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Insecure shadows CPSA mission photographs from Southern Africa c.1895-1945

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> the gospel, they eagerly took up military and bureaucratic models of organisation; they cultivated statistics in order to measure success and they certainly employed all kinds of 'methods' when it came to assure their economic basis (1991:158, 161).

Also in an anti-colonialist vein, V.Y. Mudimbe suggests that the missionary, in his devotion to Civilisation, Christianity and Progress, best symbolised the colonial enterprise:

> The more carefully one studies the history of missions in Africa, the more difficult it becomes not to identify it with cultural propaganda, patriotic motivations, and commercial interests, since the missions' programme is indeed more complex than the simple transmission of the Christian faith.[...]With equal enthusiasm, he [the missionary] served as an agent of a political empire, a representative of a civilisation, and an envoy of God. There is no essential contradiction between these roles. All of them implied the same purpose: the conversion of African minds and space (Mudimbe 1988:47).

Drawing upon F. Eboussi-Boulaga's characterisation of the discourse of Christianity as both ridiculing and refuting African traditions, and didactic in its revelation of, and conformity to, a single Truth based on Faith, Mudimbe identifies "three moments[...]of violence in missionary language[...]expressed in the concepts of derision, refutation-demonstration, and orthodoxy-conformity" (Mudimbe 1988:52). Annie Coombes, in *Reinventing Africa* (1994), not only makes reference to, but also endorses Mudimbe's approach to missionaries and colonialism, arguing that the missionaries' positions in Africa "ultimately served imperial interests" (1994:161). Cochrane too, in *Bounty in Bondage* (1987), sees the missionary enterprise as a pawn of secular political hegemony (1987:150-162). Mission photography was implicated in wiping African religious practice "off the map of Africa", mostly by

Secularisation: An African Viewpoint', suggests that '[t]he ideal objective of missionaries was to wipe African Traditional Religion, in which Africans had been finding spiritual consolation for centuries, completely off the map of Africa' (1979:255). Like Comaroff and Comaroff, who characterise Christianity as a 'master narrative of a universal civilisation' (1991:246), Ayandele argues that secular motives of missions - to introduce European cultural practices, education systems and economic models - were inextricably tied up with, and essential to, the introduction of a new religious episteme (1979:256), and that colonial administrations used Christianity as a tactical project to justify and control the system:

> the white masters used the Church to lord it over the African, a logical thing in the colonial set-up: they strengthened the ecclesiastical imperialism they had established in the nineteenth century and frowned at the attempts of Africans to institutionalise Christianity in a way different from that of the Western-established churches and beyond the control of white rulers (Ayandele 1979:265).

Similarly, Johannes Fabian emphasises the complicity of missions in the political administration of the former Belgian Congo, as part of 'the famous triad' - political, commercial and religious interests - which set up and maintained the colonial system (1983:169).[7] In a later essay in *Time and the Work of Anthropology* (1991), Fabian refines his approach to the political-religious relationship, but is none the less adamant about the complicity of religious and political interests:

> one finds striking agreement between missionaries and imperialist agents with regard to conceptions of space (routes are traced, territories to be mapped) and movement (attack, penetration, occupation)[...]when missions began to spread

The following sections of this introduction deal with the discursive assumptions and parameters of the tactics of missionisation and photography, focusing on writings about the missionary's encounters with other missionaries, colonial administrators, ethnographers and African indegenes, as well as the photographs that were either produced at the time of the encounters or as a result of these encounters. This contextualisation is intended to highlight the fact that mission photography, as defined in this project, is a discordant and varied genre and thereby dispel the myth that such photography is a generic entity within the histories of colonialism and photography.

2.

From the late fifteenth century, when the Portuguese first established missions in northern Angola (Neill 1966:285), historicising discourses of missionisation have established wide-ranging, and often contradictory, positions on the role missions in Africa, most specifically their differing relations to religious and secular forms of colonial, as well as indigenous cultures. In this section on the missionary encounter, I would like to explore some anti-colonialist, sentimentalised and context-specific approaches to the missionisation of Africa.

The anti-missionary thrust of some recent writings on mission history is based on an argument that heavily implicates missions in acts of colonialism. E.A. Ayandele, for example, in an essay entitled 'Mission in the Context of Religion and

While the imperialistic bent in photographic practice is fairly consistent, the will to dominate and control is not always realised in colonial photography.

