# Chapter 3
# A Sociology of Human Rights

The argument in Chapter 1 has been that human rights tend to be framed in universalised, generalised and depersonalised ways. It was argued that these features are linked to the masculinist, formal, rationalist and legalistic approaches to human rights. In response, it was pointed out in Chapter 2 that it is important for human rights to be specific, particular and personal. This was based on the understanding that if human rights are to have the desired effects on people's actual lives, that is, prevent violations of human rights and enable people to realise their potential, they need to be able to "speak to" the lived conditions of people's existence. The logical extrapolation of this argument is that human rights can achieve their desired effects if they are directed at particular people, personally and individually.

However, directing human rights at the personal and the individual raises a few issues. These relate to theoretically problematic issues such as being "specific" versus being "general", and balancing "macro" and "micro" forms of analyses. The question here is about the manner and the extent to which one is able to address analytically "the individual" and simultaneously "the social". In Chapter 2, the possibilities of making the law more specific and personal were argued to be present within substantive equality provisions. However, this remains within the domain of the law and is legalistic. The challenge of making other theoretical approaches address the specificities of people's lives, and to do so in ways that maintain the analytical focus on macro societal processes and the individual, concurrently, remains. In this chapter, I argue that the macro constructions of power in socio-economic and political systems, which are based on inequalities and differences in material conditions, are significant in shaping the experiences of people on individual levels; they enable and constrain the ways in which human rights are framed and articulated.

In this chapter I put forward the case (the pun is intended) that a sociology of human rights provides the means with which to address such theoretical challenges, analytically and methodologically. I argue that a "theory of articulation" as elaborated by Stuart Hall (1996) and the approach of "portraiture" as developed by Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000) provide generative and useful theoretical and methodological insights and tools that may allow for analyses to address the individual and the general, micro and macro, formal and personal simultaneously.

A theory of articulation has been used by antiracists (see Rattansi and Donald, 1992; and MacCarthy and Crichlow, 1993), feminists (see Mirza, 1997), in cultural studies (Hall, 1996) and media studies (Julian, 1993) for example. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) has applied portraiture to schools. Nevertheless, none of these have been applied to human rights. I intend to do so. My concern is to find theoretical and methodological tools, beyond the law, to enable human rights to be understood as specific, personal and particular. In this chapter I argue that a sociology of human rights, approached in these ways, provides a way to make human rights more specific and personal, theoretically and methodologically.

Attempts to make human rights more personal and specific could imply that in discussions of human rights one needs to look at particular people in an almost biographical way, wherein their actual lived "stories" would be articulated and the implications of human rights addressed therein. However, this could imply a type of individualistic approach to human rights, as if human beings exist as "islands unto themselves". The developments of and within modernity, discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, pointed to the importance of individuals as members of groups, which were seen in terms of social categories such as 'race', class, gender, etc. The viewing of people in terms of the social categories they belong to, rather than treating them individually, is, thus, an approach that enables human rights to become more specific by not lapsing into a form of individualism. In this approach, people are treated as members of a group and the ways in which human

rights influence them (or does not) in relation to being members of such a social category can be explored.

The focus on individuals as members of particular social groups has been the impetus behind most human rights provisions and instruments. Social categories such as 'race' and gender have been used in the enunciation of equality clauses of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the various legislative provisions that have emerged from it, such as: the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979, and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965 (United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, 1999).

However, as pointed out in Chapters 1 and 2, the specification of human rights in relation to people as members of particular social categories is necessary but not sufficient. They are insufficient because they perpetuate a generalisation of people in terms of such social categories, resulting in people actually not being treated specifically enough. Thus, for example, whilst anti-racist or anti-sexist human rights provisions may exist, "black" people and women continue to have their human rights violated.

At the same time, the tendency in such approaches is also to essentialise, in a reductionist manner, people's identities in terms of the social categories they are placed in. Thus, one does not get to explore the interconnections between social categories in the ways they are experienced in people's lives. "Black" people's rights are defined in racial terms, women's rights in gender terms, and so on. The intersections between 'race' and gender, for example, in the ways a "black" woman would experience human rights violations or the way a "black working class woman" would experience them, can only be explored if one goes beyond the essentialising of people in terms of social categories and notes the complex interpenetration of social categories with each other. The reason why this is crucial is that on a daily basis people experience their lives as criss-crossing interactions between the various social categories in which they are positioned.

