work are, from the outset, invested with a strong social and political idiom. But they are also enriched with what John Grierson, the British film producer, called "a dramatic language", a form of expression capable not only of informing but, essentially, of conveying emotion, thereby moving the viewer. According to William Stott (1973:12), Grierson considered this power to move as the essence of documentary work, since "[He] believed that emotion, properly felt and understood, *does* engender decent seeing; *is* intelligence"[79] (emphasis in the original).

Broomberg and Chanarin's compilation of eighty-two colour images — fifty-eight portraits and twenty-four landscapes — offers a poignant view of the social problems

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[79] Such a view is expressed by Martha Nussbaum, as has been noted in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

affecting contemporary South Africa. Unemployment, violence, housing, poverty, illegal immigration, HIV/AIDS, education — along with questions of class, ethnic and sexual identity — are some of the issues addressed in this work. The subjects are mostly people on the margins of the democratic process; people who were silenced during apartheid and are still not given a platform to be heard. Yet, the distinctive feature of this work resides in an underlying tension between the indignity of the living conditions of the poor and marginal, and the strength and dignity with which subjects present themselves. This approach engenders another level of experience, in addition to the information conveyed in the photographs, most notably a level of emotion.

3.2 Bakhtin's meditation on dialogue: an interpretive framework for the dialogical engagement in Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic practice

In this chapter I want to continue exploring ethics in post-apartheid photographic practice. I want to extend the discussion about an ethics in photographic practice centred largely on a notion of responsibility to the Other that is instantiated by the "face-to-face" encounter (as represented by Jillian Edelstein's work) to an ethics crafted on a process of exchange and dialogue between the participants in the photographic act and encounter. Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the dialogic constitution of the work of art is a valuable critical tool for considering the interactions underpinning the collaborative encounter between photographer, photographed subject and (ultimately) viewer steering Broomberg and Chanarin's project. I am arguing that their photographic work is produced and shaped in the process of dialogic interaction between photographer and subject, giving rise to "unmediated responsive reactions and dialogic reverberations", to use Baktin's (1986:94) formulation.

By transitioning from an engagement with Emmanuel Levinas's philosophical theory in Chapter 2 to an interpretation of Broomberg and Chanarin's photo-essay supported by Bakhtin's insight into the dialogical nature of artistic creation, I seek to highlight the relevance and application of Levinas's philosophy of otherness and Bakhtin's philosophy of dialogic ethics to a discussion of ethics in photographic practice. I am interested in exploring possible lines of engagement that stage and illuminate an

interpretation of photographic practice rooted in responsive human interrelations. In particular, I am seeking to expand my earlier theoretical analysis by exploring the intersection between ethics and dialogue, the conceptual cornerstones of Levinas and Bakhtin's distinctive philosophies, which emerge as inextricably interwoven when we consider the dialogical dimension of an ethical photographic practice.

As I have discussed in my exploration of Edelstein's material in Chapter 2, Levinas's treatment of the face of the other offers us a way to rethink the ethical relation between photographer and photographed subject, and between viewer and photographed subject. By presenting the face not simply as a physical detail, Levinas locates signification in the addressee's capacity to move beyond the visible. This movement constitutes a radical proposition for the theory of photography, since it compels us to rethink our experience of the photograph, one that is normally considered in terms of visuality. From a Levinasian perspective, what becomes crucial in our experience of the photographed other is not what is graspable by vision but indeed what exceeds our visual perception. This requires a different kind of attentiveness to the other's uniqueness and singularity that, as I have suggested, taps into the affective dimension of the photographic encounter.

Bakhtin's theory of addressivity and response offers us a different set of tools for considering the complex exchange between photographer and subject, photographer and viewer, and subject and viewer as a dynamic, open and ongoing communicative process. Addressivity is, as Bakhtin (1986:99) defines it, "the quality of turning to someone" in anticipation of the other's active response. I am suggesting that the process of authoring a photograph involves, from the perspective of the photographer, addressing the subject while, to borrow once again from Bakhtin, "taking into account possible responsive reactions [from the viewer], for whose sake, in essence, it is actually created" (94). Ultimately, the photograph addresses us and confronts us with our moral obligation to respond, to enter into dialogue with the other with whom we share existence. As Holquist (2002:30) observes, "Sharing existence as an event means among other things that we are — we cannot choose *not* to be — in dialogue, not only with other human beings, but also with the natural and cultural configurations we lump together as 'the world'" (emphasis in the original).

Harking back to the discussion in Chapter 2 about responsibility from a Levinasian perspective, responsibility, in the Bakhtinian sense, equates with the ethical imperative of being answerable; in other words, of formulating responses to the world's (the other's) address, or discourse. I argue that this intricate relation of

addressivity and response inextricably binds the photographer, subject and viewer in a triad of reciprocal obligation and responsibility, and affords the photograph social, political and cultural significance. Fundamental to this formulation is the premise that in this triangulated relationship of interdependence, each participant (or ethical subject) addresses the other and, in turn, responds to — and is responsible for — the other. This principle encapsulates Bakhtin's (1984:287) reflections on the ethical relation with the Other when he writes, "To be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself … I cannot manage without another, I cannot become myself without another; I must find myself in another by finding another in myself (in mutual reflection and mutual acceptance)"[80]. Bakhtin's thoughts on the relation of the self and the other cohere around the idea that, in Danow's (1991:60) words, "the other is formative of the self in the sense that one is not able to know oneself without the interacting presence of the other".

This insight provides the theoretical foundation for the reflection on the exchange between photographer, subject and viewer at the core of this chapter. Central to the discussion are the concepts of dialogue and utterance, which figure prominently in Bakhtin's thought. I relate to these notions mainly as they are developed in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984) and in the essay "The Problem of Speech Genres" published in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1986). Pivotal to Bakhtin's (1984) critique of Dostoevsky's work is the claim that its distinguishing feature and impact is the eminently dialogical character of Dostoevsky's creative process, since for Bakhtin *dialogue* is the single most important constituent of human life. He states:

> dialogic relationships are a much broader phenomenon than mere rejoinders in a dialogue, laid out compositionally in the text; they are an almost universal phenomenon, permeating all human speech and all relationships and manifestations of human life — in general, everything that has meaning and significance. (40)

The main thrust of Bakhtin's thesis is that life has meaning only inasmuch as we interact with others. What enthuses Bakhtin, according to Clark and Holquist (1984), is that the openness of dialogue animating human interaction — its dynamic nature — engenders endless possibilities for structuring thought in terms of a dialogic both/and, rather than in terms of the closed dialectical either/or model characterising Structuralism. This propulsion and human capacity for mental flexibility is, in fact, what defines existence. As Bakhtin (1984:293) stresses:

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[80] Bakhtin's philosophy differs, in this respect, from Levinas's ethical thought, which rests largely on the concept of asymmetrical responsibility. Levinas (1988:172) claims, "There is something more important than my life. And that is the life of the other".

> Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds.

Importantly, dialogue, as Bakhtin conceptualises it, is much more than a conversation between two people. As Clark and Holquist (1984:9) point out, "Dialogue is more comprehensively conceived as the extensive set of conditions that are immediately modelled in any actual exchange between two persons but are not exhausted in such an exchange". In a later interpretation of Bakhtin's thought and work, Holquist (2002:38) puts it succinctly: "A dialogue is composed of an utterance, a reply, and a relation between the two. It is the relation that is most important of the three, for without it the other two would have no meaning".

As I will discuss more extensively later in the chapter, the reason for applying the concept of utterance to the theory and criticism of photography is twofold. First, it offers potential for considering photographs as interpellations that evoke the viewer's active and responsive engagement. Second, it also encourages connections between utterances/photographs in a body of work (since each utterance/photograph may be regarded as a response to preceding utterances/photographs). In this view, the flow or movement of a body of work stems from the interconnection of utterances/photographs, which are filled with echoes from other utterances/photographs. In essence, a photographic work that is modelled as a set of utterances gravitates towards a response, anticipating it, answering it. Thus the conception of the work, and response to it, unfolds through an ongoing flow of communication.

Related to — and feeding on — this idea is the role of dialogue in the photographic encounter. Since dialogue is essential to (but should not be reduced to) verbal interaction, it can, as Eskin (2000:2) notes, "be investigated on various levels, which … exceed the purely linguistic analysis of speech". This idea follows from Bakhtin's development of the concept of *metalinguistics* in response (as scholars have pointed out) to the *langue/parole* formula adopted by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. The limitation of the Saussurean model was that it failed to account for the dynamics of the "word not in a system of language and not in a 'text' excised from dialogic interaction, but precisely within the sphere of dialogic interaction itself, that is, in that sphere where discourse lives an authentic life", as Bakhtin (1984: 202) argues. The living context of language is what fuels Bakhtin's philosophy of language,

which is pervaded by the persistent inquiry into the social and ethical function of dialogue. In his words,

> Dialogue here is not the threshold to action, it is the action itself. It is not a means for revealing, for bringing to the surface the already ready-made character of a person; no, in dialogue a person not only shows himself outwardly, but he becomes for the first time that which he is — and, we repeat, not only for others but for himself as well. To be means to communicate dialogically. When dialogue ends, everything ends (252).

This philosophical understanding is instrumental in Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the dialogic and participatory devices orientating Dostoevsky's creative activity. Two leading features are singled out as the essence of Dostoevsky's ethical stance. The first is the non-objectification of the characters, resulting mainly from the fact that, as Bakhtin (1984:68) puts it, "the author's consciousness does not transform others' consciousnesses (that is, the consciousnesses of the characters) into objects, and does not give them secondhand and finalizing definitions". He stresses, "[O]ne can only *relate to them dialogically*. To think about them means to *talk with them; otherwise they immediately turn to us their objectivised side*: they fall silent, close up, and congeal into finished, objectivised images" (emphasis in the original).

Although Bakhtin's concept of dialogue has been vigorously explored in relation to contemporary artists' approach to dialogical art practices (Kester 2004[81]), I believe that, with the exception of Joanna Lowry's reflection on the nature of the relationship between photographer and subject, its potential for staging and illuminating the role of dialogue in photographic practice has been relatively unexplored. Crucial to Lowry's (2000:13) essay is the idea that "The act of taking the photograph is a communicative act in itself which exposes the social dynamic through which identities (both of the photographer and the subject) are formed". This assessment leads to an important decision with regards to methodology, which Lowry defines in the following terms: "Photographic practices like these which have a clear dialogical constitution seem to be more amenable to analysis as speech acts then they do as semiotic texts" (13). Lowry's methodological proposal offers a point

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[81] Grant Kester outlines socially engaged art practices operating at the intersection of art and cultural activism which aim to engage with communities and audiences beyond the institutional boundaries of galleries and museums. Kester (2004:69) claims that "what is at stake in these projects is not dialogue per se but the extent to which the artist is able to catalyze emancipator insights *through* dialogue" (emphasis in the original). He alludes to the "ethical dimension" of language, inasmuch as dialogue is viewed "not as a tool but as a process of self-transformation" (111).

of departure for a reading of the architectonics[82] of Broomberg and Chanarin's photo-essay rooted in Bakhtin's broad concept of dialogue and theory of the utterance. In particular, I want to extend Holquist's analysis of the tripartite nature of dialogue (mentioned earlier) to the analysis of photographic meaning.

Recourse to the utterance as a conceptual anchor for interpreting photographs yields new insight into Broomberg and Chanarin's project, which, can be viewed, from this perspective, as a complex web of dialogic interrelations between utterances. Crucial to this line of thought is Bakhtin's insight that an utterance is constructed in anticipation of a response. As Bakhtin (1986:71) emphasises, "[an utterance's] beginning is preceded by the responsive utterances of others (or, although it may be silent, others' active responsive understanding, or, finally, a responsive action based on this understanding)". He continues, "Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another … Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related" (91). Similarly, the photo essay can be considered as a carefully constructed articulation of utterances whose meaning(s) emerge from the relation they share with each other.

I take Bakhtin's treatment of the utterance as the overarching frame for a meditation on the specificity of each photograph which, nonetheless, invokes echoes and reverberations of other photographs. More particularly, I want to draw a line of intersection between this strand of analysis and Levinas's ethics of dialogue, which provides a basis for reflecting about the dialogical dimension of the encounter and exchange between photographer, subject and viewers. Levinas (1985:87) argues, "Face and discourse are tied. The face speaks. It speaks, it is in this that it renders possible and begins all discourse". He adds, "[T]he *saying* is the fact that before the face I do not simply remain there contemplating it, I respond to it. The saying is a way of greeting the Other, but to greet the Other is already to answer for him" (emphasis in the original) (88).

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[82] According to Holquist (1990:x), "architectonics" as Bakhtin conceives it, "can be understood as concerned with questions of building, of the way something is put together". Haynes (1995:5) observes that "architectonics is not a strict formal cognitive structure, but is an activity that describes how relationships between self and other, self and object, self and world are structured". I invoke Bakhtin's conceptualisation of architectonics to address two different questions, namely the formal and aesthetic characteristics of a photograph, on the one hand, and, on the other, the relation of an individual photograph to others in the photo-essay.

As I established earlier in the chapter, the face (regarded from a Levinasian perspective) is not, strictly speaking, the anatomical face. Rather, the figure of the face constitutes a means of address or form of engaging a specific mode of ethical-political response. On the other hand, we cannot ignore that the anatomical face is the means through which we represent and reveal ourselves. In photographic portraiture, the physical details of the face comprise the photograph's iconography, inspiring an initial interpretation and conjuring a range of emotions. As Butler (2004) points out, in its most fundamental aspect the face is a condition for humanisation (but also for dehumanisation — we need only think of representations in the media of the faces of Osama bin Laden, Yasser Arafat or Saddam Hussein). At another level of interpretation, Levinas's theorisation of the face offers resources for considering that the Other's face is not reducible to physical traits, compelling us to think beyond the visual cues with which we have been presented, since, as Butler (2004:145) reflects, "For Levinas, the human cannot be captured through representation, and we can see that some loss of the human takes place when it is 'captured' by the image". Therefore, reference to the face here comprehends the two meaning I have just outlined.

What is at stake is that regardless of how we interpret it, the face of the Other renders indifference impossible. Within the context of the photographic encounter, the face urges first the photographer, and then the viewer, to adopt an active stance, to take initiative. In this Other's presence we cannot remain silent; we are summoned to an ethical responsiveness. The *saying* in Levinas's formulation is not to be taken literally. It is not meant as the production of speech, but rather as a command to action, entailing an attitudinal commitment to the Other. When faced with the photographed Other we are invited to exercise an ethics of looking. An ethics of looking stems from the recognition of the humanity of the Other. Harking back to the philosophy of *ubuntu,* the conviction that the Other's humanity is inextricably bound to my humanity yields an ethical responsiveness to the Other's vulnerability that requires opposing and intervening upon injustice where we find it, since as Levinas (1969:294) underscores, "the face presents itself, and demands justice".

In her book titled *Bakhtin and the Visual Arts*, Deborah Haynes (1995) explores Bakhtin's theory of creativity in his early essays on aesthetics — most notably the categories of answerability, outsideness and unfinalizability — assessing the relevance of his ideas as they apply to the critical analysis of works of art. Although Haynes's (1995:131) objects of examination and reflection are painting and sculpture, the question at the core of her argument — "Is the image complete and finalized, or open and unfinalized?" [83] — is extremely pertinent to my enquiry into the interpretation and response elicited by the photographs in Broomberg and Chanarin's project. I suggest that the signification of a photographic work is constantly being negotiated by virtue of the distinct ways in which it is used (in book form and in different exhibitions), consequently engaging viewers in ongoing open dialogue. The unfinalizability of the photographic image results from the fact that photographic meaning is never tied down to a single point of view, but, rather, emerges through the meeting of consciousnesses — the photographer's and the viewer's.

My analysis of Broomberg and Chanarin's work departs from a discussion of the circumstances and approach framing the production of the photographs. Invaluable in my enquiry is recourse to interviews with Adam Broomberg, as well as with the curators of exhibitions of their photographic project in South Africa, London and Amsterdam. I will be looking closely at the documentary film titled Mr. Mkhize's Portrait (2004) produced by the photographers, on commission, for BBC Channel Four. In a personal interview[84] Adam Broomberg dismissed the documentary film as a flawed project, but it provides the viewer a rare opportunity for glancing at the photographers' creative process and the interaction between photographer and photographed subject during the photographic encounter. In this regard, I am particularly interested in reflecting on the eminently dialogical and ethical character of Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic practice.

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[83] The answer to the question, Haynes (1995:141) suggests, is provided by Bakhtin. She claims that in his early texts Bakhtin discussed "the active role of the audience in provisionally completing a work", and observes: "Bakhtin insisted that the creative process and work of art are ultimately unfinalizable" (131). Haynes sees this idea reflected in *Black Square*, one of the paintings she analyses, and concludes that "[by functioning as a window], it implies a first consciousness that creates (the artist), and a second consciousness that recreates through contemplating the completed work (the viewer)" (149).

[84] The interview took place in London on 30 June 2006.

3.3 "We the People": the essential foundation and framework for Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic project

Mr. Mkhize's portrait, together with the collection of photographs published in book form (to which I will return later), was initially intended for a photographic project and exhibition titled "We the People: In the Shade of the Constitution", which was commissioned in 2003 to comprise the "We the People" national information campaign. This campaign was developed within the context of the inauguration of the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg on Human Rights Day, 21 March 2004. Before elaborating on the "We the People" national information campaign and its variants, it is useful to refer to the Constitutional Court, the institution to which the project is intimately tied. Although an extensive discussion about the conception and development of the Constitutional Court falls outside the scope of this thesis, I wish to outline its central organising idea and stress the character, symbolism and significance of the Constitutional Court for South Africa's new democracy[85].

The Constitutional Court was erected on the site of the Old Fort, originally built in 1893 in the developing mining settlement of Johannesburg by the then Boer President Paul Kruger as a symbol of defiance against the British. During the Anglo-Boer war at the turn of the twentieth century, the British took Johannesburg and imprisoned and executed Boer soldiers in the Fort. After the war, the Old Fort was used as a high security jail for white inmates only, but in the first decade of the twentieth century two more prisons were built in the adjacent grounds. The first, the "native" prison, popularly known as Number Four, was built to accommodate black male prisoners only. The second, the Women's Jail, with imposing Victorian style architecture, was intended for white and black women, who were held in separate sections of the prison. A third building, the Awaiting Trial Block, was erected in 1928 to house male black prisoners awaiting trial.

During its lifetime (until it stopped functioning as a prison in 1983), the Old Fort incarcerated opponents of the government of the day of whom Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela are the most cited. During apartheid's most active period of oppression, the prisons became overcrowded (cells were designed to accommodate

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[85] Of the available literature about the development of Constitution Hill and the construction of the Constitutional Court two publications deserve mention, notably *Number Four: The Making of Constitution Hill* by Segal et al. (2006a) and *Light On A Hill: Building the Constitutional Court of South Africa* edited by Bronwyn Law-Viljoen (2006).

twenty to thirty prisoners, but more than sixty were housed at a time). They were feared and hated by the black population for the injustice, brutality and humiliation meted out to prisoners[86]. They also became known for confining political prisoners alongside common criminals. Many of the treason trialists — including Nelson Mandela, Albert Luthuli, Joe Slovo, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, Helen Joseph, Moses Kotane and Ruth First — were imprisoned in the Old Fort, the Awaiting Trial Block and the Women's Jail in 1956. In the years that followed, many anti-pass campaigners — including Albertina Sisulu, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Robert Sobukwe, leader of the Pan African Congress (PAC) — were held in the same prisons. During the next twenty years hundreds of activists were incarcerated in the three prisons, but in 1983 they were closed down and the prisoners were transferred to the newly-built Diepkloof prison outside Soweto.