Colonisation is about the simultaneous elimination and production of old and new spaces: "it is not a space of cohabitation, but of interdiction and intersection" (Buchanan 1994:129). Mission photography, as one form of colonial photography, is but one practice used to delineate a politics of inclusion and exclusion. The various 'complementary' practices of colonialism seek to organise and arrange "the domination of physical space, the reformation of natives' minds, and the integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective" (Mudimbe 1988:2). Missionisation and photography were (and are) two complementary practices which attempted to dis/re-locate the physical and visual spaces of Africa. Photographic and mission practices attempted to be essentialised versions of an 'ideal' colony - photographs are often abbreviations of space, just as missionisation is often concerned with the simplification and essentialisation of identities.

Missionisation and photography are both implicated in colonial encounters that are differently affirmations and disruptions of power. An exploration of encounters of power requires, to some extent, a revaluation of both the terms and relationships of power (especially in discourses of photography). The modes of articulation of power (outside of the limited parameters of writer and photographer), as well as exchanges between colonising groups (e.g. missionaries and administrators) and between 'colonised' groups (e.g. traditional leaders and Christian converts) inform notions of encounter in the 'contact zone'.

Introduction

1.

If imperialism is about the hegemonic extension of power and control, then colonialism, as the forms of imperialism, is about the ideological occupation and settlement of physical and metaphysical space. The overriding strategies of imperialism contain the political, economic and cultural tactics of colonialism that are enacted to meet the needs of imperialism. While Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), acknowledges that 'imperialism' is "a word and an idea today so controversial, so fraught with all sorts of questions, doubts, polemics, and ideological premises as nearly to resist use altogether" (1993:3), he nonetheless makes the following distinction between imperialism and colonialism:

> 'imperialism' means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; 'colonialism', which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory.[...]In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism[...]lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices (1993:8).

Photography, generally, mirrors imperialism in that the will to dominate and control the subject of vision is a key component of taking, making and disseminating photographs. In line with the definition outlined above, colonial photography, more specifically, concerns the actual determination of a vision about a distant territory,

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Abstract

A burgeoning academic interest in mission photography has generated a fairly small body of literature that often perpetuates stereotypes and dichotomies about the photographic colonisation of Africa by missionaries. Within this literature, little, if any, consideration has been given to the mission photographs camouflaged by inadequate inventories in South African archives. This dissertation, in attempting to account for a 'history' of Church of the Province of South Africa (henceforth CPSA) mission photography in southern Africa, is an exploration of the role of such photography in the demarcation of colonial spaces and the inscription of colonial identities. Theoretical discourses of space and identity are not only useful to the framing of CPSA mission photography within the visual discourses and ideological practices of colonialism, but are also valuable to an exploration of the various uses and practices of photography within mission space, the role of photography in the stabilisation of space, and missionaries' attempts to inscribe both self-identity and the identity of other peoples.

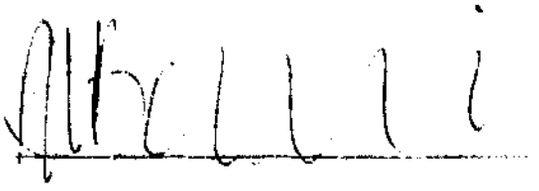
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To my grandfather, James Kenneth Waddington

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and has neither been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University, nor prepared under the aegis or with the assistance of any other body or organisation or person outside the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.



Rory McLachlan Bester

2nd day of September 1997

"[...]our society is characterised by a cancerous growth of vision, measuring everything by its ability to show or be shown and transmuting communication into a visual journey."

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*

INSECURE SHADOWS
CPSA Mission Photographs from Southern Africa c.1895-1945

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latter sense, in which photography is an effect of a particular lived spatial organisation. Thus, the use of space in this dissertation is not so much a deliberation upon issues such as perspectival illusionism – especially since perspective is so often, by virtue of the mechanical apparatus of the camera, a given in photographic images – and more a focus on space as a lived, politicised concept that accounts for the social processes that occasions certain kinds of mission photographs.

More than just providing a framework for the assessment of both CPSA mission photographs from Ovamboland and the eastern Caprivi, this chapter is an attempt to make certain links between theories of space and theories of photography, links that will hopefully provide a more nuanced framework for the assessment of colonial photographs. In this sense, it is theoretical in focus and does not pretend to offer a detailed visual account of CPSA mission photographs. The first section of this chapter is limited to theoretical perspectives that provide insights into both colonial photographic practice and the ways in which mission spaces are constituted and made meaningful through the use of the photographic medium. The exploration of the these theoretical positions is thematic rather than chronological in order to emphasise their points of meeting and departure, and focuses primarily on Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991). Key to this chapter is the development of a notion of photographic space based on these theories of space. The remaining sections of this chapter explore photographic space in relation to other photographic issues and debates, including the relationship between photographer and photographed, the photograph as an intervention in space and time, the photograph as spatial narrative, the 'arbitrariness' of the photographic image, and linked to this,

Space and Colonial Photography

1.