Thus, the specification of human rights in terms of social categories in the law does take the universalism of human rights to a more specific level – that of social categories – but still suffers from the formalism, legalism, generalisation and essentialisation of people in terms of such social categories.

How, then, does one make human rights more personal and specific; acknowledge the individual, and not lapse into forms of individualism; recognise social categories, but not fall into reductionism and essentialism? Hall's "theory of articulation" and Lightfoot-Lawrence's "portraiture" provide possible answers to this question.

## A Theory of Articulation

Stuart Hall (1996) draws on Laclau in his use and modifications of the notion of "articulation". Hall notes that the impetus for developing a "theory of articulation" has been to avoid both the abstract reification of generalised social categories and the attendant analytical reductionism of phenomena in terms of such social categories. Prompted mainly by the economic reductionism and structuralism of classical Marxism, both Hall and Laclau attempt to demonstrate, through a "theory of articulation", the importance of human agency and the complex play of forces that construct individuals and their responses in non-deterministic and non-reductionist ways.

> The theory of articulation, as I use it, has been developed by Ernesto Laclau, in his book *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*. His argument there is that the political connotation of ideological elements has no necessary belongingness, and thus, we need to think the contingent, the non-necessary, connection between different practices – between ideology and social forces, and between different elements within ideology, and between different groups composing a social movement, etc. He uses the notion of articulation to break with the necessetarian and reductionist logic

which has dogged the classical Marxist theory of ideology (Hall, 1996: 142).

There are several things at work in the above quotation. These relate to the ideas of "no necessary belongingness", the "need to think the contingent" and "connections", all of which being constitutive of "a theory of articulation". The idea of "no necessary belongingness" is a direct response to the "necessetarian and reductionist logic of classical Marxist theory of ideology". In the classical Marxist approach, all social phenomena are explainable in terms of the economic base. The superstructural constructions of ideology are reduced analytically to the economic base, suggesting a determinism, necessity and "belongingness" in and of the economic base (see for example, Giddens, 1989; and, Giroux and Aronowitz, 1986, for useful reviews of these criticisms of classical Marxism).

A useful example to illustrate this point is in the developments of Marxism in South Africa. For early South African Marxists the explanation for why racism exists in South Africa is: to maintain and develop conditions of capitalism (see Simon and Simon, 1969). In this argument the development of apartheid in South Africa correlates with the development of capitalism and the purpose of and rationale for apartheid was to provide the abundant, cheap, unskilled labour that was needed in the mining, agricultural and industrial sectors that were critical for the development of the economic base of apartheid capitalism. In this explanation racism is reduced to the economic base, which is seen as a necessary belongingness, and as a superstructural ideology for the development of capitalism.

"No necessary belongingness" is an idea that suggests that social phenomena cannot be explained by recourse to notions of "belongingness", since the alleged point of "belongingness", the economic base in classical Marxism, is a historical construction, and thereby not "necessary". "Belongingness" is an analytical devise that overly simplifies and reduces the complexities of social reality to the theoretically privileged point of "belongingness".

The idea of "non necessary belongingness" suggests that social phenomena are "contingent". Social realities, including forms of human identities, are historically context specific, dependent upon forces that exist at particular times and conditions. In analysing social phenomena, then, from the view point of thinking "the contingent", one examines the ways in which particular forces interplay with each other in order to construct particular situations. This means that one investigates the various and varying points of "connections" between different practices, social forces, ideologies, social groups and social movements. The "theory of articulation" allows for an analysis of social phenomena in non-necessetarian and relational ways (see also Slack, 1996).

Hall further points out:

> An articulation is thus the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? So the so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be re-articulated in different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness'. The 'unity' which matters is a linkage between that articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected (Hall, 1996: 141).

A "theory of articulation" is thus about making "connections". It is about locating phenomena in space and time and investigating the complex network of forces that construct phenomena as much as they are constituted by them. As Slack puts it:

> Articulation is, then, not just a thing, not just a connection, but a process of creating connections, much in the same way that hegemony is not

domination but the process of creating and maintaining consensus or of co-ordinating interests (Slack, 1996: 114).