After the 1994 democratic elections, the Constitutional Court's eleven judges began to search for a site for a permanent Constitutional Court building that would evoke the suffering and struggles of the past, as well as celebrate the democratic principles and values of the constitutional order. They chose the Old Fort Complex because of its historical and symbolical importance, as well as its location in inner-city Johannesburg (between Braamfontein and Hillbrow), which facilitated access for ordinary citizens. According to Albie Sachs, one of the Constitutional Court judges, "It had a totally ruined, derelict character. But it was the site's potential for renovation and resurrection that was so captivating" (quoted in Segal et al., 2006a:53). Pius Langa, the Deputy Chief Justice, adds, "We felt excited by the symbolism of the old prisons, whose function had once been so oppressive, becoming, under the Constitution, a place representing freedom and human rights" (quoted in Segal et al., 2006a:56).

What emerged was an ambitious architectural and urban regeneration project that transformed an abandoned site holding three derelict prisons into Constitution Hill precinct — a cultural, historical, educational, residential, business and recreational space, comprising the new Constitutional Court, statutory bodies and nongovernmental organisations, museums, and exhibition and performance spaces. Conceptually, Constitution Hill was developed from the perspective of recontextualising a historic site and assigning new meaning to the site's current

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[86] Mark Gevisser (2004:509), one of South Africa's leading journalist and a member of Constitution Hill's Heritage, Education and Tourism (HET) team, writes, "In black popular culture, the Old Fort is still known as Number Four because the black male section was 'section four', and those two words still send shivers down people's spines".

context. The different stages of the development of the project took eight years, from the choice of a site for the Constitutional Court to the architectural competition for the design of the court, the building process and completion phase and, finally, the development of Constitution Hill as a heritage site. During this period, the project received significant attention from the national media, which provided the public with an historical overview of the site and detailed its several phases of development[87].

In 2002, during the final phase of the project, a team of specialists in different fields was given the responsibility of developing a Heritage, Education and Tourism (HET) feasibility study and business plan for Constitution Hill. As Mark Gevisser (2004:511), content adviser to the HET team, writes, "[W]e were brought in to try and figure out how to give this place meaning; how to interpret it as a heritage site, a tourist site, a place of education, as a place that people could use". Reflecting the rationale of what scholarly literature calls "Sites of Conscience" or "centres for democracy in action"[88], the essential foundation of the Constitution Hill project lay in promoting the public's active involvement in the site and engaging people in dialogue about the interface between the legacy of the past and the present context of a developing democracy. Gevisser stresses, "[W]e want the site to work interpretatively: to be used as a place where you find yourself between the past and the future, and where you understand that the only way the future can happen, resting on the past, is through your agency as someone in the present" (511).

Leading up to the official opening of the site to the public in 2004, the HET team conceptualised a series of exhibitions that aimed to present the project to delegates of the World Summit for Sustainable Development hosted in Johannesburg in 2002, since in Tshepo Nkosi's words, "This was an opportunity to showcase to the

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[87] In an article titled "Site of pain now a symbol of hope", David Jackson (2002), writing for the *Sunday Times Metro*, outlined the site's historical relevance, provided a comprehensive account of the project's funding, and highlighted some of Constitution Hill's design features. On 21 March 2004, the day the Constitutional Court officially opened, the *Sunday Times* ran a Special Feature titled "Sweeping view of past and future" with photographs both of the construction of Constitution Hill towards the end of the completion phase and of the completed Constitutional Court. In a richly illustrated article titled "The hill is alive", Alison Marshall, writing for *The Citizen* in 2005, describes how the spaces in Constitution Hill have been used.

[88] According to Ševčenko and Russel-Ciardi (2008:9), "Sites of Conscience are historic places that foster public dialogue on pressing contemporary issues in historical perspective". The authors maintain that there is a belief among historic site directors that in countries with a history of repression "remembering sites of both abuse and resistance [are] critical in the transition to democracy", since these sites have an obligation to foster "stimulating dialogue on pressing social issues and promoting democratic and humanitarian values as a primary function".

international community what we were trying to plan here" (quoted in Segal et al., 2006a:119). An exhibition comprising audio recordings of ex-prisoners talking about their memories and providing facilities for visitors to record their own memories and share their responses to the development of the site was mounted in what became known as The Memory Room. This exhibition achieved the important task of, as Ševčenko and Russel-Ciardi (2008:12) argue, "connect[ing] memory to action by sharing opportunities for visitors to become involved, individually or collectively, in shaping the contemporary issues raised by the site", and, at the same time, generating multiple voices and narratives out of which history is (re)interpreted and (re)written.

Three other exhibitions were set up at the time. The Tunnel Exhibition took the visitor along the tunnel beneath the ramparts, simulating prisoners' journey into the Jail. Nine tall grey banners displayed the faces of some of the prisoners who made their way through the tunnel, including the passive resister Mahatma Gandhi, the Boer rebel Christiaan de Wet, the murderer Daisy de Melker, and Nelson Mandela. The Ramparts Walk Exhibition gave visitors an orientation to the site and provided a physical and historical overview of the landscape in which the Constitutional Court had been erected. Semi-transparent life-size panels, with key clauses of the Constitution set against historical images, were placed strategically to allow viewers to observe the physical landscape through the images. Juxtaposed with an image of the gallows, another panel displayed an image of a woman and her baby at a Treatment Action Campaign march demanding the right to anti-retroviral medication to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child.

In the Women's Jail, an installation made up of large diaphanous silk panels with either text and image or image alone, along with showcases holding photographs and prisoners' personal objects, "told the stories of three women who represented very different times in the Women's Jail's history and who were there for different reasons — Daisy de Melker, Nomathemba Constance Funani and Jeannie Noel — a murderer, a pass resister and a political activist, respectively" (Segal et al., 2006a:127). One of the stories is that of political activist Fatima Meer, who, as journalist Laurice Taitz (2002) writes, "recalled that when she was first imprisoned there she felt as if she had entered a 'Victorian ballroom' only to find, as she ventured further into the room, that this was where the women prisoners were strip-searched".

In a personal interview[89], Lauren Segal, HET's lead consultant and curator of the Women's Jail exhibition, observed that the methodology of relying on oral history, which is not an archival record that is fully verified, usually raises concern — particularly among historians — about the inevitability of contradictory texts. In response to these reservations, Segal argued that the HET project's concern was not that the texts contradicted each other. In her words,

> If there are contradictions, we welcome that. We see there being a layering of memory where people will correct each other, or juxtapose each other. Their voices will remain in conflict. We, in fact, welcome that way in which memory is not stable and has an impermanence all of its own.

It was important that the curatorial practice at the site was informed by the voices and stories of people who had a relationship to the site. Segal stresses,

> Everything was informed by the notion of testimony being equal; of testimony being excavated from as many different sources as possible; of the representation of those memories and voices being treated in the same way; that there wasn't a hierarchy of voices created on the site, neither by the narratives and curators of the exhibition or the different subjects of the exhibition.

This democratising impetus was, in fact, the cornerstone of the "We the People" national information campaign (WTP), the broad rubric from which radiated Constitution Hill's programme of activation of the site, exhibitions and tours. This public participation programme, whose name drew on the Preamble of *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, comprised two sets of activities: "Bringing the People to the Hill" and "Taking the Hill to the People".

Since little of the history of the jails had been recorded or archived, the "Bringing the People to the Hill" programme aimed to invite former prisoners and warders to participate in workshops (for men and women separately) where they were encouraged to share their experience of prison life and give material form to their memories by producing objects for display that would tell their stories to visitors in direct and cogent ways. Several activities, out of which were born the *Mapping Memory* project, run by Lauren Segal, Clive van den Berg and Churchill Madikida (2006b), pieced together the history of the buildings and provided insight into the degrading conditions and unfair treatment to which prisoners of all races, but especially black people, were subjected. The material generated in the workshops

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[89] The interview was conducted at Constitution Hill in March 2008.

was later used in exhibitions that opened Number Four and the Women's Jail in 2003 and 2005 respectively and that have since been incorporated into a permanent collection.

The "Taking the People to the Hill" programme had as its basis two types of outreach work. The first sought to cultivate a sense of community and ownership of the site in the people who lived near Constitution Hill, especially in Hillbrow and Braamfontein, by exploring the site as the centre out of which civic dialogue and civic engagement would radiate. In essence, the programme intended to foster the public's involvement and active participation in events and exhibitions at the site as a means of implementing the democratisation of culture, thereby strengthening the democratic process that was beginning to shape South Africa's history.

Another core function of the programme was to inform the public at large of its fundamental rights, most notably the right of every South African citizen to take his/her case to the Constitutional Court, the highest court in the country. As Gevisser (2004:512) puts it, "Most South Africans *are* aware of the Constitution and know that it gives them rights, even though they don't necessarily know what those rights are. They know the Constitution is the fruit of the liberation struggle and of their suffering" (emphasis in the original). Consequently, researchers and photographers were assigned to take photographs, collect objects of personal and historical significance, oral histories and hand written messages (that included demands, questions and complaints addressed to the judges of the Constitutional Court) from ordinary South Africans so as to document people's experience of the transition to democracy, and to assess citizens' understanding of their constitutional needs and rights[90].

The Constitutional Court, which was officially inaugurated by President Thabo Mbeki on 21 March 2004, has deserved much attention for its inventive design, form and content. As Yvonne Mokgoro, one of the Constitutional Court judges, reflects, "We wanted to capture the spirit of an African building: open, welcoming, warm, accessible. In Tswana, we have an expression 'Kago ee bontshang botho' meaning a building with humanity" (quoted in Segal et. al 2006a:61). It is not my intention, nor could I possibly do justice to the detail, atmosphere and mood of the Court in a limited space. A richly illustrated book edited by Bronwyn Law-Viljoen (2006), with the title *Light On A Hill: Building the Constitutional Court of South Africa*, captures

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[90] The HET project has not been entirely successful, though. Segal et al. (2006a) discuss some of the obstacles that have arisen.

the character of the Court through many photographs by Angela Buckland and text by several authors, including some of the judges of the Constitutional Court.

What concerns me here is Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic project "We the People: In the Shade of the Constitution", in particular, the agenda within which it was developed, and the guidelines that oriented the photographers' work. As Lauren Segal explained in a personal interview, the main thrust of the project came from the notion that the Constitution was — as Constitution Hill hoped to be — owned by the people. Hence, the purpose of the photographic exhibition was twofold: first, to display photographs of people who had come before the Constitutional Court, as well as those of ordinary South Africans; and second, to provide a platform where, on the one hand, those people whose cases had been heard at the Court could talk about their experiences and, on the other hand, ordinary South Africans could express their aspirations and visions for the Constitution.

There was hope that on a yearly basis, or every six months, HET researchers and photographers would go out to the nation and do a barometer of the Constitution: get a sense of how people were relating to the Constitution, what the important landmark cases were, and how the Constitution is located in the society. An archive of people's recorded relationship to the Constitution would then be built, and every six months a temporary photography exhibition of this work would be hosted at Constitution Hill. "We the People: In the Shade of the Constitution" would be a launch pad for a series of exhibitions that were to take place[91].

A crucial feature of "We the People: In the Shade of the Constitution", an image and text-based exhibition, was that it "gave people a voice". This was particularly meaningful given the symbolism of the site where the exhibition was being hosted. The prisons in the Old Fort complex had, for decades, represented the silencing and marginalisation of people who had been incarcerated there. This project sought to redress wrongs committed in the past by welcoming conflicting and controversial opinions that not only supported the Constitution, but rubbed against it as well; it was not a consensus making exercise. There was a desire to go beyond the doctrinaire approach against which so many people had spoken out, and consequently been imprisoned on the site.

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[91] At the time of the interview in March 2008, this project had been put on hold due to a lack of funding. In fact, no other photography exhibition had followed "We the People: In the Shade of the Constitution". Zwelethu Mthethwa had been approached to do the next exhibition, but was unable to do so because of the lack of funding.

Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin were chosen for this project. Jewish by descent but originally from South Africa, the team are currently based in London. Of particular value to the framing of the photographic project in South Africa is Broomberg and Chanarin's previous interrogation of the relations of power and trust that are created during the photographic encounter, and, consequently, the ethical questions that these relations often raise. These multiple tensions distinguish an extensive photographic series titled *Ghetto* (2003). This body of work was produced during a journey through twelve "present day ghettos" (as the photographers call them), starting in a refugee camp in Tanzania, then transitioning to a psychiatric hospital in Cuba, penetrating a maximum security prison in South Africa, and ending in a snow-covered forest in Patagonia. The photographers stepped into diverse settlements and communities of people — those usually ignored, silenced and disempowered — who live on the margins of civil society[92]. The photos emerge out of the encounter with people whose social and living conditions are testimony of man's inhumanity to man, or, ultimately, people whose (in)human condition stems from a process of alienation and degradation — people who have been driven, or have driven themselves, to the edge of humanity.

Several deontological concerns generate ethical decisions in Broomberg and Chanarin's work that contribute to an ethical photographic practice, which I wish to emphasise in this chapter. At the core of Broomberg and Chanarin's methodology and approach is the uncomfortable question about the morality of photographing either people who have never been photographed before or psychiatric patients who are heavily medicated and who do not understand that photographic practice can be a highly manipulative process. In an interview given at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 2003[93] for a photography exhibition titled "Stepping in & Out: Contemporary Documentary Photography", the photographers explain that they undertake to produce a piece of media that will not be exploitative. On this precept, they start by asking permission to photograph their subjects. Apart from this, they deliberately work with a 4x5 very slow camera to enable subjects to compose themselves. As they put it, "the fact that we're not looking through a lens but we're actually above it, looking at the subjects and they're looking at us, means that

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[92] This photographic study was produced at the time when Broomberg and Chanarin were the creative editors and principal photographers of Benetton's documentary magazine *Colors* between 2000 and 2002.

[93] This interview is available online at http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/photography/past_exhns/stepping/broomberg3/index.html .

there's a different relationship and the mechanics of the camera contributes a lot to the way that image is formed and the way that it's read".

Another important part of the process, they claim, is the fact that they interview and engage with the people they photograph, which, I suggest, not only humanises the process through this gesture of respect and attentiveness to the Other's circumstances and personal story, but also enables them to provide, along with the printed photographs, very personal accounts or thoughts of the subjects they seek to portray. In Broomberg and Chanarin's work the nameless, anonymous person — quite often, the individual whom civil society treats with hostility or indifference because s/he is poor, mentally ill or a criminal — (re)claims his/her place within "the civil space of photography" (Azoulay 2008).

This mode of address both invests the subjects with dignity and stimulates the type of affective and responsive spectatorial experience this thesis seeks to underscore. I am reminded of the celebrated Polish foreign correspondent and writer Ryszard Kapuściński, whose thoughts on the work or "mission" of journalists can easily apply to that of photographers. When considering the formative significance of empathy for a journalist's work Kapuściński argues, "Empathy is perhaps the most important quality for a foreign correspondent. If you have it, other deficiencies are forgivable; if you don't, nothing much can help" (quoted in Atkins and Nezmah, 2002:219).

We can relate to this idea when we examine Broomberg and Chanarin's (2003:98) *Ghetto* series. To the photographers' question "What are you scared of?" a psychiatric patient replies, "I'm scared of the outside because Rafael is there and I don't want to see him". When the photographers state, "But you are Rafael", the patient replies, "Now you understand what I'm scared of". This exchange stands out in the flow of highly moving portraits and text documenting the life and experiences of patients at the René Vallejo Psychiatric Hospital in Cuba. Most of the photographs, we are told in the introduction to the photo essay, are self-portraits produced by virtue of a long release cable that enabled the subjects to take their photographs when and how they chose.

The result of the photographers' decision to surrender control of the photographic encounter — their way of dealing with the ethical dilemma of photographing psychiatric patients — is as surprising as it is compelling. In one of the frames, Mario, a skinny sixty-year-old grey-haired man with hunched shoulders, has turned his back to the camera. The only indication of his status are the baggy institutional pyjamas.

In a second frame, the subject stands against the same aquamarine wall, this time facing the camera with a quizzical expression. His outstretched closed hand has just squeezed the ball at the end of the long release cable.

In the preface to a book titled *The Mission: Journalism, Ethics and the World,* Maria Henson (2002:7) quotes a well-known definition of journalism: "Journalism is storytelling with a purpose". This adage is equally true of Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic practice, of which the *Ghetto* material is an apt illustration. Broomberg and Chanarin's treatment of the subject matter and purposeful mode of engagement with their subjects makes this rich vein of material a valuable precursor to the work produced in South Africa[94]. Indeed, their work ethic is defined by the use of nonviolent, non-objectifying representations of the subjects to draw attention to the inherent humanity of people who are often rendered invisible or discriminated against.

In September 2003, Broomberg and Chanarin set out on a three month road trip that began in Johannesburg and covered South Africa's nine provinces, from urban townships to isolated rural communities. The first month was spent exploring Johannesburg and the surrounding areas. During the next two months the team travelled first to the centre of the country, then north to the border of Namibia, west to the ocean and south, following the coast all the way to Cape Town. After two weeks they set off again across the Eastern Cape, through the Karoo Desert, until they reached the Indian Ocean. They turned north into the Transkei towards Durban and into the Free-State before returning to Johannesburg[95].

As was previously mentioned, their mission was to photograph people who had taken their cases to the Constitutional Hill; to record individuals' impressions of the Constitution and the influence it had in their lives; and to capture personal stories, reflections, hopes and aspirations about life in South Africa. Although these were the

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[94] Prior to *Ghetto*, Broomberg and Chanarin produced *Trust* (2000), a study of the topography of the face. The series consists of close-ups of the faces of people captured in the midst of their everyday lives, doing ordinary activities, such as watching or practising sport, praying, or sitting in a dentist's chair or at the beauty salon. The photographic monograph accompanied their solo show at the Hasselblad Centre in Sweden. Their work had also been exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the British National Museum of Film, Television and Photography, the African Museum in Johannesburg, the Florence Photographic Biennale, and the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

[95] This travel log is taken from Boomberg and Chanarin's notes, which were sent to Camilla Brown, curator of the Photographers' Gallery in London, during the preparation for the "Mr Mkhize's portrait and other stories from the new South Africa" exhibition hosted at the Photographers' Gallery from June to August 2004. Camilla Brown has authorised me to refer to the notes.

initial foci of the "We the People" road trip, the photographic project branched out into an acute commentary of South Africa's plaguing social problems ten years after apartheid. Among other issues, carefully framed colour portraits and landscapes address unemployment, homosexuality, displacement, circumcision rituals, poverty and homelessness, crime, prostitution, illegal immigration, housing and AIDS.

A concern with key aspects of the social condition of marginalised individuals or communities and previously disadvantaged racial groups provides a unifying thread for this contentious body of work. It relentlessly questions South Africa's post-apartheid reality at an historical juncture in the country's democratic process (ten years after apartheid), encouraging the viewer to ask whether democracy is, in fact, fulfilling its essential role in South Africa or whether change is unfolding at a fast enough pace. Mr. Mkhize's story, the photographers claim, sums up the optimism and the frustration that they encountered during their road trip. Ten years after the end of apartheid, Mr. Mkhize is still a migrant worker; he still lives in the same hostel in Alexandra Township. The main difference in his everyday existence is that he no longer shares his room with eight other men. He now lives there with his wife for the first time in their married life. For the so called "born-free generation" (youngsters born after the demise of apartheid), in contrast, life in South Africa is exciting and empowering — as Mathaba Mayla (Fig. 13) reveals.

As a contestant in a beauty pageant, Mathaba (whose aspirations are far removed from those of her parents who were born into the struggle against apartheid) dreams about becoming Miss Teen South Africa, being a logistics manager for BMW and driving a sports car. A full-length portrait (Fig. 13) shows a confident, tall and thin young woman facing the camera in a pink bikini and black stilettos. By placing the subject against a white backdrop, the photographer draws attention to her face, but, mainly to her body and posture. Self-conscious about her semi-nakedness, the subject adopts a modelling pose, keeping her back straight and shoulders up, one leg locked straight and the other casually stretched at a slight angle. In the accompanying extract of her conversation with the photographers, Mathaba stresses, "They say the sky is the limit. But not for me". She also considers that "Apartheid wasn't all bad", since without it, "Nelson Mandela would never have become who he is" (Broomberg and Chanarin, 2004a).