Taking as its impetus certain aspects of Marxist politics, space theory has evolved as a range of particularly acute understandings of abstract and physical geographies. Space theory, as a body of thought, is not a cohesive perspective to which any number of metaphors or adjectives can simply be attached. Authors consistently emphasise and contest different, and often contradictory, notions of the constitution and meaning of space.[14] Against this, traditional art historical notions of space usually refer to the occupation and ordering of a two-dimensional picture surface, and more specifically, to the creation of a visual illusion of depth through conventions of Renaissance perspective.[15] Used in this traditional sense, space is largely ahistorical and depoliticised. Little or no attempt is made to critically assess the contexts and motives that covertly and overtly inform personal and cultural articulations of visual space. So where traditional art historical space is concerned with the ordering of a three-dimensional reality on a two-dimensional surface through the organisational use of perspective, more politicised conceptions of space are concerned with the particular social relationships that facilitate and/or hinder the production of a particular space. Within the domain of photography, the former is a preoccupation with photography as a representation of space, as opposed to the

meanings. The fluidity of meaning forms an important theoretical focus in this chapter, specifically in relation to both the constructed delineation between, and meaning of 'mission', 'frontier', 'private', and 'public' spaces, and the extent to which the mission photographs are implicated in the shifts between these various spaces.

The photographic material for this project has been largely derived from the CPSA archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Photographic material in the CPSA archive at Wits University has neither been indexed in any coherent form, nor worked with in any academic project. The location of the photographs for this dissertation thus required an examination of all the CPSA inventories. Out of this process emerged a list CPSA mission photographic material that formed the basis of this study, a list that is included as Appendix A in this dissertation. The lack of a 'photograph(y)' entry within the mission archive's index suggests a rather passive attitude to the photographic holdings in the archive. There is no archival photographic policy, no special procedure for the preservation of the photographs, and no systematic process for the collection of CPSA mission photographs. In addition to the CPSA archive, the following archives were visited: Cape Archives (Cape Town); Cory Library (Rhodes University, Grahamstown); Local History Museum (Durban); Killie Campbell Africana Library (University of Natal, Durban); MuseumAfrica (Johannesburg), Natal Archives Depot (Pietermaritzburg), and South African Library (Cape Town).

annotated in a notebook attributed to a lay worker at the mission, Alec Crosby. The notebook is an attempt to organise the frontier space of Ovamboland region through snapshot photographs and written annotations. The photographs play an important role in producing a particular narrative about the frontier space of Ovamboland. Frontier space is, importantly, concerned with notions of communicated difference, as well as the re-negotiation of space and place. The notebook is about the negotiation of this frontier space in an attempt to produce a concrete missionary place. The frontier is transformed, both visually and verbally, from the openness of a hostile place into the closure of a tamed place, thereby effecting the reintegration of the fragmented and uncertain space of the frontier into the safe place of the mission.

In looking at postcards produced by and for CPSA missions in the eastern Cape, one has to negotiate at least two photographic histories, namely a history of 'public' postcard views and a history of mission photographs, and through an exploration of elements in these histories, come to some understanding of the creation of mission identities through the selective visualisation of content and the use of a specific form. As such, Chapter Four is not so much an exploration of 'representative' examples of either mission or postcard photographic histories, as an inquiry into the fragments of a spatialising process. This examination of fragments of mission photographic production is part of a conscious attempt to obfuscate any fixed identity for mission photography. The failure to constitute full and complete identity is central to the attempt to revision the specific contents of photographic colonialism as well as a history of that colonialism. The stratified nature of mission photographic histories is also a product of the photograph's fluid and disruptive path between

4.