Pursuing the example of racism in South Africa, non necessary belongingness would entail connecting race not only to the economy but to other factors as well. An example in this regard is the arguments by the South African Communist Party against classical Marxism. The South African Communist Party argued that whilst racism in South Africa was linked to apartheid capitalism, it had a dynamic that could not always be reduced to the economic base. Two developments illustrate this quite explicitly: the Rand Revolt of the 1920s, and the relations between "white" and "black" women in South Africa.

The Rand Revolt of the 1920s in South Africa showed that despite the similarities in the economic conditions of black and white working class people, racism between black and white workers was rife, in fact more so than in other sectors. This suggested that there was another way in which racism was functioning, beyond the economic base. Racism was then seen as something that needed to be addressed directly and separately rather than being treated as if it was only instrumental to the development of apartheid capitalism (South African Communist Party, 1967).

The idea of non necessary belongingness is also tied to contingent connections. To illustrate this point, the work of Jacqlyn Cock (1980, 1982) demonstrated the intersections between race, class and gender in her expositions of the relations between black domestic workers and their white female employers in her seminal work called *Maids and Madams*. Cock shows that racism is particular, and connects with forces that are specific and contingent. Black women in these maids and madams relations were exploited as working class people, as black people and as women, resulting in a "super-exploitation" of black women. In addition, rather than assuming that such maid and madam relations will always be antagonistic, which reductionist classical Marxism would imply, there are also examples of how white madams collaborated with black maids in order to resist apartheid. One

such example is also contained in Andre Brink's celebrated book called *A Dry White Season* (Brink, 1983). In these arguments, racism is linked to capitalism but not reducible to it. Racism is viewed as particular and with its own dynamic, allowing for several combinations and possible configurations. Racism is also seen as not overly determining people, but also allowing for possibilities for human agency, including the ability to resist it. There is no necessary belongingness of racism to the capitalism in these accounts(./;) the ways in which it unfolds is contingent and various possibilities for human agency exist, albeit within the constraints of the forces, structures, relations, dynamics and issues that are at work at particular times and spaces.

As such, a theory of articulation investigates how political and social rights get connected discursively across different social categories in society. It investigates this relationship by examining the conditions and processes that create the possibilities for connections of particular types to be made. However, for Hall, "articulation" also has another meaning.

> (Articulation) has a nice double meaning because 'articulate' means to utter, to speak forth, to be articulate. It carries that sense of language-ing, of expressing, etc. But we also speak of an 'articulated' lorry (truck): a lorry where the front (cab) and back (trailer) can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another. The two parts are connected to each other, but through a specific linkage, that can be broken (Hall, 1996: 141).

The second meaning of "articulation" in terms of an "articulated lorry" is what has been discussed above in relation to the idea of "connections". The first meaning of "articulation" as that which is "expressed", points to the importance of "language" and "language-ing" within a theory of the social. There are three important aspects to articulation and language that need to be outlined here: 1) treating the "uttered", the expressed seriously; 2) the implications of the "silenced" or non-articulated; and, 3) on a more metatheoretical level and about the theory itself, whether a theory of articulation is only about an analysis of language/s.

Given the development of a theory of articulation as a reaction to the reductionism of classical Marxist theory, the emphasis on the "uttered", spoken or expressed takes on an additional meaning. Treating seriously the expressed utterances of people is a significant shift away from the tendency within classical Marxism, because of its reductionist logic, to "read" such utterances in terms of the economic base. The focus on the uttered, language and language-ing within a theory of articulation, attempts to reconstruct theoretically the experiences and the views of social agents. Within a theory of articulation, what people say is treated seriously and deconstructed within the context of how such utterances are made possible, what they represent, the signifiers they use in order to constitute their meanings and what can be discerned about their positionality in the conditions within which they exist.

Such utterances are various, and within them there are many inconsistencies and contradictions, and they are partial. A theory of articulation notes such differences and uses them to further show the many ways in which social realities are constructed and experienced.