Expressing far less certainty and optimism about the future is the text that accompanies a landscape photograph of Khayelitsha township in Cape Town [96]. The frame is divided diagonally by a railway track. On the left side of the track a dense agglomeration of shacks made of a collage of materials (including metal sheets, corrugated tin and wooden planks) takes up all visible space right up to the railway track, evincing the lack of living conditions affecting the residents of this informal settlement. Horizontal rows of electricity cables decorate the skyline above the shacks. Contrasting with the densely packed shack settlement on the left of the track, a long winding dirt track separates the railway line from the rubbish-filled bushes on the right. The image was taken at sunset; the distribution of tones and colours and the soft light diffuse the grimness of what we know to be inhuman living conditions. The text accompanying the image, on the other hand, is brutal in its graphic description. It reads,

> Nandipha Stemelo, Vuyo Maombothi and Bulelani Xama live in Khayalitsha … More precisely, they live almost on train tracks, because Khayalitsha's newer shacks are built against the high-speed commuter line. Trains pass every five minutes, and everyone here can tell a story of seeing a young child, an elderly person or someone simply distracted getting dismembered by a passing train … If a person here needs the toilet then they step over the tracks and go here in the bushes. Two weeks ago there was a lady who was hit by the train just down there by the bridge. It happens every day. We don't even get frightened anymore (Broomberg and Chanarin 2004a).

Methodology carries significant weight in Broomberg and Chanarin's practice, constituting a complementary dimension of their ethical work. The choice of subjects stems, in part, from research and attention to both demographics and the diverse social landscape shaping the character of contemporary South Africa. Although they set out with an interest in specific themes and institutions (including variously, crime, security and AIDS; hospitals, prisons and the police), the photographers do not confine themselves to an agenda. Part of the nature of photography, they claim, is having an eye for the unexpected and the ability to recognise a moment worth seizing.

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[96] Khayelitsha, which means "our new home" in Xhosa, grew as a dormitory settlement for rural African men who migrated to Cape Town in search of jobs, and is today the second-largest township in South Africa after Soweto with over a million residents. The township has constituted one of the greatest challenges for the post-apartheid government, which has attempted to combat the alarming unemployment, crime and AIDS rates, and improve the quality of life of the township residents, with the development of an urban renewal programme. Critical voices have expressed the view that the urban renewal programme preserves ghettoes from the apartheid era and consigns current residents and future generations to economic isolation (Goldberg, 2003).

Fig.13 Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, *Mathaba Mayla*, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2004

Portraiture is Broomberg and Chanarin's selected technique and mode of engagement (although they also use landscapes in a sequence of images to produce a photographic narrative). They understand portraiture as being informed firstly by an ethical stance and respect for the subject, and secondly by a relationship that is established between photographer and subject. Therefore, they always ask for permission to photograph and — contrary to the approach of celebrated photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson — always engage their subjects in conversation before taking their portraits. With respect to Cartier-Bresson's discreet or sly approach, Agnès Sire (2006) recounts a well-known story in *An Inner Silence: The Portraits of Henri Cartier Bresson*. She writes,

> [H]e liked to tell of his meeting with Frédéric and Irène Joliot-Curie … 'I rang, the door opened, that's what I saw, I took a photo, and I said hello afterwards — it wasn't very polite.' Or the meeting with Ezra Pound in Venice …, which consisted of nothing but a very long silence which 'seemed to last for hours' (8).

For Broomberg and Chanarin, by contrast, getting a sense of their subjects' lives and stories is, as Adam Broomberg revealed in a personal interview[97], an important part of the photographic process. But more than simply canvass the exchange between photographer and subject, the subjects' words are an integral part of the way the photographs are presented. As Broomberg underscores,

> I think photographers need to take responsibility for the way photography is presented, what words are attached to it — and there are always words attached to it, whether it's in a gallery or in a magazine, or a book. It's always been a part of our practice, and this is not a new thing, but always to name the people and always to interview them, so that it's not just this aestheticisation of poverty. It's about the feeling of a human being, and an image can be used in a million ways. I think it's very important to try and control the way it's used as much as possible because if you're going to photograph marginalised people who do not have access to the media, and who do not actually understand the way an image is used, it's up to you to make sure it's used in a responsible way, so the stories are absolutely integral.

As the extract of this interview reveals, the linguistic exchange that takes place during the photographic encounter is not simply a means of establishing rapport with the subjects. Considered from a Levinasisan perspective, linguistic exchange stems from an ethical injunction to respond to an address by an Other originating in the

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[97] The interview took place in London on 30 June 2006.

face-to-face encounter. In the presence of the Other, in which he/she expresses (and exposes) him/herself, I am compelled to enter into a dialogical relation. As Levinas (1969:198) reflects, "the face speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation". The ethical frame within which this exchange takes place implies that responsibility to and for this Other (person) endures long after the linguistic exchange has come to an end. This explains why Broomberg and Chanarin's presentation of their material is attentive to the responsible use of the photographed subjects' words.

Importantly, the dialogue (and, correlatively, the ethical responsibility stemming from this dialogue) between photographer and photographed subject is extended to the viewer. Broomberg establishes that the viewer is present from the moment the photographers are making a picture up until the point when they present their work, since they consider — perhaps because they come from an editorial background — that they are as accountable to the photographed subject as they are to the viewer. This enables us to consider the photographic practice — of Jillian Edelstein and now of Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin — not as a relation with two elements, the result of which will be a force of oppositions and antagonisms, but as a loop consisting of a continual flow or movement between photographer, photographed subject and viewer.

Parallel to the photographic material assembled for the "We the People" project, Broomberg and Chanarin produced (as mentioned previously), a thirty minute documentary film titled *Mr Mkhize's Portrait* (2004b) for BBC Channel Four that seeks to explore the process of taking photographs, thereby enabling the viewer to get a glimpse of what is happening at the time of the shoot. The film consists of a juxtaposition of a series of images — photographic stills and moving landscapes — and short vignettes, each about one minute long, that reveal the preparation for the shoot and the exchange between photographers and subject leading up to the moment when the shutter release is pressed.

We see the photographers set up a cumbersome 5x4 view camera on a tripod, which immediately gives us a sense that the whole process of making an exposure is paced and very deliberate. One of the photographers looks through the glass plate, focuses, sets the aperture, slides in the Polaroid back and closes the lens. Then, finally, there is the clicking of the shutter. The image appears reversed and upside down through the criss-cross of guide-lines on the glass screen. The mechanics of constructing an image are accompanied by the dialogic exchange between photographers and

subject. We hear the photographer's questions but the camera focuses only on the subject's face as s/he responds and poses, looking intently at the camera.

The dialogic exchange between the photographers and twenty-three year old Tessa Davis (Fig. 14) evokes Bakhtin's conceptualisation of dialogue. By engaging the subject in dialogue before releasing the shutter button, the photographers enable "[the] person not only [to] show himself outwardly, but [to] become for the first time that which he is … not only for others but for himself as well" (Bakhtin, 1984:202). During the exchange captured on film we see the subject in the context of her environment. The setting is a Boxing Club. In the midst of the conversation Tessa Davis, a pretty, slender young woman, is captured in different poses, each conveying a distinct mood. One of the images shows her hitting a punch bag. Two other stills call attention to the subject's serious expression as she stands in her boxing gear to the left of the frame. The walls behind her display magazine clippings of boxers and high windows with burglar proof bars.

We hear the photographer's first question: "How do you think South Africa has changed in the past ten years?" The camera zooms in on the subject's face as she answers in an unexpected squeaky voice, "It has changed a lot, but for poor people you don't see it. We see no change." The next question, "Have you ever been in love?" generates smiles and a bright expression as the subject answers,

> Yes. Actually, at one point when I started to box, he wanted me to stop, so I told him to go. It was very hard. I told him to go. I cried for two weeks every day, but I'm fine now. I got over it. I see him from time to time. I just wave and say, 'Hi, how are you doing?' I just walk on. That's it. Ja.

The next question, "When you think about your life, what's the warmest, the nicest memory that you've got?" prompts an even brighter expression. She answers, beaming, "When I won my first fight … Let's say Christmas at home with my mother. My mother tries to make it, you know, the best she can so that we all can be happy that day. That's the warmest thing." Then the photographer asks, "And the worst one?" The answer is unexpected, but still said with a smile: "The worst? The worst was I was raped when I was 16. Ja, so it was my worst experience. When I get angry I get quiet. I am just quiet and I don't talk to nobody". The photographer's ethical stance is expressed in the non-objectification of the subject, who is given time to compose herself and to (re)present herself not as a victim of her circumstances but as a "fighter" keen to rise above her circumstances. A head shot capturing the subject's unwavering gaze and determination brings this vignette to an end. The

photographs emerge out of the flow of the dialogue between the subject and the photographer.

Of the three stills we see in the film, the one that was published in the book is a confrontational half-length portrait (Fig. 14) of Tessa Davis standing in a room. The background is slightly blurred so that our attention is drawn to the subject only. The subject faces the camera unflinchingly, demanding reciprocity of direct, face-to-face interaction. The strength of the composition stems from the contradiction and complexity that is captured in the frame. There is an energy in the girl's strong face that accentuates her quiet and noble bearing. Her slender figure, her neatly plaited hair and feminine flowery t-shirt contrast with the fisted boxing gloves, suggesting the strength of character of this young woman whose femininity intersects very well with the traditional manly sport she has taken up.

The text appearing alongside the photograph is an extract from the conversation with the photographers. There is a unity between image and linguistic text that, alongside the pictorial, stresses the subject's circumstances. We learn that the photographers found her in a Boxing Club in Eldorado Park — a strangely paradoxical name for a crime-ridden suburb near Soweto where there is a forty percent unemployment rate. Tessa has also been unemployed for five years, since she finished high school. She explains,

> [I]n all that time I've worked for a month in a part-time job. It's not from laziness. Blacks from Soweto, other white people, they're scared of Eldo's. It's got such a bad reputation. They say that everything happens here, all kinds of crime. It's true … The other day a nine-year-old girl was raped in the park here. Most rapes are not even reported, they happen at bashes, at street parties.

Engagement with Broomberg and Chanarin's documentary film in correlation with the book invites reflection about two fundamental aspects regarding the execution and presentation of their work, which, although previously mentioned, I wish to underscore in relation to the material on Tessa Davis. First, the dialogical ethics that constitutes Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic practice slows down the process to movements of listening to the subject and seeking the right frame. The whole process honours the subject, enabling him/her to negotiate his/her presence in front of the camera. Second, a sense of ethical responsibility to and for the subject is revealed in the treatment of his/her story, which becomes an integral part of the photo essay. How images work depend largely on their linkage with the accompanying text. Prior to reading Tessa Davis's story the viewer's response to her

portrait will be quite different from the one following assimilation of the story. Knowledge of the context from which the photograph emerged delivers a demand for identification, compelling the viewer to think about the circumstances of the subject's life.

The interconnection of text and image produces a more complex (and affective) reading of the work (as I will continue to examine in this chapter). It engenders a dialogical interpretation of the photographs, summoning Bakhtin's philosophical thought. Although Bakhtin develops his thought in relation to the characters in a novel, his argument is equally valid for the interpretation of photographs. Bakhtin (1984:68) writes, "[O]ne can only *relate to them dialogically*. To think about them means to *talk with them; otherwise they immediately turn to us their objectivised side*: they fall silent, close up, and congeal into finished, objectivised images" (emphasis in the original).

Although the photographers were displeased with the film from a conceptual point of view, as they felt the whole process was flawed due to the difficulty involved in simultaneously producing a photographic project and a documentary film of that process, it offers insight into the artists' conception of portraiture and style of working. Rather than seek to capture "the decisive moment", as Henri Cartier-Bresson defined it, Broomberg and Chanarin are much more interested in transitory moments, whilst never losing sight of capturing a quiet moment of dignity or poise. In essence, though, the whole process of creating a portrait is extremely self-conscious, on the part of both subject and photographer — and it is important, they feel, that this comes across to the viewer (and it does in the film). As Broomberg stressed in a personal interview,

> I think for us what is important in the pose of the people is that, number one, we are present — and you can see that. You can see it's a collaboration. Number two, is that people are given time to compose themselves, so this performance between people and portraiture is very intense — it doesn't have to be, but the way we do it is quite an intense performance.

Fig. 14 Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, *Tessa Davis*, Eldorado Park Boxing Club, South Africa, 2004

3.4 "We the People: In the Shade of the Constitution" and "Mr. Mkhize's portrait & other stories from the new South Africa": an overview of two photography exhibitions

Broomberg and Chanarin's project resulted in a political, and yet very intimate, collation of images and text that reflects an attempt to understand the state of South African democracy as it reached the ten-year mark of freedom from apartheid. While it celebrates the freedom of individuals like Mr. Mkhize and his wife, it does not shy away from revealing the flaws in a political system and social structure that has not yet succeeded in improving the lives of the majority of the population. Although Constitution Hill was symbolically the most politically charged exhibition space in South Africa, since the Court is the most powerful law-making body in the land, the organisation of the exhibition wanted to avoid making an overt political statement, one that might conflict with the commemoration of the institution that represented one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world. As a result, the selection of images for the show was not entirely what the photographers had intended[98]. Nevertheless, the exhibition "We the People: In the Shade of the Constitution" opened in conjunction with the inauguration of the Constitutional Court in South Africa in March 2004 and ran for over two years.

The expanding literature on exhibition practices draws attention to artists' interest in exhibiting their work in art institutions, since as Jean-Marc Poinsot (1996:39) argues, "Contemporary art comes to us through the medium of the exhibition. History has shown that the other ways it makes itself manifest are fast becoming obsolete and regressive, no longer mobilizing talent, resources or attention". Indeed, exhibitions have become ubiquitous in the contemporary cultural landscape. Seldom viewed as the domain of the elite or knowledgeable, most exhibition spaces are currently accessible to a wide viewing public, and quite often spectators walking into a gallery or museum have little or no prior knowledge of the artists' work or the subject matter of the exhibition. Hence, for artists today, the expansion of a museum/gallery audience represents a wider exposure and circulation of their work. In the case of Broomberg and Chanarin, exhibiting their project outside of South Africa allowed for a different articulation of the body of work produced and

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[98] In 2008 I went to Constitution Hill to examine the exhibition archive, but was told there were no photographs of the installation. In fact, although the exhibition had run for much longer than was initially planned (more than two years), there seemed to be no information about the show at all.

exhibited in South Africa, and a distinctly different type of audience response, reflecting the view expressed by Greenberg et al. (1996:2) that, "Exhibitions are the primary site of exchange in the political economy of art, where signification is constructed, maintained and occasionally deconstructed".

Outside of South Africa, the project was first showcased at the Photographers' Gallery in London from 10 June to 1 August 2004. With this first major solo exhibition in the United Kingdom, Broomberg and Chanarin were able to produce a larger (and, in their view, much more balanced) selection of images that resulted from a negotiation between the artists and the curator. Essentially, though, Broomberg and Chanarin's body of work spoke directly to the core interests of the Photographers' Gallery. Established in 1971, the Photographers' Gallery was the first publicly funded gallery in Britain devoted to promoting contemporary national and international photography to a wide viewing public, making it more popular and accessible. Its exhibitions programme seeks to reflect a commitment to both established and emerging photographers whose work "has a strong thematic basis, that deals with contemporary issues — whether social or aesthetic — or that reassesses historical themes and perspectives"[99].

Within this context, Camilla Brown, Senior Curator at the Photographer's Gallery, observed in a personal interview[100] that the connection of the Gallery to the history of South Africa came from previously hosting two solo exhibitions of the South African photographer David Goldblatt: the first in 1974 and the second in 1986. It was interesting, at this point, for the Gallery to see how a younger generation of South African artists who had been out of the country for quite a long time had documented the changes in the country since they had left. The presentation of Broomberg and Chanarin's work sought to reflect the undeniable political character of their work whilst highlighting the non-exploitative approach to their subjects, and the genuine interest in people, which has become the essential trait of their methodology. In this sense, much of the appeal of their work stems from the attention that is given to the subjects' stories, extracts of which are always used to complement or add another layer of meaning to the image.

My purpose here is to examine the presentation of Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic material on post-apartheid South Africa within the discursive spaces of

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[99] Cited from the Photographers' Gallery website at
www.photonet.org,uk/index.php?id=80,47,1,1,1,0 [Accessed 09-07-2006]
[100] The interview was held at the Photographers' Gallery in June 2006.

the gallery and the printed press. I will explore in greater detail questions of curatorship, spectatorship and narrative at the Photographer's Gallery. It is important to note that prior to this show the only South African photographer invited to display his work at the Photographers' Gallery was David Goldblatt even though the United Kingdom had long been associated with the international movement of anti-apartheid protest (as I will detail later in the chapter). This is illustrative, as I have discussed previously, of the slow recognition of South African photographers in the international art market, bringing to mind that, as Shohat and Stam (2002:37) underscore, "Traditional art history … exists on a continuum with official history in general, which figures Europe as a unique source of meaning, as the world's center of gravity, as ontological 'reality' to the world's shadow".

The interest in South Africa photographers has surfaced mostly within the context of post-apartheid socio-political change and reconstruction. Accordingly, Broomberg and Chanarin's photographs were sequenced in a near cinematic narrative with texts at the Photographers' Gallery show to prompt reflection about the (un)changed realities of contemporary South Africa. The focus of my inquiry in this section will, therefore, be on how narrative operates within the context of the exhibition design and how certain discursive frames used in the British printed media's coverage of the show orientate interpretation about democracy in South Africa ten years after the demise of apartheid.

The disquieting portrait of Mr. Mkhize, together with the politically-charged text discussed earlier, was given prominence at the start of the exhibition (Fig. 15), since it was hung on a separate screen with a strong wall colour to draw the viewers in[101]. The remainder of the display, consisting of thirty-five images, achieved dramatic effect through the grouping of 76x102 cm portraits (Fig.16), followed by sets of smaller 30x40 cm portraits (Fig.18), and by larger 102x107cm landscapes juxtaposed with 76x102 cm portraits (Fig.17). The flow of the images created a narrative thread by virtue of the dramatic or contemplative quality of particular images, and the juxtaposition of landscapes and portraits (whereby the former contextualised or opened up the meaning of the latter). With the exception of nine 30x40cm portraits, the prints were large, compelling the spectator to stand back in order to take in the details of each composition, then move closer to read the text on the wall next to

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[101] Mr. Mkhize's portrait was also used in the publicity materials of the show, most notably on The Photographers' Gallery's printed magazine titled *Great*, as well as on the gallery's website, the press pack and the invitations for the first evening and for the private view of the exhibition.

each image. The work was intentionally mounted simply on aluminium, rather than framed and placed behind acrylic glass, so as not to distance the viewers from what they were looking at. Engaged with critically, from the theoretical perspective put forward by Bruce Ferguson (1996:178):

> [T]his is precisely what an exhibition is — a strategic system of representations. The system of an exhibition organizes its representations to best utilize everything, from its architecture which is always political, to its wall colourings which are always psychologically meaningful, to its labels which are always didactic (even, or especially, in their silences), … to its lighting which is always dramatic (and therefore an important aspect of narrativity and the staging of desire).

Adding another perspective to the idea of the politics of exhibition display, Shirley Read (2008) believes that the careful thought that goes into the exhibition design connects the audience to what the artists are trying to communicate through their work by considering — and encouraging — different types of audience response. The display needs to take into consideration not only the size and atmosphere of the space, but also the size and impact of the work, along with the flow of the space or how a potential audience will move through the gallery. In essence, the display must respect the expressive idiom of the work, and (if need be) enable the audience to pause, to contemplate the work and meander around the exhibition. As Read puts it,

> A good hang takes time and careful thought and combines awareness of the work and the space it is placed in. A space can, and should, dictate the way work is shown, and every aspect of the presentation of the work has to be sympathetic to the size and atmosphere of the space as well as to the work (111).

Returning our attention to the exhibition "Mr. Mkhize's portrait & other stories from the new South Africa", the selection of eight portraits in the first grouping of images (Fig.16 and Fig.19), hung on the wall to the left of the screen at the entrance with Mr. Mkhize's portrait, provokes introspective engagement with the work. The images echo each other in some way due to an affinity of composition or of facial expression, but the most striking common thread running through the portraits is the element of pose and quiet dignity in the subjects' bearing. The representations are extremely direct and minimal in their expression. In essence, they all transmit the sense of power stemming from the stark symmetry of the frontal gaze that commands the viewer's attention and compels him/her to engage with the portrait subject's eyes and face.