The convergence of spatial and identity politics, as outlined in Chapter One and developed in Chapter Two, takes place at the point of the refusal of the spatial metaphor to completely encompass or fix a particular notion of identity. Space and identity are mutually inclusive in that an identity politics of space and a spatialisation of identity both involve a lack of 'fixity'. The application of this lack of 'fixity' to missionary and photographic practices, forms part of an attempt to evaluate the extent to which mission photographs are used to fix particular identities, and the extent to which the genre of mission photographs can be fixed with its own identity. If a politics of representation is concerned with "how politics is inscribed within the form and act of representing itself" (Giroux and Simon 1994:95), then space and identity are crucial theoretical moments for particular understanding of mission photographs. The place of mission photography in processes of colonisation need to be politicised to more adequately reflect the numerous permutations of a colonisation of vision. In looking at the photographs themselves, only fragmented moments in the history of CPSA mission photographic practice will be explored. That these moments are not 'representative' of the genre of mission photography is part of a conscious attempt to spatialise the genre as largely fragmented and without cohesive identity.

Taking up the issue of space, Chapter Three explores a set of photographs from St Mary's mission in Ovamboland. The photographs have been collected and



Fig. 1
'Water Carriers Natal, S. Africa', n.d.
Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban
Brueckner Papers, File 4

include studio and 'location' photographs such as 'Water Carriers Natal. S. Africa' (fig. 1, overleaf), a highly posed, picturesque, professional photograph in the collection of an American Board missionary from Natal, alongside more amateur photographs taken by missionaries or lay workers.[5] While photographic meaning is often genre-specific, the opening up of the parameters of the genre allows for an assessment of how secondary readings (e.g. a missionary's reading of a tourist postcard) often re-invent wider uses for photographs.[6] To suggest, as Pierre Bourdieu does, that "the ordinary photograph[...]has no meaning, value or charm except for a finite group of subjects, mainly those who took it and those who are its objects" (1990:87) is limited exactly because it does not take cognisance of the relocation of photographs in different genres.

The existence of different genres within mission photography raises the importance of the difference between encounter and strategy. The photographs need to be assessed primarily in terms of both an encounter between photographer and photographed and the photographic strategies reflected in the actual images and their genres. These emphases on the encounter and strategy are meant to not only dispel the myth of the inactive African subject and introduce the possibility of African resistance to and protest against mission photography, but also locate mission photography within a process of transculturation: asking what African culture took from mission photography. Thus, what needs to be established, from a visual perspective, is the role of photography in the maintenance and/or denial of colonial and cultural ideologies.

contributions of African Christians and of African cosmologies" (1990:59, 60). Gray lists various interests and emphases which not only distinguished missionaries from colonial administrations, but in some cases brought them into conflict with colonial rule: the financial independence of missions, their role in instituting various forms of education and their ability to be unrestricted by national boundaries (1990:59).[7]

3.

One of the most important applications of space theory to photography, and one that is central to this project, is a definition of mission photography (as distinct from missionary or church photography). By 'mission photographs' I mean more than just photographs taken by missionaries. This notion of the term prioritises the spatial use values of the photographs rather than necessarily the producers of the photographs (while not ignoring the latter), so that its scope embraces all photographic imagery that was used to generate and perpetuate certain 'missionary' positions. Thus the term includes photographs taken by professionals and missionaries themselves, both on 'location' at mission stations and in studios. In this regard, the word 'mission', especially in the South African context, is significant as it refers to an institution which served African rather than European interests (Japha et al 1993:3). This racial connotation is important to the kinds of photographs that were produced, specifically the emphasis on photographs that separated out 'mission' and 'African' identities. The wide scope of 'mission photographs' is thus intended to

cause of the varying positions of missionaries - the socio cultural character of the colony with its diversity of groups on both sides of the colonial encounter (representing a wide range of ethnic, religious, commercial and political interests) engenders a context of contradiction, inconsistency and misperception in missionising (Wyllie 1976:197-98, 202)." The suggestion that the missionary project in Africa was not a unified strategy of colonialism is not to imply that missions were not a part of the colonial thrust into Africa, but rather that they were not as rigidly embedded in a particular kind of colonial practice.[17]

Beidelman's position has subsequently been superseded by a notion of missionaries as "anticolonial militants" (Fields 1982:96). In an essay entitled 'Christian Missionaries as Anticolonial Militants' Karen Fields suggests that missionaries and colonial administrators waged an ideological battle over Africa customary law - the former rejecting it as 'heathenism' and the latter harnessing it as a means of indirect rule over the colony:

> Missionaries had to part company with the colonial regime on the matter of custom. To missionaries custom was a stumbling block, to the regime a prop. Attacking custom, therefore, missionaries attacked indirect rule at its foundation (Fields 1982:106).