> The discursive perspective (that of Laclau and Mouffe) has required us to think about reintroducing, reintegrating the subjective dimension in non-holistic, non-unitary ways … [It]enabled cultural theorists to realise that what we see as 'the self' is constituted out of and by difference, and remains contradictory, and that cultural forms are, similarly, in that way, never whole, never fully closed or 'sutured' (Hall, 1996: 145, brackets in the original).

However, the focus on what people articulate, and the discursive conditions that make such articulations possible, also implies that in the process of articulation there are "silences" as well. This being necessary since all forms of articulation construct particular objects in their expressions, and in so doing, do not focus on other things. The theory of articulation notes both what is articulated and what is

not, since what is silenced in many ways provides the conditions of possibility for what is articulated in the first place (see Rattansi *in* Rattansi and Donald, 1992 for a useful analysis of articulation and silences of racism in representations in the British media).

Following on the example of racism in South Africa, there are two examples that can be used here to illustrate the point of treating the language of racism seriously. The first is the work of Derrida (1986) in his exposition of the ways apartheid used language in its articulation of itself and the various transmutations it underwent during the existence of apartheid. These included shifts in articulations of racism ranging from overt racist segregationism, "cultural pluralism" to "own development" (see also McClintock and Nixon, 1986).

Another example is the deconstruction of representations in the apartheid media. Frederickse (1989, 1993) analysed racist representations in the apartheid media showing the ways in which it uses language and images to construct perceptions of the superiority of white people, and distortions to express the inferiority of black people. In this analysis Frederickse also points to the silences that exist, and what these suggest. For example, no news of black resistances to racism is covered. It is silenced. As another example, when black people die they are described in depersonalised terms in the form of "5 blacks were killed". When white people die it reads " Mr X, father of Y and Z and husband to W and dearly loved member of the D community died tragically in a car accident this morning". In these representations black people are anonymous entities; only white people are granted status of being human, who have social lives and who are viewed in personal ways. This is linked to the lack of human rights for "black" people.

If the theory of articulation is about exploring the connections between things and uses centrally discursive forms of analysis in order to do so, is the theory of articulation suggesting that social phenomena are merely a series of competing languages and based in language? Hall's answer to this is most instructive:

The question is, can one, does one, follow that argument to the point that there is nothing to practice but its discursive aspect … to conceptualise *all* practices as nothing but discourses, and all historical agents as discursively constituted subjectivities, to talk about positionalities but never positions, and only to look at the way concrete individuals can be interpolated in different subject positionalities … there is no reason why anything is or isn't articulatable with anything. The critique of reductionism has apparently resulted in the notion of society as a totally open discursive field.

I would put it polemically in the following form: (the idea) that the world, as social practice, is language, whereas I want to say that the social operates *like* a language. While the metaphor of language is the best way of rethinking many fundamental questions, there is a kind of slippage from acknowledging its utility and power to saying that that's really the way it is. .. What seems to happen is that, in the reaction against a crude materialism, the metaphor *x* operates like *y* is reduced to *x = y*. There is a very dramatic condensation which, in its movement, reminds me of theoretical reductionism ... I would say that the fully discursive position is a reductionism upward, rather than downward, as economism was (Hall, 1996: 145-146, emphases in the original).

In the above, Hall separates a theory of articulation from forms of post-modern analyses that reduce society to language. He also dissociates a theory of articulation from lapsing into a discursive reductionism and editing out of human agency. But, a theory of articulation still considers it important to use the techniques of discursive analysis since modes of articulation, representation, signification and meaning are critical in analyses of what is and is not articulated and the conditions of their possibility.

I want to suggest that a theory of articulation, as outlined by Hall, provides a viable way in which to analyse issues related to human rights.

A theory of articulation can allow analyses of human rights to avoid the universalism, generalisation, formalism and legalism that seemed to have characterised approaches to human rights. It also provides a way in which to treat seriously the individual and particular lives of people and the ways in which they make meaning of, and within, them. A theory of articulation also allows the exploration of the individual within the context of specific historical conditions and social forces on macro and micro levels of society. Thus, the theory of articulation allows the individual level to be analyzed in articulations with other wider levels of society. At the same time, it does not treat human beings in essentialising and homogenising ways. This means that human beings in a theory of articulation can be viewed as different, contradictory and complex. Finally, a theory of articulation also allows human rights to be seen as impacting on, as they are impacted by, human agency. In these ways, I contend, a theory of articulation provides a theoretical basis for engaging with human rights in ways that would meet the criticisms raised in Chapters 1 and 2, about the need for making human rights more personal and specific, without losing the necessary conditions for their existence.