Three young black South Africans of approximately the same age, from the first post-apartheid generation commonly called "the born-free generation", present themselves in the same way but tell very different stories in the texts accompanying the images. Tessa Davis, the twenty-three-year-old woman boxer (whose portrait has already been discussed), meets the camera with a pained expression in her eyes, seizing the viewer's interest and imagination. The next portrait is of Mandlenkosi Noqhayi (Fig.20), an eighteen-year-old Xhosa dentistry student from Johannesburg. The subject, who is covered in white paint and clad in a tribal tunic and flashy orange trainers, seems to be on his way somewhere, with a transistor radio in one hand and a walking stick in the other.

Mandlenkosi was photographed in the bush in the Eastern Cape, where he had taken part in his tribe's sacred and secret thirty-day circumcision rituals. Traditionally, young boys from the Xhosa tribe must be circumcised before they can inherit their fathers' possessions, get married or officiate at tribal events. Although he knows that (according to the accompanying text) "initiates are often infected by blunt surgical instruments and dirty water", Mandlenkosi's gaze and bearing denote a great sense of pride and conviction in his cultural heritage. He explains that there can be no physical contact for three weeks, so initiates carry sticks that they hit together to greet each other.

Mathaba Mayla (whose portrait has previously been discussed), on the other hand, shares the same dream as so many girls her age in other parts of the world: to win a beauty pageant, be wealthy, and have a successful career. The other portraits and stories in this sequence of images are of a young father with his two children; an eleven-year-old coloured girl who lives in Mitchell's Plain, a large coloured township in Cape Town; a lesbian pastor from The Hope and Unity Metropolitan Community Church in Johannesburg; a nine-year-old girl who won a case in the Constitutional Court; and three traditional medicine women from a township in the Eastern Cape. Each portrait in the exhibition is as intense and engrossing as the previous one. Cumulatively, the images engender startling realisations about the complex social, economic and cultural issues facing contemporary South Africa, including unemployment, poverty, housing shortages, the mass economic migration from neighbouring African countries, violent crime, and the impact of the AIDS epidemic.

Fig. 15 Photographers' Gallery, London. Installation view of *Mr. Mkhize's portrait and other stories from the new South Africa* exhibition, 2004. Photograph courtesy of the Photographers' Gallery, London.

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Fig. 16 Photographers' Gallery, London. Installation view of *Mr. Mkhize's portrait and other stories from the new South Africa* exhibition, 2004. Photograph courtesy of the Photographers' Gallery, London.

Fig. 17 Photographers' Gallery, London. Installation view of *Mr. Mkhize's portrait and other stories from the new South Africa* exhibition, 2004. Photograph courtesy of the Photographers' Gallery, London.

Fig. 18 Photographers' Gallery, London. Installation view of *Mr. Mkhize's portrait and other stories from the new South Africa* exhibition, 2004. Photograph courtesy of the Photographers' Gallery, London.

Fig. 19 Photographers' Gallery, London. Installation view of *Mr. Mkhize's portrait and other stories from the new South Africa* exhibition, 2004. Photograph courtesy of the Photographers' Gallery, London.
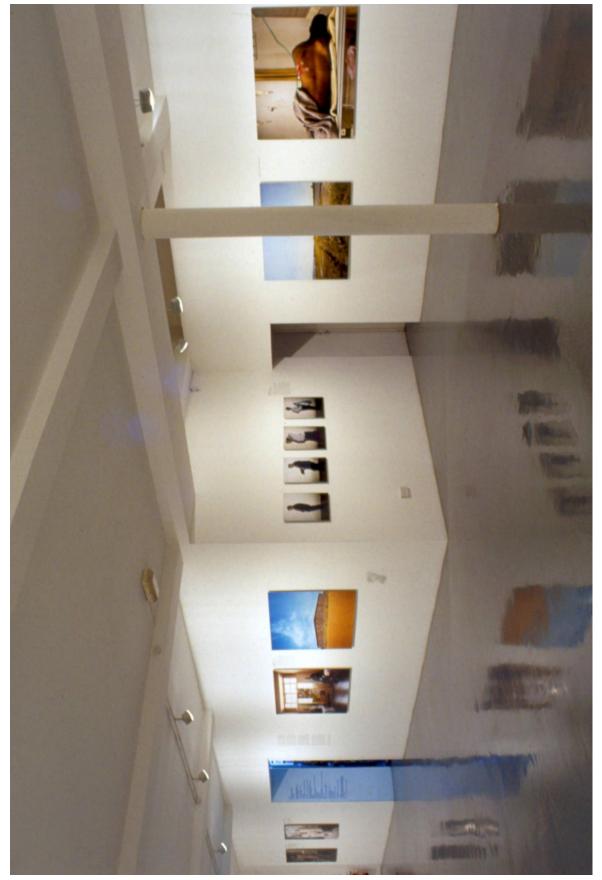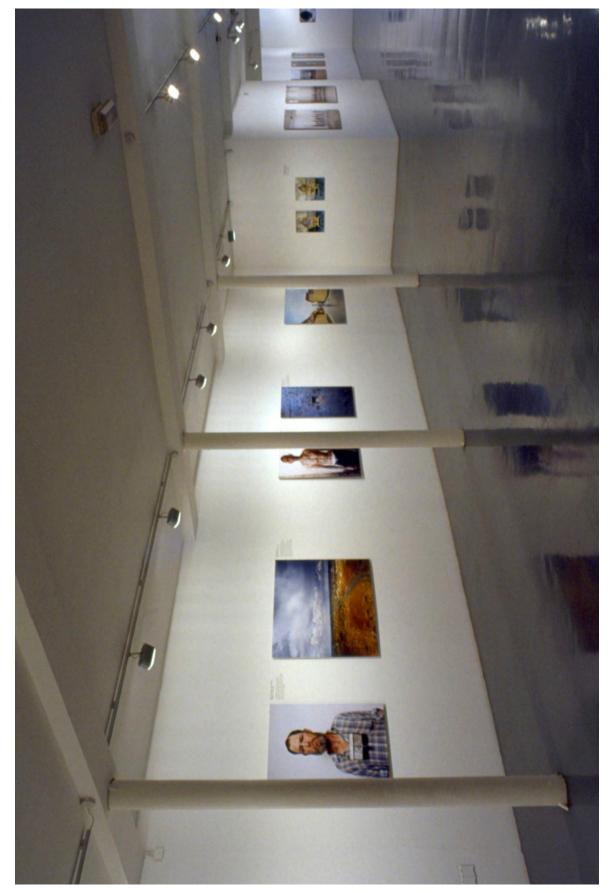
Fig. 20 Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, *Mandlenkosi Noqhayi*, Motherwell, Eastern Cape, South Africa, 2004

In an article titled "The Discourse of the Museum", Mieke Bal (1996:205) argues that

> Discursivity, most notably rhetoric imbricated with narrative, is in effect a crucial aspect of the institution. And I do not mean by this that museums inevitably produce discourse in their information flyers, brochures, and catalogues. I mean more central, at the core of the idea of exhibiting.

Indeed, the exhibition design of "Mr. Mkhize's portrait & other stories from the new South Africa" takes two key aspects into account: one, that the portrait subjects' stories feature as an essential component of Broomberg and Chanarin's work, in that they occupy, alongside the image, a central place in the presentation and interpretation of their project; two, that the exhibition plays a pivotal role in providing a narrative experience to the viewers through the interweaving of the photographs and accompanying individual life stories. As Bal (1996: 208) points out, "a visit to the museum is an event that takes place in space and in time, and it therefore produces a narrative", one that provokes an affective — and at the same time critical — response to the work. In essence, the critical and affective quality of Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic work and the narrative component of the exhibition design mutually condition and inspire one another, engendering what Jill Bennett (2005) has intelligently called (and used as a book title) *Empathic Vision*.

At the core of Bennett's (2005:11) thesis is the argument that an affective response to a work of art should not be construed "in narrow cause-and-effect terms, as if the image functioned simply as a mechanistic trigger or stimulus", as is often the case with media forms such as horror films. Bennett traces "the conjunction of affect and cognition", claiming that when art "shocks us", it does so to jolt us into a mode of critical inquiry. Examined from this perspective, "Mr. Mkhize's portrait & other stories from the new South Africa" not only moves and disturbs us, but also provides — by virtue of the stories accompanying each photograph — insight into the lived experience of people whose lives are so far removed from our own. It compels us to question the political and socio-economic realities framing each of the stories told both visually and in written form. An illustration of this is the portrait of eleven-year-old Naema Erasmus (Fig.21) included in the first set of portraits in the exhibition.

Different in composition from the other photographs, the stripped-down and minimal essentialism of the image has excluded any visual element in the background that might distract us from the landscape of the face. The subject has been posed with

her shoulders at a forty-five degree angle to the camera and framed against the corner of two neutral coloured walls with only two rows of tiles bearing a pale blue pattern at the bottom of the frame. The girl's feminine beauty is accentuated by her flawless light brown complexion a few shades darker than her frilly beige t-shirt. Her hair has been pulled back to reveal an oval face with beautiful almond-shaped hazel eyes and full lips. She has composed herself, looking straight at the camera. What catches us off guard is the intense expression in her eyes that gives us the impression that she is really not looking at us but looking inward. Her calm, dignified bearing is disconcerting for a girl her age. But her expression and poise can only be gauged against the text accompanying the image, which affords a sense of what her life is like. It reads,

> I live in Mitchell's Plain with my mother. It's not a bad place. The only downside to it is that there are a lot of gangs living there. They aren't good because they tend to shoot and stab people for no apparent reason. Most of the times I don't feel safe walking around alone. At times I get angry at my mother for sending me to the shops alone. I get terrified and scared of being stabbed.

Considered from a Bakhtinian perspective, the sequence of images I have been discussing may be seen as a set of utterances, in a chain of signification. In this regard, we can conclude that, as Sekula (1982:85) argues, "the photograph [a single photograph] is an 'incomplete' utterance", and it is only when examined in dialogical relationship with other photographs — and in conjunction with the respective interpretive captions — that it gains fuller readability and capacity for narrative. The complex web of dialogic interrelations that emerges from the conceptualisation of the exhibition as a set of utterances engenders a tension in the work that ties in with David Levi Strauss's (2003:10) observation: "To be compelling, there must be tension in the work; if everything has been decided beforehand, there will be no tension and no compulsion to the work". This tension is what compels the viewer to engage with and respond to the photographs individually, to the groupings of photographs, and to the narrative as a whole, during the visual encounter with Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic work.

Fig. 21 Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, *Naema Erasmus*, Mannenburg, Cape Flats, Western Cape, South Africa, 2004

According to the Photographers' Gallery's Marketing and Press Review (MPR)[102], 39,269 spectators, averaging 9,576 spectators per week, attended the show. Of these, 80.2% were British and the remainder 19.8% were mostly from European countries[103]. The audience's response to the exhibition was extremely positive, as Camilla Brown observed in a personal interview:

> We didn't get any negative responses about the show. We got a lot of people who found it incredibly moving ... It had a very human direct response, and it's partially because of the size of the work and the fact that in a lot of the portraits people are looking directly out at the viewers, and engage their eyes with your eyes. I think it pulls you in and makes you identify with them ... People that you wouldn't expect to engage with, you suddenly were confronted directly with in the space, and read their stories, or part of their stories. A lot of people told me they were moved by it.

Parallel to the exhibition audience's direct response, the show attracted considerable attention from the British media, including television, radio, national newspapers, consumer magazines, photography publications, exhibition listings and websites. The exhibition catalogue, which was published to coincide with the opening of the exhibition, ensured a wider degree of exposure. In this respect, in an online symposium titled *Museums of Tomorrow: A Virtual Discussion* — later edited for publication by Maurice Berger (2004) — Mary Kelly stresses,

> The exhibition is also a system of meaning that includes not only the display or works and their reproduction along with commentary in the catalogue, but reviews in art magazines and, most prominently, the daily press, which plays a large part in determining how many people will even try to get to the guided tour.

In effect, Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic project evoked media interest that generated public awareness about contemporary post-apartheid South Africa and drew the appropriate interested audience into the Photographers' Gallery. In an extensive article titled "The Winds of Change", David Beresford (2004), writing for *The Observer Magazine*, hones in on the successes and shortcomings of the first decade of democracy in South Africa, questioning just how much the country has changed. His most trenchant criticism is reserved for the then president Thabo Mbeki, whom he accuses of vanity, of gross inefficiency in his handling of the HIV/Aids scourge in South Africa, and of committing innumerable gaffes. The article is richly illustrated with ten photographs by Broomberg and Chanarin, accompanied

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[102] The Marketing and Press Review was made accessible to me by Camilla Brown.
[103] Aside from these figures, the audience profile breakdown in the MPR reveals that 1.5% of the spectators were white South Africans and 0.5% were black Africans.

by unusually detailed captions (for a newspaper article); more detailed, in fact, than some of the text accompanying the photographs in the book. While the author expresses his own particular view of post-apartheid South Africa, the photographs, together with the stories at their side, rather than simply lend credence to his statements, draw the reader's attention to the content of the images that depicts the stark reality of specific lives. The reader is then given access to the photographed subjects' thoughts about South Africa — which, in some cases, are more optimistic than those of the author — or his/her personal aspirations and dreams, in the form of a first-person narrative.

Other journalists wrote about Broomberg and Chanarin's photography series in national newspapers, but none were quite as blunt in their analysis of the social fractures — some new, others that have been maintained or deepened since the demise of apartheid — threatening South Africa's non-racial democracy. Favourable previews and reviews were published in *Metro Life* (which gave the exhibition a rating of three out of five stars), in *The Times* (four out of five stars), in *The Independent*, in *The Guardian* and in *Tribune*[104]. Emmanuel Cooper (2004), writing for *Tribune*, concluded that "By turns exhilarating and salutary, this fascinating exhibition adds a further dimension to our knowledge and understanding of this absorbing country".

The project also received significant attention from consumer magazines, photography publications and internet sites, including *Dazed & Confused*, *The Big Issue*, *Time Out London*, *BBC Focus on Africa*, *British Journal of Photography*, *Digital Photographer*, londonart.co.uk, news.bbc.co.uk and 24hourmuseum.org.uk[105]. While David Beresford (2004) focuses on some of the socio-economic issues that continue to engender poverty and gross inequality among the population in South Africa ten years after apartheid, Beth White (2004), writing for *Dazed & Confused*, explores the resilience of the traditional African cultural practice of male circumcision among the Xhosa tribe that is still very much embedded in contemporary society, highlighting the dangers of "bush" circumcision practices for public health. In particular, she claims, there is a growing fear from health officials "about HIV/Aids being

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[104] See Fisun Güner's (2004) review titled "Ever since Apartheid" in *Metro Life*; Peter Chapman's (2004) review in *The Independent* and Joanna Pitman's (2004) review titled "A Land of Hope" for *The Times*.

[105] See Chrisi Franks's (2004) review titled "South African Portraits" for *Dazed & Confused*; Charles Howgego's (2004) piece in *The Big Issue*; the review titled "Reality bites" in *Time Out London*; Marieke Hoogendijk's (2004) piece titled "South Africa: A Changing Nation" in *The Big Issue in Scotland*, and Mary Harper's (2004) article titled "Lives in Focus" in *BBC Focus on Africa*.

transmitted to entire schools", resulting from the use of the same non-sterile blade on a whole group of initiates. Worsening the already serious situation are the aftercare medical complications that often occur. Many of the boys develop infections and gangrenous wounds. Although some initiates die, and many have to undergo penile amputation and plastic surgery, "Families are increasingly spending thousands of rand on gifts for the initiation schools, and the first 'super-school' is being built in the urbanised Cape Flats region, with the expectation that over 600 youths will 'graduate' per year", writes White (2004:121).

A full-page landscape shows an isolated makeshift tent made of plastic sheets in the middle of the bush. The second photograph in this four-page feature story is a close-up portrait that draws our attention to a young man wrapped in a blanket, revealing only his painted face. The subject's direct cold stare, seemingly fixed on the viewer, and firmly-set thick red lips discourage any type of proximity. Next to the image a quote reads, "Previously men won glory by fighting against the colonists. Now the only way to hold your head high is to be circumcised". The third image is the full-length portrait, discussed earlier, of the same young man, Mandlenkosi Noghayi.

The extensive media coverage on the "Mr. Mkhize and other stories from the new South Africa" exhibition enabled readers to get a sense of the overall themes explored in Broomberg and Chanarin's photographic project, and gain a deeper understanding of both the trajectory covered in South Africa during the first decade of democracy as well as the social problems with which the country is grappling. The interest of a British audience in this exhibition brings to mind Ferguson's (1996) theoretical discussion about the circumstances and factors contributing to audience receptivity. Ferguson (1996:184) argues: "As a system of critical representations, exhibitions must be seen in terms of their differentiating forms, media, content and expressive force within the environment and historical conditions in which each of their solicitations are proposed and received".

Fundamentally, the United Kingdom has a long history of relations and economic interest in South Africa, from colonialism to the present day. The apartheid era, and particularly the implementation of draconian apartheid legislation in the 1950s, followed by the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, unleashed a storm of protest from the international community. Strong condemnation of the apartheid government's racist policies and oppressive regime was followed by the application of economic sanctions and an arms embargo instituted by the United Nations (UN). Although South Africa

was excluded from the Commonwealth of Nations in 1961, the British government was reluctant to sever all ties with the South African government.

The banning in 1960 of the ANC and the PAC in South Africa led activists in exile to seek support abroad for the liberation movement. A Boycott Movement had begun to take shape in the UK in 1959 and in 1960 it formally became known as the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM). According to a special edition of the *Anti-Apartheid News* (Summer 2009) celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the AAP, "The AAM was founded in response to an appeal from the South African Congress movement. It involved individual supporters, political parties, trade unions, and religious and secular organisations in the common cause of overthrowing apartheid". Over the years the AAM grew into a powerful international solidarity movement.

The AAM called for sanctions and the total isolation of apartheid South Africa. It also campaigned to end the supply of arms and all military collaboration with South Africa, since Britain was South Africa's major arms supplier in the early 1960s. The 1964-70 Labour government imposed a ban, but it was lifted by the Conservative government in 1970. Following the murder of Steve Biko by South African security forces in 1977, the UN imposed a mandatory arms embargo, but the 1979-92 Conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher exploited its loopholes and continued to exchange military expertise with South Africa. The campaign eventually grew to include the boycott of South African sports, arts, academic and all cultural interactions, forcing the cancellation of the 1970 Springbok cricket tour. After this, South Africa was expelled from nearly every international sporting federation.

Alongside the UK, Scandinavian countries — together with the Netherlands — proved to be amongst the most supportive of the liberation movement, despite expressing strong disapproval of the ANC's recourse to the armed struggle and its links to the South African Communist Party (SACP) (Callinicos 2002). Lindiwe Mabuza, former ANC activist, and the High Commissioner of South Africa to the UK from 2001, recalls that support from Scandinavian countries came in the form of funds (in 1985, $3.5 million were raised to support the ANC youth). In her words,

> When I had first arrived in Sweden the isolated anti-apartheid South African community had roughly a dozen organisations, but by 1986 the Swedish People's Parliament against Apartheid had grown to the extent that only a handful of organisations were not part of this broad mass movement (*Anti-Apartheid News* 2009:12).

The wide public support of the AAM, which translated into popular mobilisation against apartheid in the UK (as well as in Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands) for decades, explains the general public's continued interest in South Africa's journey into democracy. In this respect, South African artists have attracted attention from the international art circuit, whose interest is directed at forms of expression that encompass the diversity and contradictions that continue to define the country well after its transition to a non-racial democracy. Consequently, numerous solo and group shows of South African photographers have been curated in contemporary art museums and photography galleries abroad.