Richard Gray, in *Black Christians and White Missionaries* (1990), acknowledges that the missionaries' insistence on the value of "regular labour, obedience, individual effort and responsibility" was not out of kilter with commercial and political interests, but points out that "the argument that Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa has been merely the ideological superstructure of Western capitalism ignores the fundamental

presentation of heroic missionaries. Importantly, though, such images rarely depict the 'struggle' against antithetical practices. The falsity of these images lies in the presentation of a linear missionisation of Africa, devoid of any uneven or contested development.

One of the most important features of the history of Christianity in Africa is the sheer diversity of missionary practices, a degree of variance that resulted in the many contrasting and contradictory positions of different mission groups. T.O. Beidelman's *Colonial Evangelism* (1982) is premised on a notion of anthropological recovery. Using the localised encounter as the basis of his research, Beidelman ascribes these contrary positions to the different sacred and secular foci of mission groups, in terms of issues such as the contrasting cultural backgrounds of missionaries (ethnic, class and economic differences), the differing ideological approaches of mission groups (to such things as an African clergy, levels of literacy and African beliefs and customs), contrasting approaches to the implementation of Christianity (extent of coercion, use of western clothing, language of teaching, etc.), the changing roles of missionaries as mission stations developed, from being the lone, romantic, spiritual hero to being an administrator and manager; and the merging of sacred and secular affairs (1982:9-28). Ironically, where Ayandele argues that the secularisation of missions made them a firm agent of colonialism, Beidelman uses this link to argue for the diversity of missionary approaches. R.W. Wyllie, in an essay entitled 'Some Contradictions in Missionising', endorses Beidelman's ascription of contradictory missionary positions to differing sacred and secular interests, but suggests that it is the nature of colonial society itself that is a

expansion and control (1966:12), and paints instead a picture of missionaries as defenders of humanitarian values (slavery, compulsory labour, education, alcohol, racism, land rights, etc.) which either saw them in accordance or in conflict with the political goals of the colonial administration (1966:414-15). In addition to this, it must be acknowledged, missionaries clashed with official imperialism over the secularism of governments,[1] missionary defences of converts against colonial exploitation (and customary law), and control over land not officially occupied by European states (Strayer 1976:10).

While Neill's position is sometimes over-simplistic and romantic, he does introduce a variability factor to the relationship between religious and secular forces, one that takes cognisance of the geographical, historical and denominational diversity of Christian missionisation in Africa.[2] This variability is what Strayer introduces to his other strand of African mission historiography, suggesting that efforts in the 1970s focused on the encounter of African and Christian religious systems (as myths, ritual, beliefs, etc.) rather than a socio-political or economic assessment of the expansion of Christianity in Africa:

> There can be no linear description of modern African religious history which points to the steady erosion of traditional systems in favour of Christianity. An uneven interaction between the two, coupled with a recognition of the capacity for persistence, renewal, and change within traditional belief systems offers a less elegant but more interesting context for future research in mission history (Strayer 1976:4).

This approach is, of course, premised on the recovery of an anthropology and history of African religious practice. Mission photography is often about the romantic

excluding certain subjects from photographic view. Photography was a powerful tool used to institutionalise western controlled Christianity in Africa. This visual mapping of colonial space by missionaries was underpinned by a notion of 'civilisation', and in this sense, the photographs are as much about the denial and refutation of a 'heathen' space as about the construction of a conforming 'civilisation'.

In a less anti-missionary vein, Robert Strayer, in an essay entitled 'Mission History in Africa: New Perspectives on an Encounter', locates the origins of such anti-mission sentiments in the ambivalence of African nationalist perspectives of the 1950s and 1960s. On the one hand, this nationalist literature focused on African responses and resistance to missions, the fundamentally imperialist intent of mission activity, and the negative impact of missions on African self-identity and self-confidence, while on the other hand, it saw as positive missionary efforts to modernise, and also their unwitting contribution to African independence (Strayer 1976:1). Strayer's historiographical distinctions between different perspectives in the writing of mission history also outlines an earlier perspective on missions. These early accounts of missionisation, undertaken by missionaries and their supporters, focused on the strategies and heroics of the missionaries who implemented Christianity in Africa: "this literature hardly spoke of the theme of encounter at all. In this respect, it resembled the early colonial history which saw Africa as a stage on which Europeans of all kinds played out their interests and their fantasies" (Strayer 1976:1).[4] An example of this approach is Neill's sometimes conservative analysis in *Colonialism and Christian Missions* (1966) which leans towards missionary heroics.[5] Neill disputes the claim that missionaries were merely government agents of colonial

relationships of power implicated in the photographic relationship between photographer and photographed are often superseded in the space of the reproduction of the photographic image, making the space outside of the printed frame at least as important (in the construction of photographic meaning) as the photograph itself. This external space, where photograph and text meet, "loads the image burdening it with a culture, a moral, and imagination" (Barthes 1977:26). Here, the production of space is the narration of space.