Adopting a theory of articulation to human rights does imply that individualist accounts by way of personal stories or auto/biographies only are inadequate in approaching human rights. It also implies that only "micro" or only "macro" or only "structuralist" accounts of human rights are inadequate. They do not provide ways in which to make human rights personal and specific whilst still maintaining the legal necessity for their existence. What follows is a discussion on the use of personal stories or auto/biographies in addressing issues of human rights. I want to argue that qualitative accounts of people's lives are relevant to human rights, but how such accounts are theorised and what they provide needs to be evaluated seriously. In this regard, I want to argue that Lawrence-Lightfoot's notion of "portraiture" is useful for analyses of human rights.

# Portraiture and Accounting for Individual Lives

It is possible in accessing people's own experiences that one can do so in autobiographical or biographical ways. Abbs (1974) in arguing for the value of "autobiographies", particularly in education, notes that autobiographies give primacy to "experience". For Abbs, the "experiences" detailed in autobiographies demonstrate that "experience" is "assertive, creative and intentional" (Abbs, 1974: 5). This is opposed to ideas of "experience" as passive and non-volitional. As such, human agency is highlighted within autobiographies. Given that autobiographies document individual experiences, and that experiences are active and intentional constructions of human agents, through the use of autobiographies one is able to access the ways people experience their worlds in conscious ways. As Abbs puts it:

> The central concern of all autobiography is to describe, evoke and generally recreate the development of the author's experience (Abbs, 1974: 6).

Later, Abbs suggests:

> The discipline of autobiography that I am advocating is primarily an inward and creative discipline centred on the related acts on and re-creating the personal past. It is not academic (Abbs, 1974: 13).

In this view, autobiographies are "re-creations" of people's "pasts". They are personal and existential. They do not necessarily offer an analysis of the conditions that construct and make possible the ways in which people experience their lives. And, its prime focus is "inward". Thus, through autobiographies one is able to get interesting accounts of people's lives, but they cannot be treated as theoretically directed accounts of either the lives of people being described, others or the world they inhabit, let alone the complex forces that work in historical contexts. As such, autobiographies are individualistic, subjective and relative.

Another possible approach is that of "biographies" and "personal stories", which have been used mainly in particular forms of postmodernism. "Biographies" and "personal stories" have been given prominence in attempts to "release people's own voices" (see Carrim, 2000). In reactions to structuralism and abstract generalisations of modernism, some postmodernist analyses have focused on the particular, the individual and the specific, and "personal stories" and/or "biographies" have provided a way in which to access people's experiences and "let their voices be heard". Whilst such approaches have ranged from using "personal accounts" (Prophet and Rowell, 1990), "biographies" (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994), "ethnographies" (Bozzoli, 1991) to "life histories" (Samuels, 2003), they share the common task of focusing on the personal and individual.

Unlike "autobiographies", though, "personal accounts", "biographies", "ethnographies" and "life histories" introduce the intervention of the researcher. It is the researcher that directs the form of "personal stories". The interventionism of the researcher in "personal accounts", "biographies", "ethnographies" and "life histories" admits the non-objectivity of such research and the dependence of such research on the priorities and perspective of the researcher. However, it is the interests and concerns of the researcher that informs the way in which such individual accounts would be constructed and used. In other words, such approaches can lead to an individualism of sorts, decontextualised micro accounts of interesting, but theoretically uninformed and unhelpful, "stories". Such approaches can also lead to more "articulated" and "reflexive" analyses of social conditions. Given the latitude that is available in this approach, due to its lack of methodological and theoretical specification, Lawrence-Lightfoot's work on "portraiture" attempts to specify the theoretical perspective and methodological conditions that need to be used in accessing individual people's experiences of their lives.