In late 2004 Broomberg and Chanarin were invited to present a selection of images from the *Mr.Mkhize's portrait & other stories from the new South Africa* series, alongside the work of seven South African photographers — Santu Mofokeng, David Goldblatt, Jodi Bieber, Guy Tillim, Lolo Veleko and Jo Ractliffe — in a touring exhibition titled "UNSETTLED: 8 South African Photographers". The exhibition, together with the catalogue of the same title, was produced by The National Museum of Photography at The Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark, to mark the tenth anniversary of the fall of apartheid. After Copenhagen, the show was featured at Kristanstads Konsthall in Sweden and in the Reykjavik Museum of Photography in Iceland. According to Mads Damsbo (2004:85), the exhibition's curator,

> The word 'unsettled' refers to the effect of the unknown on the subject. The word is frequently used in existentialism, where it designated the ethical encounter between the subject and its other. Although such encounters are an everyday phenomenon for most South Africans, facing one's mutually 'other' fellow citizens is still a challenge of existential proportions. Racism still prevails, and one of the major tasks of the new regime has been to institute the breaking down of former myths, prejudices and categories of perception. The eight photographers presented in UNSETTLED all engage actively in this process of redefinition.

For Sean O'Toole (2004:95), a South African art critic, the word "unsettled" evokes "the turbulent character of life in contemporary South Africa … the godless aftermath in which [South Africans] are optimistically reconstituting [themselves] as a nation, ever cognisant of the immensity of the passage [they] have just made". "Unsettled" too, he observes, is the "artistic terrain [he] inhabits, this country that will not easily be fixed: not by words, not by images" (97). This leads me to think about the difficult task of selecting photographers for a group show that aims to reflect (as the exhibition's organiser, Ingrid Fischer Jonge (2004:6), writes) on South

Africa's "process of transformation — a process where no one knows the outcome, and a process that applies to everyone".

The choice fell upon photographers whose work navigates the difficult terrain of post-apartheid South Africa, revealing the multiple tensions and conflicts that continue to leave their imprint in the country's social and political landscape. However, any selection of artists raises complex issues about who does the selecting, who is selected and who is left out. These issues, although pertinent, fall outside of the scope of my study. Ingrid Fischer Jonge (2004:6) stresses that "The eight photographers represent different generations, and this gives the exhibition an extra dimension by virtue of their different experiences".

In the essay he wrote for the exhibition catalogue, O'Toole prefers to point out what distinguishes each photographer in character, style and subject matter. Goldblatt's work, for example, bears evidence of his "sociological engagement with the land" and "concern with values" (90). Mofokeng's recent work, on the other hand, is concerned with "the exegesis of struggle", "with the struggle of memory and forgetting" (92). By contrast, Bieber, a much younger photographer, focuses on "the flotsam and jetsam of South Africa's postcolonial, capitalist society", whereas Tillim is dedicated to "the fraught enterprise of documenting human misery" (93). In Ractliffe's images there is a constant oscillation "between the immensity implied and the banality depicted". Veleko "is profoundly concerned with issues of race". Broomberg and Chanarin are concerned with "letting people represent themselves instead of pretending to catch the defining moment that speaks the unwitting truth" (96).

This reflection suggests a shift away from a shared social and political commitment to the anti-apartheid struggle characterising South African photographers' work — particularly among the *Afrapix* collective during the 1980s — to an investment of a more personal and self-reflexive nature after the demise of apartheid. A broader spectrum of themes, photographic languages, perspectives and conceptual approaches exemplifies the recent work of both older and younger photographers. This has led to the renewed interest of the international art world in South African photographers, resulting in the increased presence of their work in exhibition venues both at home and abroad.

In the case of Broomberg and Chanarin, the fact that they have been based in London, and have acquired recognition in the international art market through their

work as editors and photographers of *Colors* magazine and subsequent publication of *Ghetto*, has served as a platform for wider international exposure and discussion of their work. In 2006 they were invited to present a selection of photographs from *Mr. Mkhize and other stories from the new South Africa*, together with a then-recent photography series titled *Chicago* (2006)[106], in a major exhibition titled "Facts, Fictions and Stories" at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam[107].

In a personal interview[108] Hripsime Visser, the curator of the exhibition discussed both her interest in Broomberg and Chanarin's work and the conceptualisation of the exhibition "Facts, Fictions and Stories":

> It was the book, the book *Ghetto*, and the fact that they give people their voices because of course there's been a lot of aestheticising — also in documentary — and documentary has become fashionable also for the art world, and what I like is that they try to create a bridge between the two worlds: the documentary world, the magazine world and also the art world. On the one hand, you have a large format camera, so you have the precision and the presence of a work of art and; on the other hand, they try to give people their voices, which led also to very interesting discussions when installing the exhibition because we installed it very much in a museum-like way. They said, 'This is completely different from what we did at the Photographers' Gallery, where it was much more a magazine and now it's really an Art Museum'. But then we were adding the text, and they said, 'Oh, do we really need this text? This is so beautiful'. So for them also, they started to hesitate and I said, 'Well, it's your project, and I think you should do it because the quotes are important. You want to give people their own presence, their own voices in the exhibition'. So, it's interesting how they also developed.

The four distinct exhibitions discussed here illustrate that the production of photographic meaning is, as has been widely theorised in literature, contingent on the historical, political, social, cultural and institutional context(s) in which a body of work is produced, circulated and consumed. As Kristine Roome (2002:73) argues, "[M]eaning is made and constantly remade depending on audience and venue", and, in conjunction with this, depending also, I add, on institutional mandates and

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[106] This series of photographs, which explores aspects of war and propaganda in Israel, consists of a set of images taken in Chicago, a mock Palestinian village in the middle of the Negev desert where the Israeli army hold military drills. Another set of images draw attention to precision bombs camouflaged as everyday objects, and a third set to landscapes of Mini Israel, a gigantic scale model of the most important places in Israel, created as a tourist attraction.

[107] The exhibition ran from 10 November 2006 to 18 February 2007.

[108] The interview was conducted at the Stedelijk Museum on 9 November 2006.

curatorial practices or purposes underpinning the presentation of a photographic work.

At Constitution Hill, Broomberg and Chanarin's project was presented within the celebratory context of the ten-year anniversary of the democracy and Constitution of South Africa, privileging the historical meaning of the photographs. At the Photographers' Gallery the focus was on the photographic narration of the political and social successes and failures of this fledgling democracy, which provided an opportunity for interpretative commentary. In the Scandinavian countries emphasis was placed on the articulation between the works of a disparate group of photographers, whose varying approaches and styles not only engendered multiple interpretations about the "realities" of post-apartheid South Africa, but also provided a composite view of contemporary South African photography. The Stedelijk Museum exhibition, in contrast, sought to draw attention firstly to the aesthetic dimension of the work and only then to the political and social meaning with which it is invested. In this last case, the exhibition design had an effect on the way viewers looked at photographs, placing strong emphasis on their status as art objects.

In essence, the restaging of Broomberg and Chanarin's photography series in different institutional and cultural sites of exhibition resonates strongly with John Walker's (1997:56) critical reflection on the context of viewing as a determinant of photographic meaning. Walker argues,

> In the majority of cases, the result of a context shift is a change of emphasis in the photograph's depicted content: different parts or characteristics of the image appear important in different display contexts. Alternatively, its whole meaning is given a new significance, is enhanced or modified.

Following this line of reasoning, photographer Jo Ractliffe (n.d) stresses, "[T]he meaning [of photographs] is not fixed, nor is it located inherently within them. They reflect different things over time and as their contexts shift and other interests are brought to bear upon them, they mean new things". The same thought, put in another way, has been cogently argued by Stuart Hall (1997: 228):

> [T]he same photo can carry several, quite different, sometimes diametrically opposite meanings. It can be a picture of disgrace or of triumph, or both. Many meanings, we might say, are potential within the photo. But there is no one, true meaning. Meaning 'floats'. It cannot be finally fixed. However, attempting to 'fix' it is the work of a representational practice, which intervenes in the many potential meanings of an image in an attempt to privilege one.

3.5 "We the People": in quest of democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights

As has been variously established in photography theory, context is a fundamental determinant of photographic meaning, since photographs are produced at the intersection of specific historical, political and social circumstances and are therefore carriers of social meaning. As Miles Orvell (2003:15) argues, "[O]ne must begin to understand a work by developing a historical sense of its original purpose". I propose, then, to focus more closely on the historical and social context in which Broomberg and Chanarin's project was produced, starting with the significance and purpose of the Constitution within South Africa's historical and social matrix.

Essentially, in a country previously modelled on discriminatory and repressive laws, the Constitution represented a paradigm change in the judiciary. According to Currie and de Waal (2005:7), the principles of constitutionalism; the rule of law, democracy and accountability; separation of powers and checks and balances; co-operative government and devolution of power "tie the provisions of the Constitution together and shape them into a framework that defines the new constitutional order". The jurisprudence of constitutionalism ensures that government derives its powers from a written constitution, and that structural and procedural limitations are imposed on state power, thereby preventing abusive and oppressive use of power.

The doctrine of the rule of law mandates that state institutions act in accordance with the law, thereby precluding the arbitrary exercise of public power. The principles of democracy and accountability entail the encouragement of direct and participatory forms of democracy. As Currie and de Waal (2005:15) observe, "Participatory democracy means that individuals or institutions must be given the opportunity to take part in the making of decisions that affect them". Guaranteeing the exercise of this fundamental right is the implementation of effective checks and balances in relation to the exercise of state power, as a means of ensuring accountability, responsiveness and openness of government. Hence, the Constitution provides for a separation of power between the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. As Currie and de Waal (2005:21) emphasise,

> The purpose of checks and balances is to ensure that the different branches of government control each other internally ('checks') and serve as counterweights to the power possessed by the other branches ('balances'). Simply put, whereas the

purpose of separating functions and personnel is to limit power, the purpose of checks and balances is to make the branches of government accountable to each other.

Considering the historical circumstances that preceded the development and adoption of the Constitution, the jurisprudence of constitutionalism provided the most viable form of political organisation for a society in transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. The key political and legal notions encapsulated in the political ethic of constitutionalism – rule of law, human rights and civil rights – displaced the hegemonic discourse on 'power' and introduced a discourse on 'rights', laying the basis for democratic political practice. A culture and morality of constitutionalism placed the individual at the centre of social justice, reinforcing the need for the implementation of a democratic system of government committed to the consolidation of socio-political cohesion. Fundamental to this project was the development of citizens' political consciousness and the nurturing of a shared sense of the civic dimension of existence. The drafting of the text drew on the contributions of members of the public in the largest public participation programme ever devised in the history of the country, thereby ensuring its legitimacy and relevance in the eyes of all South Africans (Devenish 1998).

The fourteen chapters of *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (2009) — of which the Bill of Rights is a keystone — chart the values of a sovereign democratic state, specifying the rights, privileges and benefits of all South African citizens while underscoring their duties and responsibilities. The Preamble to the Constitution reflects the objectives and foundational values underpinning the Constitution, orientating our understanding and interpretation of the document. It reads as a covenant between the people and the law, in which the injustices of the past are invoked as a means of establishing a society predicated on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. It further lays the groundwork for a new democratic political order steered by the rule of law and the entrenchment of social and economic justice. Importantly, harking back to the social contract theory[109], "We, the people of South Africa", pledge to contribute to the social and political stability of the country by firstly respecting the differences and liberties of others, and, secondly delegating the exercise of power to a body of freely elected

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[109] Among the historical figures representing the social contract theory are Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hume and Kant. Notwithstanding the differences in both the approach and the arguments sustaining their distinct theses, a common thread running through the development of the contractarian tradition is, as Sayre-McCord (2000:247) defends, "the conviction that moral norms or political institutions find legitimacy … in their ability to secure (under the appropriate conditions) the agreement of those to whom they apply".

representatives of the people. In this context, political legitimacy arises out of the contractarian precepts binding individuals and the state to a set of moral and political obligations. Thus the Preamble to the Constitution reads,

> We, the people of South Africa,
> Recognise the injustices of our past;
> Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;
> Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country;
> and
> Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.
> We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this
> Constitution as the supreme law of the republic so as to —
> Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic
> values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
> Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government
> is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally
> protected by law;
> Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
> Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful
> place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.
> May God protect our people
> Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika …

Since its adoption in 1996, great efforts have been made to ensure that the fundamental rights and freedom of all citizens enshrined in the Constitution are protected in the post-apartheid socio-political landscape. At the institutional level, the Constitution makes provision for the creation of state institutions tasked with supporting constitutional democracy by monitoring the observance of political and socio-economic rights. These include the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC); the Public Protector; the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Commission); the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE); the Auditor-General (AG); the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC); and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

Central among the public human rights institutions is the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), which was founded in 1995 (under the Human Rights Commission Act 54 of 1994) to promote a culture of human rights by carrying out research and running education and awareness-raising programmes. Ultimately, the SAHRC has been mandated to take steps where citizens' human rights have been

violated. Key to the accomplishment of this mission is the dissemination of the principles governing the "Bill of Rights" (Chapter 2 of *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*). Section 7 of the "Bill of Rights" declares that "This Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom" (6).

Crucially, the "Bill of Rights" comprises the following fundamental rights provisions: the right to equality and freedom from discrimination; the right to human dignity; the right to life; the right to freedom and security; slavery, servitude and forced labour; the right to privacy; the right to religion, belief and opinion; the right to freedom of expression; the right to freedom of assembly, demonstration and petition; the right to freedom of association; political rights; citizenship; the right to freedom of movement and residence; the right to freedom of trade, occupation and profession; labour relations; environment; the right to property; the right to housing; the right to health care, food, water and social security; children's rights; the right to education; the right to language and culture; the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities; the right of access to information; the right to just administrative action; the right of access to courts; and the rights of arrested, detained and accused persons.

The provisions of the "Bill of Rights" reflect the fundamental values on which the Constitution is premised. These values are set out in Chapter 1 of the Constitution, which deals with the founding provisions. In essence, four fundamental intertwining political values are said to constitute the baseline of the democratic political system. The first concerns protection of human dignity, promotion of equality and advancement of human rights and freedoms. The second condemns the practice of racism and sexism. The third advocates the supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law. The fourth encapsulates universal adult suffrage, a national common voters roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government which abides by the principles of accountability, responsiveness and openness. However, just as the founding provisions stipulate the political obligations binding the body politic, they also clearly define the entitlement of citizenship. Hence, there is a common South African citizenship that affords all citizens the same rights, privileges and benefits, and equally subjects them to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

The principles underpinning the constitution of a democratic state consensually achieved by the nation – "another name for 'We the People'", as Nodia (1994:7) defends – are based upon the declaration of the freedom and equality of citizens (Habermas, 1995). As a member of a polity any citizen is entitled to equal opportunities and, in Habermas' (1995:260) words, "equal protection and respect in his or her inviolable integrity as a unique individual, as a member of an ethnic or cultural group and as a citizen". Accordingly, the South African Constitution cultivates what Habermas terms "constitutional patriotism", which translates into the understanding and acceptance of ethnic, linguistic and culturally diverse forms of life.

This is especially important in the context of South Africa's long history of oppression preceding the adoption of what Ronald Louw (2006:27) terms the "first democratic Constitution". Forming the basis of the right to equality — one of the central rights in the Constitution — is the understanding that, according to section 9 of the "Bill of Right", "Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law". Substantiated by this fundamental principle, the equality provision articulates the following:

> The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

A growing body of literature has emerged in response to the many transformations in the post-apartheid socio-political landscape, which draws attention to the role of the Constitution in providing a legal framework upon which the new democratic dispensation was able to shape a new social and political order. The respect for human rights and freedoms advocated by the Constitution figures prominently among the values that the post-apartheid government sought to entrench in civil society. Human dignity, equality and freedom are often referred to as inalienable constitutional rights which motivated the policy directives underpinning the post-apartheid political agenda. While some critical literature (Louw, 2006) highlights the right to equality, other views (Liebenberg, 2005) focus on the role that human dignity plays in socio-economic rights jurisprudence, but both approaches stress the interrelation of these central values in the new constitutional jurisprudence. As Louw (2006:34) notes, "neither the concept nor the realisation of equality can take place in isolation", substantiating this view with a Court ruling that states:

Our Constitution entrenches both civil and political rights. All the rights in our Bill of Rights are inter-related and mutually supporting. There can be no doubt that human dignity, freedom and equality, the foundational values of our society, are denied those who have no food, clothing or shelter. Affording socio-economic rights to all people therefore enables them to enjoy the other rights enshrined in Chapter 2. The realisation of these rights is also key to the advancement of race and gender equality and the evolution of a society in which men and women are equally able to achieve their full potential.

Liebenberg (2005:142) argues that failure to provide both subsistence needs and ensure living conditions worthy of the dignity of people not only results in threats to individuals' life and health, but importantly "impedes the development of a whole range of human capabilities, including the ability to fulfil life plans and participate effectively in political, economic and social life". Loss at individual level will impact on society as a whole, since, as Sachs (quoted in Liebenberg, 2005:142) argues, "While recognising the unique worth of each person, the Constitution does not presuppose that a holder of rights is an isolated, lonely and abstract figure possessing a disembodied and socially disconnected self."

Following this line of argument, Liebenberg draws on Martha Nussbaum's thesis on the associational dimension of human life to stress the notion "of the human being as a dignified free being who shapes his or her own life in cooperation and reciprocity with others, rather than being passively shaped or pushed around by the world in the manner of a 'flock' or 'herd' animal" (quoted in Liebenberg, 2005:146). While subscribing to this approach to human dignity, which articulates the individual's exercise of agency, Liebenberg goes a step further in exploring the interdependence between human potential and agency and an environment of basic liberties and material support. She cogently argues,

If we are to constitute ourselves as a society that respects human dignity (as we have through the founding values of our Constitution), we are committed to redressing the social and economic conditions of those whose capacity for development and agency is stunted by poverty. By failing to do so, we undermine the very foundations of our new constitutional democracy (151).

In the introduction to this chapter I reflect on the importance of both the legal framework provided by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* and the values therein for the entrenchment of a new constitutional and democratic order in

post-apartheid South Africa. The Constitution inherited from the interim *Constitution of South Africa* (Act 200 of 1993)[110] the mandate to provide:

> a historic bridge between a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future society founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence and development of opportunities for all South Africans, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex.

In response to the legacy of apartheid, which denied the humanity and the basic human dignity of the majority of the country's inhabitants for four decades, the Constitution aimed to inculcate in society human and social values based on the respect for human rights and dignity, thereby promoting a change in social conduct and inter-human relations. In its most fundamental sense, the Constitution aspired to cultivate respect for the intrinsic worth of all human beings, and advanced the idea that the individual's whole existence is relative to that of the group. Human dignity should be conceived of as a relational value, as Liebenberg (2005) suggests, since we are interconnected beings and our senses of self-worth and personal development are inextricably bound up with those of others. The meaning of human dignity gains salience when its social value is highlighted and one understands the responsibility placed on the individual for ensuring the well-being of his fellow man[111]. This change in paradigm is, in my view, one of the greatest achievements of the South African Constitution, and the ideal to which any civil society should aspire.

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[110] Provision on "National Unity and Reconciliation" termed the postscript or postamble of the *Constitution of South Africa* Act 200 of 1993.
[111] This notion is intimately tied to the social values of group solidarity, conformity, compassion, respect, human dignity, humanistic orientation and collective unity underpinning the concept of *ubuntu*, which is invoked in the postscript of the interim *Constitution* (Mokgoro, 1998).

3.6 Ten years of democracy: a photographic mode of engagement with the "new" South Africa

The prescription of democracy and freedom articulated by the new constitutional dispensation provides the backdrop against which I propose to continue discussing the photographic project by Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin (2004a) titled *Mr. Mkhize's portrait & other stories from the new South Africa*. This approach contrasts the constitutional vision of a society modelled on human rights and social justice (outlined in the previous section) with the photographic representation of members of that society ten years into democracy. Viewed with the constitutional values in mind, this photographic material interrogates the advancement of a human rights culture in general, and in particular the respect for human dignity in post-apartheid South Africa. It also encourages engagement with developments at the social and political level in South Africa prior to 2004, enabling a more complex understanding of the socio-political conditions that frame the visual representations dealt with in this chapter.

I have discussed the close-up portrait of Mr. Mkhize that was selected both to open the exhibitions at the Photographers' Gallery in London and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and to introduce the photography series published in book form. I now wish to consider this photograph in relation to others in the book, and to the text accompanying the photographs, since as John Walker (1997:56) argues,

> [W]hen a photograph — considered as a single unit of meaning — enters into a montage relationship with either a caption, text, another picture, or a particularly potent display context, then a third-effect meaning can be generated from that juxtaposition which was not inherent in either of the terms seen in isolation.

In effect, the close-up portrait eschews any contextualising detail within the picture's frame that might anchor the image to a particular historical moment or set of social circumstances. It is only after reading the accompanying explanatory text that the viewer gains access to precise social and political co-ordinates that place the image within an interpretative framework. By contrast, Mr. Mkhize's close-up shot is integrated with two other images which are overtly symbolic and very skilfully composed to reinforce contextual meanings. What is stressed in these photographs is not the subjects themselves but their relation to their socio-economic environment.

Let us take as an example the photograph where Mr. Mkhize appears seated on a narrow bed across from his younger-looking wife, who is sitting on another bed (Fig.22). The room is sparsely furnished with two single beds against opposite walls. Bare dirty walls intersect with a dark, cold concrete floor. The only decoration in the room is some graffiti and magazine clippings of soccer players, cover girls and smiling children and youngsters papered on part of the wall facing us. These allude, perhaps, to the couple's interests and dreams — to go to a soccer match, to have children, or to have their children living with them.

Sunlight streams into the room through bare windows on the same wall. What immediately strikes us about these living conditions is the discomfort of the room, which is further intensified by the distance between the beds, creating the impression of a forced physical distance between the couple. The only amenities in the room are two tape-recorders displayed on a box and another on the floor in between the two beds — a luxury, no doubt, if we consider the bare essentials with which the couple live. The visually expansive horizontal format used for the portrait connects the subjects closely to their surroundings, but sets them apart physically by virtue of the layout of the bare room. This further accentuates the cold environment characterised by an absence of personal belongings and intimacy. We are made aware that this couple's living reality distances them from the Western conception of "home" and of a "family life" to which most viewers relate.

The subjects occupy marginal and isolated positions in the frame, implying isolation and solitariness. Yet each subject assumes a concentrated pose, half turning to look straight at the camera. Mrs. Mkhize's pose is calm and dignified. Her expression is guarded, giving little indication of her thoughts. The only visual relief from the otherwise dismal setting is provided by the colourful prints of Mrs Mkhize's headscarf, blouse and skirt, which contrast both with the bleak setting and with Mr. Mkhize's faded denim overalls. With his head tilted slightly to one side, his right arm outstretched and the wrist resting casually on his knee, Mr. Mkhize leans slightly forward in a serious and questioning attitude. Although the subjects have been posed in their room, the formality — or strangeness — of the event produces a guarded pose and a sense of discomfort, giving the impression that they found the photographic encounter unsettling.

The visual elements in the frame encapsulate the dire reality of the subjects' living circumstances and the trappings of their social condition. Another layer of meaning is produced when we examine, to use Alvarado's (2001:159) formulation, "how the

photograph contains and reworks wider political, social and economic questions". This is best achieved if we relate the image's implied narrative to the larger history of urban development and the emergence of townships and, in particular, the construction of migrant single-sex hostels during the apartheid era. The explicitness of this connection is stressed in the text accompanying the image, which reads,

> Mr. Mkhize lives in Madala hostel in Alexandra, a township in the heart of Johannesburg's affluent northern suburbs. The apartheid government built single-sex hostels like Madala to accommodate rural migrants looking for work in the city. Mr. Mkhize has lived there for fifteen years ... Ten years after South Africa's democratic elections, Mr. Mkhize is still a migrant worker. He still lives in Madala hostel ... He used to share his room with three men. Now he lives there with his wife, for the first time in their married life.

This text, together with the text supplementing the close-up shot of Mr. Mkhize discussed earlier, brings into view the trajectory of citizenship for the black majority of South Africa's population from apartheid to the post-apartheid era. As has already been discussed in Chapter 1, under apartheid the pass book became a key instrument used by the authorities to control the movement of disenfranchised black city dwellers. This mechanism of influx control, together with a sweep of bantu labour regulations, came about largely as a result of the rapid urban demographic growth provoked by a steady movement of population from rural to urban areas in the 1920s and 1930s. The mining town of Johannesburg, most notably, saw a sharp increase in its migrant mining population during this period of expansion of mining and industry.

Founded in the gold-mining area of the Witwatersrand — commonly known as the Rand — Johannesburg owed its expansion to the discovery of gold in 1886 and subsequent large capital investments and industrialisation in the first decades of the twentieth century. It became the core of the largest commercial centre in the subcontinent, also known as the PWV — an acronym for Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging complex. Economically, within the first decade of the twentieth century, Johannesburg thrived from the Rand's position as the producer of 40 per cent of the world's gold (Beinart, 2001). Politically, structurally and physically it grew in the 1950s and 60s in tandem with the exclusivist thinking of apartheid's social engineering[112].

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[112] Currently, as Beavon (2004:11) notes, "The PWV, which comprises only 2,5 per cent of the area of South Africa, is the powerhouse of the whole country [and the financial capital of Southern Africa]; Johannesburg, at the centre of the region is the single most important metropolis, with 12 per cent of the national employment".
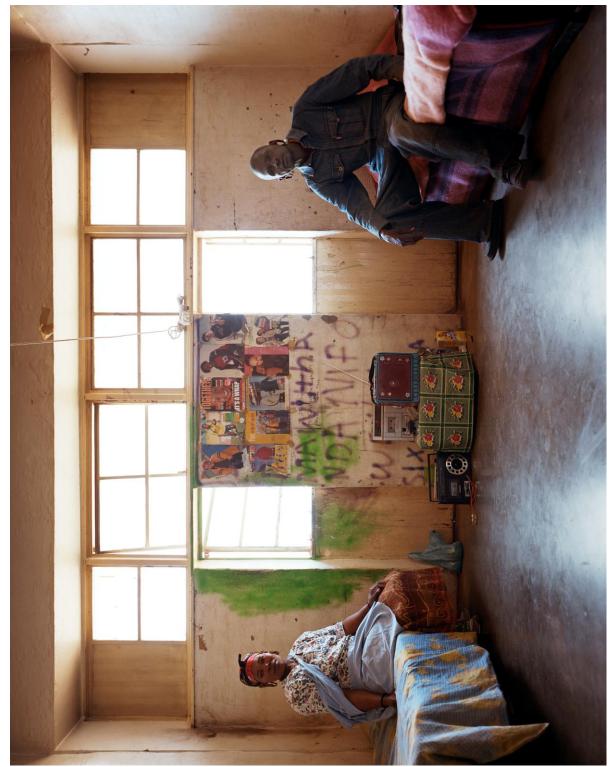
Fig. 22 Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, *Mr. Mkhize and his wife*, Madala Hostel, Alexandra Township, Gauteng, 2004
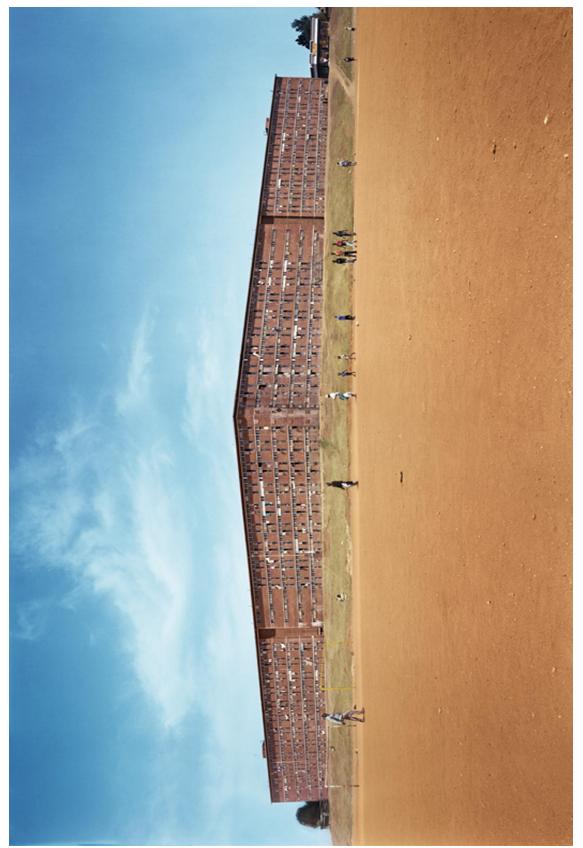
Fig. 23 Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, Madala Hostel, Alexandra Township, Gauteng, 2004

With the development of economic activity a new social and spatial configuration of towns and cities began to emerge. Despite the attempt at socio-spatial control imposed by the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923, slum yards, rent racketeering and backyard shacks housing domestic servants proliferated in towns and cities throughout the country. Townships or locations within short travel distances to places of employment, like Alexandra and Sophiatown in Johannesburg and Cato Manor in Durban, housed the largest part of the black urban population. Further from places of employment, fringe townships, including Orlando (around which Soweto grew) in south-west of Johannesburg, Umlazi in Durban, and Khayelitsha in Cape Town exemplify what became mass-settlements under apartheid.

Following the NP's 1948 election victory, apartheid legislation became a canon of governance which, among other objectives, sought to streamline the spatial division of urban residential areas. In the 1940s the increase – particularly in Durban – of Indian house and business property ownership gave rise to a set of interrelated measures. The Pegging Act of 1943 restricted Indian purchase; the Asiatic Land Tenure Act of 1946, the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951 implemented racial zoning, resulting in the forced removal of Indians and coloureds from suburbs integrated in 'white residential areas'. According to Beinart (2001:153) around 60,000 people were removed from the centrally located District Six in Cape Town. Entire communities of both District Six and Kalk Bay were relocated to the Cape Flats or further afield to Mitchell's Plain in Cape Town east, or further still to Atlantis, forty kilometres to the north (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989). District Six was reconverted into a suburb for whites.

As previously noted, in the 1920s and 1930s the South African urban landscape started taking a disorderly shape[113]. Settlements grew haphazardly with no drainage or sewerage systems, electricity or water supply. In the face of a growing threat to public health and the urban social order, the 1934 Slums Act was created with the intention of enforcing slum clearances. Two decades later, the Natives Resettlement Act of 1954 made way for the demolition of Sophiatown, the multi-racial suburb of Johannesburg, and legitimised the relocation of thousands of blacks. In essence, though, the reshaping of the spatial layout of cities under which racial zoning was a

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[113] Intrinsic to rapid urbanisation in the first half of the twentieth century was the demographic growth in urban areas, due largely to a steady movement of population from rural to urban areas. According to Beinart (2001:126) "the percentage of the white population living in the urban areas increased more sharply from 50 to 75 per cent, trebling from about 600,000 to 1.8 million people by 1946". Between 1904 and 1946 the African population grew "from about 350,000 to 1.8 million", with an unequal growth rate of men and women.

core objective served, as Maylam (1995:26) notes, more than one capitalist interest: "first, [it facilitated] labour control and, second, [released] land for industrial purposes".

Evocative of Michel Foucault's carceral city, townships – notably, Soweto situated in the south-west of Johannesburg and Alexandra in the north-east – were essentially dormitory areas, which consisted of, as Manning (2004:529) describes, "row upon row of barracks-like matchbox houses … a limited number of access points and a geometric street layout … designed with the intention of restricting unregulated movement thereby curbing potential resistance". The tight equation between spatial organisation and socio-racial control, embedded in the psyche of the white ruling class, materialised into urban design grounded on the division of space which excluded black people both from the city's public space and from citizenship. Segregationist urban planning reserved the city centre and residential suburbs for whites while the black population was relegated to peri-urban townships. Under the apartheid schema of exclusion and control, motorways, greenbelts and industrial zones circumscribing the city made it difficult for township residents, who often had to travel long distances to get to work, to access the city centre.

Notwithstanding these segregationist measures, at the height of the slum clearance programme, white property owners whose houses were located in middle-income suburbs adjacent to the overcrowded Alexandra township campaigned for the abolition of Alexandra (or Alex, as it is commonly known). Although a full-scale clearance of Alexandra proved unfeasible, since the township was a strategic labour pool for the northern suburbs of Johannesburg, according to the urban specialist Pauline Morris (2000:7), "Between 1958 and 1973 nearly 56 000 people were forcibly relocated to Soweto in the new Resettlement Board townships of Meadowlands and Diepkloof, and some 15 000 to Tembisa in the north-east Rand". The state then proceeded to purchase properties sold to black families before the 1913 Land Act, demolish houses and renovate others for renting.

In 1963, in the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre and as part of the control measures of the State of Emergency, the apartheid government proposed to demolish all property in Alexandra and develop a hostel city. As Morris (2000) writes, "Family accommodation was to be eliminated and 25 hostels, each housing some 2500 'single' people were to be built". This scheme was never fully implemented, but despite resistance to forced relocation and wide protest about the social consequences of the destruction of family life, three hostels were completed. The first two, Madala

hostel and Nobuhie hostel, built in 1971 and 1972 respectively, were allocated to men; the third, a women's hostel, went up in 1981.

A Master Plan produced for Alexandra envisaged the construction of houses and the provision of services including water supply, sanitation and streets during the first decade of the 1980s, but was soon suspended due to a lack of finance. However, the first phase of the redevelopment plan — which relied on a programme of expropriation, forced removals and demolition of buildings — was carried out, resulting in widespread protest and conflict. Literature reveals that the mounting tension in the township was compounded by the unstable political environment of the 1980s. Concomitantly, the abolition of influx control in 1986 led to a rapid social and urban change. In practice, people from rural areas flocked to the cities — and to Johannesburg in particular — in search of employment, giving rise to a burgeoning of squatter settlements which sprang up alongside the hostels across the Rand. According to Segal (1991:209), the hostels "became shelters for the unemployed, and were often the first port of call for people entering urban environments". Hostel dwellers took in relatives and friends who ended up staying for indefinite periods of time. Soon single-sex hostels started housing hostel dwellers' wives and girlfriends. The resulting rapid increase (and change in demographics) in hostel population bred impoverishment and instability in the living environment. Segal draws on an earlier study to argue:

> The issue of space has long been a contested feature of hostel life. In hostels, 'the concept is of a "bed-holder" as opposed to a "house holder": this immediately introduces the politics of space, where people are limited to a bed as the only space over which they have some measure of control (209).

After the unbanning of the ANC, during the negotiation process between 1990 and 1992, political violence escalated in townships across the Witwatersrand. Literature advances different theories for the extent of violence during this period. In her study of the role of hostel dwellers in urban violence, Segal (1991) draws attention to structural elements which may have caused unrest, but does not discount the importance of the polarisation in the political landscape and the struggle for power between the ANC and the Inkatha during the negotiation period. Militancy grew in hostels, intensifying rivalry between those hostels controlled by ANC and those controlled by Inkatha members. Correlated to this trend, political ideology intersected with ethnic cultural values, entrenching political affiliation precepts and aggravating deep-rooted historical cleavages between Zulus and Xhosas. Clashes

between Zulu speaking Inkatha (IFP) hostel dwellers and ANC supporters — who were mostly Xhosa — spiralled out of control between 1991 and 1992. Hostels became seedbeds of crime, often masking criminal with political agendas (Stavrou, 1993).

As previously mentioned, Segal (1991:191) emphasises that "Structural elements such as the migrant labour system, single accommodation, and insalubrious living conditions, all contribute to and actively promote violence". Simpson and Rauch (1993), however, develop a different line of argument. They begin by pinpointing two main causes of the increase in political violence. Firstly, they claim that deconstruction of formal apartheid and deregulation of repressive forms of social control in the post-1990 period rendered the state's security forces ineffective and incapable of maintaining their authority. Secondly, they stress that an inbred (and historically-traced) culture of violence "as a means of both maintaining political power (on the part of the NP government) and as a means of resistance (on the part of the liberation movements) served to embroider the entire political culture with violence as a means of resolving conflict" (2). Simpson and Rauch conclude, however, that the political violence in South Africa is far too complex to have a mono-causal explanation. They state:

> The violence has been variously labelled as ethnic conflict, conflict between hostel dwellers and squatters or township residents, conflict between ANC and IFP supporters, conflict between the police and the residents, conflict between the poor and the very poor, conflict generated by government or a 'third force', etc. None of these descriptions is completely inaccurate. Yet none, on its own, will properly explain this complex situation (3).

Whatever the causes, the onset of violence had deep implications at the communal and social level. Simpson and Rauch (1993) are sceptical about the findings made public at the time, arguing that they vary according to the source, interpretation of the statistics and political agenda of the institution releasing the data. In my view, irrespective of the ideological discourses framing these institutions, statistics published by the Human Rights Committee (HRC), the South African Police (SAP), the South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR) or the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (Case)[114] are a powerful indictment of the socio-political makeup of townships across South Africa during the transition to democracy.

These studies discuss the trends in violence that characterise a period of intense political contest, offering a broad view of the proportion and politicisation of crime,

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[114] See Simpson and Rauch (1993).

but fail to reflect on the impact of violent crime on specific communities at the micro level. Of interest to the photographic analysis begun earlier in this section, in a report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), Stavrou (1993) provides a valuable indication of the forms and types of violence unleashed between January 1991 and May 1992, focusing on Alexandra township as a specific locus of violence. She observes that "the criminal element in Alex had taken advantage of the 'political unrest' in various ways" (5). In incidents involving Madala hostel dwellers, she suggests that given its arbitrariness, the violence perpetrated by the hostel dwellers was criminal rather than political. She writes,

> On 2 November 1991 … two men were killed after gunmen, said to have emerged from Madala hostel, indiscriminately opened fire on residents. In the time period January 1991 to May 1992, 49 people were killed and 230 injured in 26 incidents of violence related to this hostel (4).

These accounts prompted an inquiry into the impact of violent crime on inter-personal relationships and everyday human social interaction. Stavrou (1993) claims that although access to basic health, education and social services, clean water and sanitation, was grossly deficient in Alexandra at the time of publication of her survey, representing greater cause for concern in the community was the dramatic increase of violent crime[115] and the corresponding criminal behaviour of hostel dwellers. As she writes, "Despite the dreadful living conditions, respondents perceived crime to be the main problem in their area; followed by a fear of the hostels and hostel dwellers" (4). The respondents in Stavrou's study express fear of both specific physical environments (hostels) and a specific group of members (hostel dwellers) within the community, but they also identify other perpetrators in broad terms. Alongside the youth, the unemployed, squatters, 'com-tsotsis' and gangs, a significant group of outsiders (most notably squatters and the police) are perceived as equally dangerous.

Different forms of fear have shaped South Africa's politics and culture throughout its history, but fear of crime has taken on major proportions since the dawn of democracy in 1994. Alongside social and economic problems, fear of crime (more than crime itself, some have claimed) has waged an increasing threat on the emotional landscapes of everyday life (as will be explored at greater depth later in

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[115] According to Stavrou's (1993:5) survey, "The crimes the respondents felt most threatened by were … (1) fights and disturbances in the streets, including political as well as criminal violence; (2) housebreaking and entry; (3) assault; (4) sexual crimes, and (5) theft of motor vehicles".

the chapter). Thomas Hobbes, a pioneer of Western political thought, laid the theoretical ground for subsequent explorations of the role and nature of fear in social life. In *Leviathan,* Hobbes (1974:64) examines the interface between power and fear, arguing that human nature tends to a constant state of war where "every man is enemy to every man". Hobbes contends that the continual fear and danger of violent death dominates every aspect of life; a life that, in the state of nature, is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (65).

The notion that "every man is enemy to every man" underpins much of the contemporary scholarly analysis on fear. In South Africa the association of danger with race was used in government discourse to justify apartheid's policies of social and spatial segregation as a means of maintaining social order. *Fear* of the "dangerous black other" and *crime* were key mechanisms by which the state implemented repressive measures of control and appropriated space. More recently (in the period up to and following the demise of apartheid), fear has extended far beyond the scope of racial stereotypes. While white fear of black crime is still deeply embedded in the social fabric, at the neighbourhood level danger has become associated with other social identifiers, most notably the "ethnic other", the social outcast, and the "illegal alien".