Lawrence-Lightfoot explains "portraiture" in the following way:

The social science of portraiture, is a genre of inquiry and representation that seeks to join science and art. Portraiture is a method of qualitative research that blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organisational life. Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of people they are studying, documenting their voices and visions – their authority, knowledge and wisdom. The drawing of the portraits is placed in social and cultural contexts and shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one negotiating the discourse and shaping the evolving image (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997: xv).

There are three important elements that Lawrence-Lightfoot raises in the above quotation: the contextualisation of "portraiture", the interaction between the "portraitist" or researcher and the "subject", and the link between "art and science" in the development of "portraiture".

The placing of "portraits" in their "social and cultural contexts" is an important dimension of the "social science of portraiture". This contextualisation of portraiture enables it not to lapse into a decontextualised form of individualism. For Lawrence-Lightfoot, portraiture is not only about "human experience" but also about human experience within "organisational life". Davis (1997) points out:

Throughout our considerations of the aesthetic production and perception and the realm of interpretation as cognition, we cannot overestimate the importance of context (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997: 31).

Lawrence-Lightfoot also states:

The portrait, then, creates a narrative that is at once complex, provocative, and inviting, that attempts to be holistic, revealing the dynamic interaction

of values, personality, structure, and history. And the narrative documents human behaviours and experience in context. In fact, the portraitist insists that the only way to interpret people's actions, perspectives, and talk is to see them in context (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997: 11).

In developing the importance of context in portraiture Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis indicate that for the portraitist three levels of contexts are important: historical, personal and internal. "Historical context" refers to "the variety of research frameworks from which portraiture derives and deviates"; "personal context" refers to "the researcher creating a portrait that is manifest in the experiential repertoire of the researcher; for example, whether he or she is familiar with the subject or has particular expertise, assumptions, or expectations that modulate the presentation of the subject"; and, "internal context" refers to "that in which the parts of the whole are perceived in terms of each other and the backdrop of the work" (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997: 32). Thus, "context" in portraiture has a dual meaning; that of social, cultural and historical contexts, and levels within the portrait, such as what is foregrounded, what is in the background, what shades and colours are used, and so on.

Lawrence-Lightfoot also notes explicitly that the researcher intervenes in the process of the research, in the construction of portraiture. In this process, for Lawrence-Lightfoot, the researcher overtly enters into "dialogue" with the "subject" in "evolving" the "image".

> The identity, character and history of the researcher are obviously critical to the manner of listening, selecting, interpreting, and composing the story. Portraiture admits the central and creative role of the *self* of the portraitist (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997: 13, emphasis in the original).

However, it is not as if the portraitist or the researcher is not bound by the need to check his/her biases and subjectivity. Lawrence-Lightfoot points out:

Even though the identity and voice of the portraitist is larger and more explicit in this form of inquiry, the efforts to balance personal predisposition with disciplined scepticism and critique are central to the portrait's success. One might even say that because the self of the portraitist is so essential to the development of the work she must be that much more vigilant about identifying other sources of challenge to her perspective (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997: 13).

As such, the portraitist or researcher in this approach of portraiture is bound by methodological conditions that attempt to ensure a critical, "sceptical" and "balanced" projection of individual lives. The portraitist creates the portrait in ways that are mindful of theoretical and methodological rigour. It is for such reasons that Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) describe portraiture as a "social science". The researcher in this perspective is thus bound to ensure that portraiture is not conducted in decontextualised ways.

In addition to "context" and the "checks" on the subjectivity of the researcher, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) point to four other aspects to doing portraiture: "voice", "relationship", "emergent themes" and "aesthetic whole". The idea of "voice" in portraiture is based on the assumption that portraits make statements and as such represent voices. In addition, the "dialogue" between the portraitist and the subject in the production of the portrait should be "heard" in the portrait. This at the same time is also a way of ensuring that what the researcher's views are and what are the subject's statements should be methodologically distinguishable in the portraits. Throughout, though, it is the voice of the subject that should be accorded with primacy.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis also suggest that the idea of "relationship" is also central to the creation of portraits. This refers to relations between the portraits and contexts, with contexts being viewed in the ways discussed above. Relations also refer to the relations between the portraitist and the subject, and to "self" –

relaitions between the self of the portraitist and the self of the subject in relation to the portrait.