Recent theoretical work on fear of violent crime has been developed within a framework of social and spatial exclusion. As Pain (2000) points out, fear of crime is increasingly seen as inextricably intertwined with crime, but also with a range of other social and economic problems encompassing housing, employment, environmental planning and social exclusion (relating to poverty, gender, race and so on). Correspondingly, specific neighbourhoods and physical environments are equated with higher indices of crime. This generates anxieties over crime, which, as Roberts (2008:2) stresses, motivates behavioural patterns and "may also diminish the sense of trust and cohesion within communities". Using data from the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) and other public opinion surveys conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)[116], Roberts provides an overview on the fear of crime in South Africa, charting its evolution since the early 1990s. Countering some public perceptions of victimisation and fear of crime as being endemic to specific social groups, Roberts reveals that "Indian and black African respondents exhibited greater fear of crime than coloured and white respondents in 2005 and

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[116] The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) is a statutory agency based in Pretoria that conducts research on all aspects of human and social development, with particular relevance to public policy.

2006" (4). He concludes that "the scope of fear extends beyond a specific minority of the population. Consequently, the popular notion of fear of crime in the country as predominantly 'white fear' is misleading and neglects the needs of a majority who are less able to voice their concerns" (5).

These dimensions of the social environment in post-apartheid South Africa provide a backdrop for the photographic representations under discussion in this chapter. They enable the conceptualisation of the photographic images of Mr. Mkhize and his wife, and of the hostel where Mr. Mkhize lives, as sites of intersection of the specific circumstances captured in the photographs and a spectrum of social and historical factors compounding those circumstances. Meaning is offset by the interconnection between the photographic discourse used, the photographer's viewpoint and the viewer's interpretation of the socio-historical conditions framing the representations. Seen as a sequence, the three photographs that introduce us first to Mr. Mkhize and then to his living circumstances, together with the accompanying text, produce a narrative inflected with the tensions in the social and political environment before and at the time the photographs were taken. As Derrick Price and Liz Wells (2004:36) stress in their development of a model of analysis of photography,

> it is not the objective presence of the image which is at stake, but rather the force-field within which it generates meaning … In effect we are invited to consider not only the text, its production and its reading, but also to take account of the social relations within which meaning is produced and operates.

Something that is absent from the first two photographs discussed so far (the close-up shot of Mr. Mkhize and the photograph with his wife), and that only becomes visible in the third photograph in the sequence, is the physical structure (the material conditions) — a blatant testimony of the political and social values underpinning apartheid's urbanisation policy and housing schemes for black migrants in urban townships. Evocative of David Goldblatt's (1998) photograph of the south-east wing of the hostel for African men in Alexandra township[117] in the photography

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[117] Goldblatt's (1998:252) detailed caption to the image crystallises the structural violence underlying state policy on accommodation and housing for black migrants. He writes,

> Then in 1963 a new plan was announced. All family accommodation and freehold rights were abolished. Alex was to become a township of single-sex hostels, six for men, six for women, each housing 2500 people. No provision was to be made for Alex families wishing to stay together; somehow they would have to find accommodation in the area in which the head of the household was employed, which, given the influx control regulations and the restrictions on housing for Africans would be almost

series titled *South Africa: The Structure of Things Then*, Broomberg and Chanarin's landscape (Fig.23) displays a large red brick building in a dry barren landscape.

The choice of a full frame wide-angle and the use of depth of field emphasise the size of the building while isolating it in the distance. A vast expanse of red earth occupies the foreground, extending horizontally across the frame and stretching towards its edges and corners, giving the viewer the sense that this wasteland, where nothing seems to grow, extends far beyond the picture plane to the left and right. The harshness and hostility of the landscape is accentuated by the texture and hue of the visual elements dominating the lower half of the frame, most notably red dry earth and red brick, which contrast strongly with the expanse of blue sky taking up the upper half of the frame. There is in sight no small bush or tree that might provide shelter from the blazing sun, only red dead land. The only sign of life and movement are the few human figures crossing the frame in the distance, some walking from left to right and others from right to left, suggesting that this open piece of land is used merely as an access route for the hostel residents. But if we look closely enough, we can just discern two goal boxes on one side of the frame that tell us that we are, in fact, looking at a soccer field.

The accompanying text offers Mr. Mkhize's reflection about his experience of being a rural migrant worker, providing insight into a possible cause of the inter-ethnic/political conflicts and violence that turned hostels into sites of open warfare between inmates and the township residents during the turbulent period preceding the 1994 elections. He states,

> I came here when I was just a boy. That was what you did. You left home and came to the city to look for work. I lived alone in this hostel. Alone with 400 other men. It was dangerous in those days. The football field outside was often covered in blood. There was a war between many of the locals and many of us that came from far away. We were kept apart, we spoke differently and wore different clothes. Many of the locals mocked us for being country boys. It started like that and then got more lethal. Finally it turned into a war.

Until the moment we read Mr. Mkhize's testimony, the photograph's meaning is open, incomplete and ambiguous. The text channels the viewer to a more nuanced interpretation of the photograph's composition. The red dry earth in the foreground symbolises more than the aridity of the soil and, by extension, of the lives of the

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impossible. No children were to be allowed to stay in the hostels and, obviously, no one of the opposite sex.

people living in the red brick building in the centre of the frame. It also symbolises the blood spilled during the violent and lethal confrontations that took place in front of the hostel. Viewed from this perspective, the image stimulates reflection about the broad political and social realities that were (and are) woven into the fabric of South African society before (and following) the production of the photograph.

In an essay published in 1998, Neville Dubow, the respected South African academic and art critic, made the following shocking but lucid statement:

> The barricades have been dismantled. What lies beyond? While every sane South African hopes that violence will begin to recede in the light of a new democratic dispensation, *we remain a violent society*. The structures of institutionalised violence still have their aftermath. We still have to come to terms with the all-pervasive legacy of a system marked by forced removals, displaced communities, exploitative labour practices … These are the ugly realities, the inheritance of the apartheid system that still has to be resolved (25-26) (my emphasis).

"We remain a violent society", Dubow claimed four years after the first multi-racial democratic election. On 11 May 2008, ten years after Dubow's incisive remark, "a gang of young men in Johannesburg's Alexandra township forced their way into a hostel on London Road and initiated a merciless attack on residents they deemed to be 'foreigners'" (Worby et al., 2008:1). In a few days the violence — which included murder, rape and looting — had spread from Alexandra to other informal settlements and townships in the province of Gauteng, and across the country to the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern and Western Cape. What was first labelled by the media as "xenophobic attacks on black foreign nationals" soon gained hazier contours as reports began to surface of South African citizens — Shangaans and Pedis — also being targeted.

Public and institutional response to the wave of violence that killed sixty-two people and displaced over a hundred thousand before subsiding in early June 2008 was almost immediately expressed in the media. Among the first to issue a statement was Frans Cronje (2008), the deputy CEO of The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), who found that numerous policy failures on the part of President Thabo Mbeki's government had caused the wave of violence that gripped Johannesburg and surrounding areas. He goes a step further in his scathing indictment of Mbeki's last ten years of rule, arguing that "poor and ineffective governance had created a tinder box of unmet expectations … similar to many of the causal factors that contributed to apartheid era unrest". In more specific terms, the statement lists failures in nine

key policy areas, most notably the rule of law, border control, corruption, employment, education, economic growth, foreign policy, service delivery and race relations.

In effect, the violence of May fuelled the long-felt discontent and disappointment of South Africans about the political, institutional and social structures sustaining the new political dispensation. Frustration had frequently been levelled at what was proving to be a failed project: a non-racial democracy of which the Constitution is the cornerstone. For many South Africans the constitutional values rang hollow, in particular (in light of the xenophobic violence) the promise that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it" championed by the values of inclusion, tolerance and respect for difference. More than ever, society was characterised by deep cleavages and inequalities, all of which resulted in strains, conflict and intolerance. In an article titled "South Africa's hard truths", Sean Jacobs (2008) writes,

> As polling firm Markinor (using very optimistic measures) reported earlier this month, in an increasingly youthful population (78% black), only 42 of every 100 South Africans have a job, 49% are poor (with monthly household income below R2,400 or £170), 13% are HIV positive, 24% homes have no electricity, 32% no tap water, 69% no hot water supply, and R21 (£1.40) of every R100 (£6.80) they earn, they spend on food.

The South African academic community saw the disruptive events as an opportunity for debate and reflection about the types of social and political malaise that afflicted South African democracy. On 28 May 2008 the Faculty of Humanities in the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg convened an urgent colloquium that was attended by approximately two hundred and fifty people from Wits and the wider Johannesburg community. "The colloquium aimed to draw upon … scholarship and expertise to engage in the search for short and long term solutions that would promote an ethos of peace, inclusiveness, humanity and security" (Worby et al., 2008:24). For Bishop Paul Verryn (2008), who wrote the Foreword to the volume proceeding from the colloquium:

> There is no doubt that the way in which we treat the stranger reflects our humanity; whether that stranger be from another country or whether those strangers be strange because they are poor is beside the point. If we are going to survive as a human race we are going to have to reassess our fundamental value system.

Verryn's words find echo in Cathi Albertyn's (2008) reflection. Invoking the philosophy of *ubuntu* as the bedrock of a post-apartheid "rainbow nation" advocated by both Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, Albertyn writes, "For many

South Africans the recent xenophobic violence betrayed fundamental values of community, inclusion, participation and *ubuntu* and confirmed just how far we are from the democratic society imagined by those who wrote the new Constitution in the early 1990s" (175). This analysis prompts a few concluding remarks about Broomberg and Chanarin's photographs of Mr. Mkhize, in conjunction with the written story supplementing the photographic narrative.

Evocative of the representativeness of Dorothea Lange's well-known photograph of the "Migrant Mother", which has often been cited as a symbol of the resilience and perseverance of a generation of Americans who suffered the hardships of the Depression of the 1930s and 1940s (Levine, 1988; Hariman and Lucaites, 2007), Mr. Mkhize may be viewed as representing a generation of men and women in South Africa for whom the Constitutional provision regarding the basic right of citizenship (in other words, the right to vote for a government of one's choice) symbolised individual and political freedom after decades of oppression. The seriousness and dignity — but also wariness and restraint — in the subject's gaze and posture carries the sense of endurance and individual strength associated with apartheid's victims. For them, the first democratic elections represented hope for "a new South Africa" and the long-awaited end of the liberation struggle. Paradoxically, the second photograph of Mr. Mkhize and his wife communicates very little hope. The fact that their socio-economic circumstances have remained unchanged ten years after the first democratic election reveals the contradictions of democracy and the incapacity of the Constitution to guarantee social justice and "[i]mprove the quality of life of all citizens" ("Preamble" of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*).

Conclusion

Nelson Mandela (1995:750-751) concludes his extensive autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* with the vision that sums up the work of a lifetime. First as an activist and co-founder of the ANC Youth League in the 1940s; then as a young lawyer in Johannesburg; and later (after being convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment) as the symbol of the anti-apartheid struggle; and finally as the first black president of the Republic of South Africa in 1994, Nelson Mandela fought for one cause. As he writes:

> It was this desire for the freedom of my people to live their lives with dignity and self-respect that animated my life, that transformed a frightened young man into a bold one … Freedom is indivisible; the chains on any one of my people were the chains on all of them, the chains on all of my people were the chains on me.

The concept of freedom is pervasive in post-apartheid political discourse, but its many ramifications are rarely considered. This is what I propose to do now, since this concept is intimately tied both to the themes I have developed and the photographic projects I have explored in my work.

Two other presidents (Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma) have succeeded Nelson Mandela in democratic South Africa since he stepped down from office in 1999, but neither has manifested the same concern for people's social and political freedom, dignity and self-respect, or the belief in a common humanity and a civil and humane society, which Nelson Mandela defends with so much conviction. As noted throughout this thesis, these beliefs underpinned much of the political discourse, centred on nation-building and reconciliation, that framed the transition from apartheid to democracy and later steered the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The wish that all South Africans should "live their lives with dignity and self-respect" propelled the social and economic reforms implemented by the first democratic government, which sought to improve the lives of the majority of the population by creating jobs; building houses, schools and hospitals; and by providing essential services such as electricity and clean water, especially in the rural areas.

Nelson Mandela's noble and ambitious project for a new democratic society has been both applauded for its successes and criticised for its failures. In a similar way, Thabo Mbeki's (and, more recently, Jacob Zuma's) social and economic agendas have been critiqued for the inadequate development of policies and the slow or inefficient implementation of reforms, resulting in a largely asymmetrical and divided society

(May, 2006). A decade after the demise of apartheid, critical reflections on the development of democracy in South Africa have established that the country's socio-economic landscape remains as convoluted as in the decades preceding the implementation of democracy, despite the fact that the Constitution has provided the state with the necessary framework for the realisation of political and socio-economic rights. Importantly, according to Landsberg and Mackay (2006:6), democratic South Africa is rooted in founding values that advocate "human dignity, the achievement of equality, the advancement of human rights and freedoms (including non-sexism and non-racism) and respect for fundamental principles of democracy". In the same vein, Albie Sachs (2010) — one of South Africa's most respected judges who formed part of the Constitutional Committee charged with drafting the Constitution — argues,

> Clearly, the constitution by itself does not provide jobs, build homes and enable people to walk freely everywhere in the land. Nor does it eliminate inequality and unemployment. But it does create a coherent, functional and value-based framework in which all these problems can be dealt with.

My aim in this thesis has been to examine portrait and documentary photography in post-apartheid South Africa as it engages with political and social processes at key historical moments and articulates the values of a society still scarred by a racially skewed history of racial oppression and exploitation. I have sought to demonstrate that the photographs comprising the projects of both Jillian Edelstein and Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin cannot be analysed outside of the historical context or the socio-political landscape within which they were produced. My inquiry has focused on how both photographic projects give meaning to individual experience and modes of human agency. Parallel to this central organising perspective, I have explored the aesthetics and ethics that characterise the photographic practices of these three photographers. I have drawn attention to the viewer's role and responsibility in responding to the works' affective quality and — having moved past the emotional terrain within which photographic representations operate — reflecting about their symbolic and/or political content. This act of perception, which involves a dialectical relationship between feeling and understanding, contributes to the works' "consecration and, simultaneously, its completion" (Dufrenne, 1973:47).

Although distinctly different in subject matter from most of the photographic work produced during apartheid, the two projects at the core of this thesis share a

common feature, notably the way the artists position themselves in relation to the realities of the country and to the lived experience of their subjects, illustrating a personal and interpretive approach. Both projects subscribe to the visual language and conventions of portraiture but maintain the political edge of the social documentary work performed in South Africa during the apartheid years. Jillian Edelstein's (2001) *Truth & Lies* uses the context of the TRC process to explore post-apartheid trauma. Broomberg and Chanarin's (2004a) *Mr. Mkhize's portrait and other stories from the new South Africa* delves into the fabric of society in more detail and nuance, commenting and reflecting on the political and social structures that keep large swathes of the population poor and marginalised a decade after the demise of apartheid.

In keeping with the methodology of interweaving the analysis of visual representations in these bodies of work with an examination of the socio-political environment out of which they grew, I wish to conclude this thesis with two interconnected reflections. The first concerns key socio-political issues that motivate debate in contemporary democratic South Africa. The second delves into the role of photography as a conduit of ideology and purveyor of evidence during apartheid. I reflect on the development, after the demise of apartheid, of an ethical photographic practice (exemplified by the works of Edelstein, Broomberg and Chanarin) that seeks to go beyond the traditional documentary mode, articulating the urgency of ethical responsibility in post-apartheid South Africa. The photographic projects I have engaged with echo contemporary socially engaged art practices' concern with catalysing reflexivity capable of engendering transformative social processes.

The first question I would like to turn to is the TRC — more specifically the debate regarding the (dis)continuity and complexity of the processes of political reconciliation and nation-building which engaged the TRC, and which bear on the conflicting social realities of contemporary democratic South Africa. Ten years after the hearings, the TRC, its activities and recommendations continued to play an important role in contemporary debate about the truth and reconciliation process and about the national healing it purported to initiate.

It has been widely recognised in literature that Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Tutu's leadership played a crucial role in the work of the TRC. In his inauguration as president of the Republic of South Africa in 1994, Nelson Mandela made an appeal for social transformation and the reconstruction of a national identity. He did not seek

to dismiss the country's past nor eradicate the memory of apartheid; rather he focused on the potential of a common future, constructed from the imaginings of all its citizens. People of different races, classes, linguistic and cultural backgrounds had come together on 27 and 28 April 1994 to vote for a democratic South Africa. Their elation rendered Mandela's address not only celebratory of a newfound status quo but plausible in the light of a revived national consciousness.

During the first years of South Africa's transition to democratic rule, and particularly in the context of the TRC proceedings, 'forgiveness', 'healing' and 'reconciliation' were some of the words most frequently used by leaders dedicated to the pursuit of national unity in which the "rainbow nation" metaphor found cogent expression. Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu often drew on the philosophy of *ubuntu* during the TRC process to advocate a new set of values to which most South Africans could relate. But as the emotional setting of the TRC receded into the past, the idea of a collective journey into a future of non-racialism became more unrealistic and distant.

In April 2006 a conference titled *TRC: Ten Years On* (the proceedings of which were published in a book with the same title) was organised by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. It brought together scholars, analysts, journalists, writers and government officials to discuss possibilities for deepening citizens' commitment to socio-political transformation after the TRC, thereby contributing to the ongoing reconciliation and nation-building process. Charles Villa-Vicencio (2006:7), the then executive director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, considers that there are limitations to the TRC model. He argues that while the TRC is an instrument of transitional justice which "can contribute to tolerance, reconciliation and nation-building it can also polarise, embitter and do little more than suspend the confrontation it seeks to avoid".

In this regard, Wilson (2001) identifies the 'healing the nation' idiom as one of the flaws in the discourse of nation-builders. As he argues, the articulation of a 'collective memory' consisting of the traumas of apartheid gave rise to a collectivist view of the nation as a sick body in need of collective cleansing, ritually performed in the TRC hearings. The issue, as Wilson (2001:15) sees it, is that "individual psychological processes cannot be reduced to national processes dedicated to 'healing', since the 'nation' is not like an individual at all". He lends strength to his argument by drawing on Ernest Gellner's view of the nation as:

a political fiction invented by nationalists, who conjure up tenuous concepts such as a 'collective memory' or a 'collective psyche'. Nations do not have collective psyches which can be healed and to assert otherwise is to psychologize an abstract entity which exists primarily in the minds of nation-building politicians.

Scholarship pursuing this line of argument asserts that a nation-building project centred on welding citizens together through, as Beiner (1995:7) puts it, "a shared language, shared associations, shared history and a common culture" is unrealistic in South Africa's case. According to this line of reasoning, constitutionalism is the most viable political framework for a society in transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, since the key political and legal notions encapsulated in the political ethic of constitutionalism – rule of law, human rights and civil rights – displace the hegemonic discourse on 'power' and introduce a discourse on 'rights', laying the basis for democratic political practice and consolidation of socio-political cohesion. This is reinforced through citizens' heightened political consciousness and a shared sense of the civic dimension of existence.

In effect, *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (characterised for its non-racial, non-ethnic ethos) is considered to be one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, enabling an effective transition from apartheid to a stable functioning inclusive democracy. Despite the comprehensive nature of the new constitutional order, many critics have stressed that social change has not been big enough or fast enough since the first democratic election in 1994 and that the language of political transformation advocating socio-economic welfare rights has failed to materialise into a just and equal society.

The new dispensation has been challenged to deliver on the promise made in the Preamble to the *Constitution* (2009:2) that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it", irrespective of race, class, belief or gender. Reconciliation, reconstruction and development were deemed crucial to social transformation and the building of a new society "based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights". But a little more than a decade after these values and goals were set out in the *Constitution*, social and economic justice is far from being achieved, and the promise of quality of life for all citizens seems like a flawed contract. The chronic, and apparently irremediable, social strain caused by poverty, inequality, mass unemployment, HIV/AIDS (and, by implication, violence) has obscured Mandela's vision of dialogue and reconciliation, as well as of a united, non-racial, democratic and politically stable nation.

According to Moodley and Adam (2000), the most salient problems facing contemporary South Africa are social racism, cultural racism and economic racial inequality. Moodley and Adam contend that despite acknowledgement of the importance of a united socio-political community, "the non-racial democratic constitution [has not been able to] alter overnight the conditioned consciousness of black and white". The inherited stigma of racial classification still impairs social relationships in business, schools and in everyday life. There are eleven official languages in South Africa, but English and Afrikaans (the languages of imperialism and oppression respectively) are still the dominant languages in politics, business and academia. This is largely due to what Giliomee (1995:100) calls "a powerful group consciousness based partly on race and partly on maintaining European standards and a European identity".

At the socio-economic level, save for a burgeoning black bourgeoisie that has succeeded in breaking free from the township — thereby integrating formerly white residential areas and schools — the majority of the black and coloured population continues to grapple with inefficient/insufficient housing, water, food security, health care, education and employment opportunities. Chief among the social factors impeding socio-economic development and stability are high illiteracy, crime, disease and poverty. The concept of democracy equates with a government of, by and for the people, and espouses freedom of choice. Yet, few South Africans have been given the freedom to choose a more dignified life, bringing to mind Gramsci's (1971:276) words: "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot yet be born. In the interregnum, a variety of morbid symptoms appear."

Whilst ten years of political freedom began to dispel the oppression of roughly four decades of apartheid, many South Africans also began to question precisely what democracy entails. In Goodin's (2005:2) view, "Voting inevitably remains the ultimate act of political legitimation in a democracy", and should be grounded as much on internal-reflective deliberations as on external-collective ones. Ideally, the core of democratic citizenship is the responsive and responsible act of voting for a set of political, social and economic policy proposals geared to developing social conditions and boosting economy. Political parties, in turn, are made accountable for promises made and hopes raised during election campaigns.

What happens, though, when the electorate constitutes mainly people whose everyday lives are affected by poverty and social exclusion? A significant part of the

population that participated in the first democratic elections claimed the basic rights of every citizen, namely housing, water, food security, health care, education, and employment opportunities. The democratic state and the society share the responsibility of promoting and sustaining economic, social and cultural change crucial both to development and to the enhancement of individual freedom of choice. Amartya Sen (1999:295) emphasises that achievements such as more and better education and health care (to name but two factors) go a long way in expanding human freedom and enabling people "to live the kind of lives [they] have reason to value".

For many disadvantaged (mainly black and coloured) South Africans who saw democracy as a passport to a better life, the anniversary of the country's first decade of freedom brought very little to celebrate. In many respects poverty and underdevelopment had deepened during the transition from apartheid to democracy. The development agendas of Nelson Mandela's (1994-1999) and Thabo Mbeki's presidencies (1999-2004) aimed to redress poverty and inequality. However, a decade into liberal democracy, social and economic rights continued to lag behind[118]. Policy-wise, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) failed to guarantee the much-expected social development. At a macro-economic level the Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR) aimed at securing investment and augmenting employment fell short of the promised economic growth and stability: the unskilled remain unskilled, unemployed and excluded from the economy (Sparks, 2003).

Habib and Padayachee (2000) examine how the transition to neo-liberal economic policies has favoured a burgeoning black middle class that has seized opportunities granted by privatisation, liberalisation, tax concessions, low inflation and the opening up of export markets, widening the gulf between wealthy and disadvantaged members of the population. Desai (2002) deplores the privatisation of municipal services whose reliance on financial cost recovery has resulted in water and electricity cut-offs and evictions for those millions of poor people (categorised as "the poors") who are unable to pay for basic services. Drawing on studies including

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[118] According to Jacobs (2003:36) "unemployment is at 40% and the economy has lost half a million jobs since 1995. Approximately 45% of South Africans live in poor households that earn an average of R 352,53 (equivalent to US$ 32 at time of writing) per month per adult by 2002. […] About 3 million people still need housing, 7,5 million lack access to running water and 21 million go without sanitation services. An estimated 3,6 million of the country's 44 million have HIV/Aids."

the 2000 UNDP report and the Taylor Committee's findings, van Donk and Pieterse (2004:38) argue,

> a large proportion of the population continues to live in the appalling conditions that characterised the period of apartheid and colonialism. In addition there is evidence that the situation is worsening for a significant number of South Africans — poverty, unemployment and inequality have been on the increase, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues apace.

This suggests that the transition to a free society driven by respect for human rights relies as much on policies as on the mental and attitudinal change in individuals who are called upon to be agents of change through individual initiative and responsibility. Yet, even though change may foster renewal in political and cultural practices, freedom inevitably implies, as Bauman (1988) argues, asymmetry in society, the existence of social difference, and consequent social division. He contends that the choices and action of some result in the *restrained* freedom of others.

In Sen's (1999:17) view, freedom "involves both the *processes* that allow freedom of actions and decisions, and the actual *opportunities* that people have, given their personal and social circumstances." This logic suggests that the recognised interconnection between democracy and freedom is grounded on the premise that democracy creates opportunities. But as Sen (1999:155) further argues, "Democracy does not serve as an automatic remedy of ailments as quinine works to remedy malaria. The opportunity it opens up has to be positively grabbed in order to achieve the desired effect."

Echoes of this argument can be found in the varied responses to a succession of race-related incidents that took place at the beginning of 2008 in South Africa, sparking debate about the fragile balance in race relations and rekindling animosity about the residual practices of racism and discrimination which continue to fester in the contemporary South African social landscape. National newspaper headlines focused on the "killing spree" on 14 January at the Skierlik informal settlement in the North West where four black people were murdered and six more were wounded by Johan Nel, a white teenager, in what was believed to be a racially motivated crime.

On 22 February 2008, white journalists were barred from a meeting for the re-launch of the Forum of Black Journalists (FBJ) where the then ANC president Jacob Zuma was a guest speaker. This raised an outcry among journalists, particularly because

"speaking to reporters – black and white – after the event, Jacob Zuma said he saw 'nothing wrong' with the enforced colour bar that prevented whites [but not journalists of Indian or coloured origin] from hearing him speak" (Forde, 2008a). On 27 February, following numerous reports of racially motivated violence in schools, footage of a video made by four white hostel residents at the University of the Free State (UFS), in which black cleaning staff members were made to carry out demeaning mock-initiation activities, prompted an emotionally charged response across the country.

Among the voices heard in the wake of these events — that *The Star* journalist Thabiso Thakali (2008) termed "Eight Weeks of Racism" — was that of Raenette Taljiaard (2008), director of the Helen Suzman Foundation. Taljiaard alludes to the Preamble of the *Constitution* to emphasise society's commitment "to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights", holding parents responsible for the values transmitted to their children and for the space "[created] for young minds to understand diversity and the core of humanity that is exactly the same, irrespective of skin colour".

In an article titled "Let's talk about race", Justine Gerardy (2008) dismisses the vision of a democratic and free society in which all people live together in harmony as "the euphoric fantasy of post-1994 racial harmony" and writes, "The Rainbow Nation has often been a bit hard to swallow. This year, it has been throwing up all over itself". Gerardy quotes Jody Kollapen, chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), to illustrate scepticism about both the rapid transition to democracy and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's emphasis on hastening racial reconciliation. Kollapen argues that "whiteness and blackness" continues to define race relations in South Africa, stating, "the challenge is whether we allow this to place us within a racial ghetto or whether we recognise that we seek to transcend that … You can never eradicate racism, but you can relegate it".

The academic Achille Mbembe (2008) took the events in this period as an opportunity for reflecting about the country's "fragile, confusing and uncertain present". Mbembe stresses that the factors that are threatening South Africa are: "the dramatic moral failure of [the country's] political leadership…, the relative apathy of civil society, the unfinished nature of [the] democratic transition and the fact that [South Africans] live under a de facto one-party system." For him, a very real challenge to leadership is "the economic upliftment of the poor in general and the

black poor in particular" through the implementation of a radical programme. As he sees it, part of the answer to the problem of poverty lies in the provision of adequate education and skills. He adds that the success of such a programme depends on cultivating a sense of personal responsibility, and on discouraging both black victimhood and the "generalisation of social grants for the poor, however useful they are, and hefty handouts in the form of black economic empowerment deals for a tiny and greedy elite only". Mbembe concludes that the real catalysts for social change are the (re)commitment to the project of nonracialism (and, by extension, the support of equal justice for all, blacks and whites), moral leadership, and the re-engagement with civil society organisations.

Taking the same line of reasoning, Achmat Dangor, CEO of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, emphasises that the process of "reconciliation and transformation are two parts of the same imperative", which relies on the rejection of a "culture of expectation … a certain complacency, a belief that we don't have to do anything for ourselves" and on the acceptance of individual responsibility for oneself and one's actions (quoted in Forde 2008b). This argument resonates with Nelson Mandela's understanding that if the belief system of the individual is changed, that of the nation can be significantly altered.

Both Mandela and Dangor reject the sense of defeatism that paralyses efforts to resolve deep-seated problems in society, and insist on agency and individual responsibility as key practices informing the exercise of democratic citizenship. These practices were central to the anti-apartheid struggle; they were equally important to the political and social transformations underpinning the transition from oppression to democracy. They remain vital in the context of contemporary South Africa's socio-political landscape, where much needs to be done to advance the socio-economic rights of all citizens.

As illustrated in Chapter 2, during the TRC process the concept of agency was closely connected to the notion of voice. Within the sphere of politics, the fact that black South Africans — who had previously been excluded from the polity — had been given "a voice" meant that they could speak (and be heard) on what they expected from their political representatives. Within the context of the TRC's truth seeking process, "voice" equated with the narration of life experiences under apartheid and, importantly, with the notion that each story mattered. In this regard, "voice", as Nick Couldry (2010:8) defines it, "necessarily involves us in an ongoing process of reflection, exchanging narratives back and forth between our past and present

selves, and between us and others". This insight is reflected in the TRC's ethical framework within which there was an emphasis on each individual's worth, and a sense that a a more humane society could be generated by a meaningful exchange between individuals whose relations had for decades been steered by feelings of hatred and revenge. To borrow from Couldry once again, "Voice as a social process involves, from the start, both speaking and *listening*, that is, an act of attention that registers the uniqueness of the other's narrative" (emphasis in the original)(9).

But, as I have argued, the use of one's voice entails not only being *heard*, but being *seen* as well. Perpetrators and victims who came before the TRC were, perhaps for the first time, heard and seen publicly. Under the specific circumstances of the TRC hearings — which received wide television and radio coverage — South Africans could no longer deny the knowledge of perpetrators' actions nor ignore victims' trauma. From the perspective of the implementation of democracy in post-apartheid society, the fact that so many people who had been kept at the margins of society received acknowledgement — precisely because they were both *seen* and *heard* — was evidence that this model of citizenship guaranteed the empowerment of the black subject.

In his book *Why Voice Matters*, Nick Couldry (2010) builds a compelling argument about the value of voice, "the effective opportunity for people to speak and be heard on what affects their lives". I wish to add to this equation the value of *becoming visible*, not only in the sense that a black citizen is regarded as a political subject, but also in the sense that he or she is given the opportunity in the public arena to (re)present him/herself with dignity, as someone with a specific life experience, and to be regarded as such. This is especially significant in a country with a long history of oppression and censorship, and more so if we consider the history of photography in South Africa.

During apartheid the main purpose of South African photographers was to expose the oppression of the black population. Ernest Cole's (1967) photographic indictment of the realities of apartheid was published in *House of Bondage*, and twenty photographers contributed to the publication in 1986 of *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart* (edited by Omar Badsha), choosing the black subject as their main focus. All these photographers capture the black subject in his/her work and living environment: in Cole's work, performing duties in the white man's domestic or work settings; in *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart*, eking out a miserable existence in

impoverished Bantustan resettlement camps or barely surviving in demeaning living conditions.

The captions beneath the photographs in these publications draw attention to a place and date; to the subjects' profession (most notably labourer, herd boy, cleaner or domestic worker); or to a social condition, for example unemployed men or pensioner; but rarely to a name or a life story. Some captions transmit an action, including "applying for work", "women returning from a day's journey to the trading store", "waiting for pension payments", "waiting to board the government truck", and "dismantling house". The subjects in the photographs are social types that represent many other people living in the same conditions. Unlike the captions, the extensive text accompanying the photographs provides details about the social and political circumstances within which the images were produced.

Both *House of Bondage* and *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart* tell a story of apartheid without exploring individual life stories or enabling the photographed subject's "voice" to come across. In these bodies of work the photographers are perceived to be in full control during the photographic encounter, choosing how best to (re)present the subjects so that each frame could expose the violence of apartheid and the gross violation of human rights. South African photographers took on the political role of representing people who had no citizen status, and were persecuted by the apartheid government for attempting to document and raise awareness of apartheid's perverse practice of social organisation. Ernest Cole left South Africa and published his work in 1967 while exiled in New York. Other photographers who remained in South Africa were harassed, detained or prevented from doing their work.

During the turbulent 1980s, resistance or struggle photography (as it became known) sought to document the violent confrontation between the security forces and protesters in anti-apartheid demonstrations across the country, resulting in the publication and touring exhibition in 1989 of *Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa* (edited by Iris Tillman Hill and Alex Harris). This body of work emphasised the determination and agency of the subjects. An iconic photograph of this era shows a lone woman standing at the side of a road, raising her arms and fists in protest at a convoy of armoured military vehicles rolling into her township. This photograph by Paul Weinberg (reminiscent of the well-known image of a lone Chinese demonstrator stopping a column of advancing tanks in Beijing) illustrates that in the context of the struggle against oppression what is important is not the

individual, but what the individual feels compelled to do in the name of the collective.

The transition to democracy generated different photographic registers and modes of engagement with aspects of life in contemporary South Africa. Photographers (like David Goldblatt, Paul Weinberg, Eric Miller and Guy Tillim) began to explore not only different subject matter but also alternative stylistic and aesthetic approaches to their work. A greater diversity of expressive idioms and explorations has characterised South African photography since the end of apartheid, reflecting both the development of new consciousnesses about the transformative processes in South African society and a greater sense of freedom with regards to artistic expression. Photographers felt a moral obligation during apartheid (whether self-imposed or agreed among, for example, like the members of Afrapix) to focus mostly on the values, oppression and inhumanity of that regime. The demise of apartheid meant that, as Jo Ractliffe (n.d.) states, "[The photographers'] world opened up — and not only politically".

The photographic projects of Jillian Edelstein, Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin belong to a body of work produced, published and exhibited in South Africa and abroad in the past decade or more. What distinguishes these two projects is that they engage with two distinctive events/periods in South African history, most notably the TRC process and the commemoration of ten years of democracy, and hence constitute historical documents for the South African photography archive. Conceptually, both projects explore the conventions of portraiture to draw attention to the individuality of the photographed subjects. In this respect, the detailed text accompanying the photographs is crucial to the viewer's experience of the photograph, since it contextualises and particularises each photographic representation through the written representation of the subject's "voice" (the account that each individual gives of his/her life).

Documentary and portrait photography of apartheid South Africa have characteristically been a source of emotional appeal. In the Foreword to *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart*, Desmond Tutu (1986: xiv) writes,

> We must thank these photographers for putting a face to all these facets of poverty. We are not dealing with sets of statistics. We are talking about people of flesh and blood, who laugh and cry, who love and hate, who enjoy being cuddled. We are talking about men who want to be with their families, husbands who just want to

work to be able to feed their children. The Carnegie Inquiry is about such ordinary people, and the pictures bring them to life.

Truth & Lies (2002) and *Mr. Mkhize's portrait & other stories from the new South Africa* (2004a) are also about people who suffered and continue to suffer hardship, and about *humanity* and *inhumanity*. But their emotional appeal and interpretive quality derives as much from the composition and aesthetics of individual images as from the construction of narratives resulting from the sequencing of images, and the interconnection between image and written text. Several layers of reality and existence are conveyed through the interweaving of the photographs' content (what we see in the frame) and the external information provided in the adjacent written text. This combination of image and word conjures up other mental images of the subjects' lives and experiences, generating a response that is not confined to the content of the photographs alone.

An important feature of these two photo essays is the ethical imperative that drives the photographers' approach to their subjects. They place the photographed subject at the centre of the photographic encounter, enabling him/her to have some control of how he/she is (re)presented. This approach places a very clear emphasis on the subjects' dignity and self-respect, and is especially significant given the context in which both projects were produced. In the case of Edelstein's *Truth & Lies* series, most of the photographed subjects were victims of gross violations of human rights. They had been treated with disrespect and subjected to extreme forms of physical and psychological violence. The opportunity to relate their own accounts of the violations of which they were victims created a platform for public recognition and respect for individuals' trauma. Crucial to this transformative process was the restoration of the human and civil dignity of such victims. Edelstein's photo-essay captures this dimension of the TRC's work by drawing attention to both the photographed subject's dignity and his/her individual story. Neither has priority over the other; both (visual and written representation) are equally important in the presentation of this material, which gains strength from the meaning generated from the intersection of image and text.

Broomberg and Chanarin display the same sense of ethical responsibility to their subjects. The access given by the photographed subjects is treated with great respect. The viewer is made to feel that poverty does not equate with indignity or victimhood. The photographers' attention to the composition and framing of each image reflects the care the subjects bring to their living environment (or the care

they take with their physical appearance). We can see that Mr. Mkhize and his wife live in impoverished circumstances, but the space is immaculate: the beds are perfectly made and nothing is out of place. The subjects are composed and dignified. Broomberg and Chanarin's' use of colour (as opposed to Edelstein's stark black-and-white images) highlights each photographed subject's individuality, drawing attention to the skin tone, the colour of the eyes or of the shirt, as well as the colour and texture of the subject's surroundings. The use of colour references the diversity and complexity of the social landscape, alongside the distinct circumstances of each individual. As is the case with Edelstein's photo-essay, the combination of photographs and text is an important determinant of the work's meaning, since it broadens the possibilities of narrative and socio-political commentary.

The philosophies of Emmanuel Levinas and Mikhail Bakhtin, when applied to the interpretation of these bodies of work, direct attention to two complementary forms of engagement with the photographic works. The first compels an ethics of responsibility, whereby we are called to respond to the humanity of the Other depicted in the photographs. This sense of responsibility springs from an ethics of looking that rejects the objectification of the photographed subject, and seeks to recognise his/her individuality and singularity. The experience of the photograph, considered from a Levinasian perspective, is centred on the encounter with the *face* of the Other, which makes an ethical demand on the viewer to respond to the Other's appeal (his/her suffering or particular circumstances). The second form of engagement draws on Baktin's insights to explore the dialogical constitution of the photographic work, which refers not only to the work's architectonics (the relations established within the work) but also to the dialogical relationship established between photographer, photographed subject and viewer. This dialogical relationship is formed on the basis of the interdependence between the three actors involved in the photographic encounter. In this triadic relationship each actor has a responsibility to the other and inevitably makes a vital contribution to photographic meaning.

The relationship between ethics, responsibility and viewing that I have sought to establish throughout this thesis foregrounds much more than the process of reading or making sense of an image. It demands and supports a reflexive activity centred on responsive and responsible engagement with the social and political conditions depicted within each pictorial frame. Thus, I end this thesis with a reflection on Michel Foucault's insight into the transformability of experience. Foucault (2002:239)

writes, "An experience is something that one comes out of transformed". Indeed, engaging reflexively with humanist and socially-committed photography concerned with human experience and human dignity such as Edelstein's (2001) *Truth & Lies* and Broomberg and Chanarin's (2004a) *Mr. Mkhize & other stories from the new South Africa* has the capacity to change the way we see and think about South Africa in the past and in the present. The experience of doing research work on these two projects has transformed me. During this process I have unequivocally seen myself reflected in Foucault's (2002:240) words: "I write in order to change myself and in order not to think the same as before".

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