However, for Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) the production of portraits in contexts through "dialogue" and "relationships" usually yield "themes" that occur repeatedly and which give the portrait its point/s of emphases. Such "emergent" themes reinforce the phenomenological slant in portraiture in that "emergent themes" are similar to "convergences" within phenomenology (see Husserl, 1964). It is the task of the portraitist and the subject to identify and agree upon such "emergent themes". Thus, for example, in the dialogue between the portraitist and subject a consistent theme may emerge, let's assume that it is 'race', then the theme of 'race' would be foregrounded or somehow emphasised as a "dominant articulating principle" (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), to use Laclau and Mouffe here, in the portrait.

Finally, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis emphasise the importance of an "aesthetic whole" in portraiture. Here they place emphasis on the idea that the portrait needs to be "aesthetically" informed and coherent. This to enable the portrait to be a "work of art", capturing beauty and "goodness" in its complexity and "subtlety". This idea of "aesthetic whole" also indicates Lawrence-Lightfoot's and Davis' insistence that portraiture is an "art", as much as it is a social science. For Lawrence-Lightfoot, in particular, portraiture breaks with social science in that social sciences have generally been characterised by a focus on an academic critique and on "social problems". Lawrence-Lightfoot states:

> The voice of portraiture (is a) counterpoint to the dominant chorus of social scientists whose methods and goals have been greatly influenced by the positivist paradigm, whose focus has largely centred on the identification and documentation of social problems, and whose audience have been mostly limited to the academy. Portraiture, on the other hand, is framed by the phenomenological lens; it seeks to illuminate the complex dimensions of *goodness* and is designed to capture the attention of a broad

and eclectic audience (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997: xvi. Emphasis in the original).

The idea of an "aesthetic whole", then, is to ensure that portraiture "illuminates goodness", remains as a work of "art" and is accessible to, as much as it is targeted at, "ordinary" people outside of the "academy". Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, thus, recognise that portraiture is a form of inquiry that "illuminates". It does not claim to be "academic" in form or purpose neither is it a fully fledged theoretical account of social and individual life.

In summary, the following usefully captures the main elements of portraiture:

> In summary, portraiture is a method framed by the traditions and values of the phenomenological paradigm, sharing many of the techniques, standards, and goals of ethnography. But it pushes against the constraints of those traditions and practices in its explicit effort to combine empirical and aesthetic description, in its focus on the convergence of the narrative and analysis, in its goal of speaking to broader audiences beyond the academy (thus linking inquiry to public discourse and social transformation), in its standard of authenticity rather than reliability and validity (the traditional standards or quantitative and qualitative inquiry), and in its explicit recognition of the use of self as the primary research instrument for documenting and interpreting the perspectives and experiences of the people and the cultures being studied (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997: 14. Brackets in the original).

For analyses of human rights, the approach of portraiture allows individual accounts of people's lives to be captured in ways that allow the portraits produced to be located within "contexts". It allows for human lives to be viewed as complex and in "articulation" with various forces in society, structures, organisations, attitudes and assumptions. As such, portraiture enables one to access individual accounts without lapsing into an individualism or reductionism of people's lives.

In conclusion, the concern in this chapter has been to find a way in which to access individual people's lives in particular and specific ways. But, this needs to be done in ways that do not lapse into an individualism, structuralism, reductionism and decontextualised account of people's lives. This has been motivated by a need to shift analyses of human rights away from tendencies of legalism, universalism, generalisation and depersonalisation. First, an argument has been made in this chapter that a theory of articulation provides a viable way to approach analyses of human rights that would meet these requirements. It has also been argued that adopting a theory of articulation implies that individualistic accounts of people's lives via "autobiographies", "biographies", "life histories" and "ethnographies" which do not attempt to balance the micro and macro, or agency with structure, are not adequate in analyses of human rights. However, it has also been argued that the approach of "portraiture" offers a way in which individual accounts may be accessed in ways that could be used in a theory of articulation. My chosen approach to analysing human rights is thus that of a theory of articulation and portraiture.

Chapter 4 focuses on human rights in South Africa under apartheid. It applies a theory of articulation and portraiture in relation to 'race', gender and sexual orientation and provides sketches (as opposed to fully fledged portraits) of Nelson Mandela and Simon Nkoli.