The abstract place of the photograph is a narrative in the sense that it recounts (*narrare*) a known (*gnarus*).[1] The ability of the photograph to capture a complete story, or even an incident, is limited by the static frame of the camera. The frame in photography is physical, unlike the alluded to, or suggested, frame in written discourse, creating immediate boundaries that summarily confront the viewer with an abbreviated sight. Photography only communicates that which is communicable - spatial elements outside of what is permitted by the lens remain uncommunicated, and by implication non-existent, and in this sense, missions used the camera to deflect as much as to capture certain subjects. The photograph is a spatial fragment (Sontag 1977:105-6; Jeffrey 1992:351) and as a consequence, it invariably requires a (con)text:

> While they can have a form of coherence, even a series of photographs requires language or text to fill in the gaps in the narrative. Active participation in the narrative is thus not inherent in the photograph, depending rather on its relationship with other photographs or texts (Edwards 1992:11)

Certeau's idea of 'space' stops short of a concept of 'place'. De Certeau's separation between 'space' and 'place' attempts to account for the difference between the processes of stasis and mobility in everyday practice. Where 'place' is location, stasis or seeing "something dead", 'space' is intersection, movement and action upon the 'dead': space is, in short, "practised place" (1984:117-118).[4] In this separation between 'space' and 'place', De Certeau not only effectively accounts for, but also acknowledges the co-existence of politicised and non-politicised spatial domains, a dualism rejected by Doreen Massey. In that 'place' offers a resistance to the corrosive effects of time, it becomes a "triumph[...]over time" (De Certeau 1984:37). Similarly, the photograph "embalms time" (Bazin 1971:14), and it is not only plausible but also important to locate the photographic image as a 'place' to harbour the atemporality of colonial vision.

5.

To speak of space in relation to photographs is to speak of a number of spaces which variously impact on the social meanings of visual images. Photographic space encompasses both the photograph itself, and the external spaces of production (of the photograph) and re-production (of the meaning of the photograph). While the photographic act is a spatial intervention in the lived experiences of historical subjects, the photograph itself is 'dead', a 'place' waiting to be spatialised, most commonly, by the textual annotations of a title, caption or essay. Here, the

of the photograph - "its irrefutable pathos as a message from time past" (1977:54) leads her to emphasise the role of the photograph in collapsing space and time: "[i]n the real world, something is happening and no one knows what is going to happen. In the image-world, it has happened, and it will forever happen in that way" (1977:168). These photographic disjunctures between the past, present and future introduce what Roland Barthes calls "a new space-time category: spatial immediacy and temporal anteriority, the photograph being an illogical conjunction between the here-now and the there-then" (Barthes 1977:44). As a result of the photograph's "insistent dislocation of time and space", it "perpetuates the past in an insidious fashion, denying time, presenting a timeless vision, an 'ethnographic present'" (Edwards 1992:7). The 'frozen moment' of the photograph fixes time, distorts the volumetric motion of actual spatial relations, and thereby negates the possibility of Doreen Massey's 'fourth dimension'. But while photographs themselves might not permit a temporal progression through historical space - since they collapse this space into a seamless, depoliticised and ahistorical continuum - a sense of photographic 'spatialisation' is activated in the 'reading' of the image. Within photographic space the photograph gains a sense of both spatiality and temporality, the latter of which can be rationalised through an appeal to Michel de Certeau's distinction between 'space' and 'place'.

Massey argues for a notion of space that involves movement: "[s]eeing space as a moment in the intersection of configured social relations (rather than as an absolute dimension) means that it cannot be seen as static" (1992:81). But where Massey's notion of 'space' is pushed to the limits of inclusiveness, Michel de

important to acknowledge the role of photography in what Lefebvre more generally highlights as "the antagonism between a knowledge which serves power and a form of knowing which refuses to acknowledge power" through criticism and subversion (Lefebvre 1991:10). And more specifically, to locate the photographic relationship between photographer and photographed as a relationship having the potential to be as much about 'taken from' as about 'taken back'

4.

Like Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey insist on the inseparability between space and time: for Lefebvre, "space implies time, and vice versa" (1991:118), and similarly, Massey insists on "the inseparability of time and space[...]on the necessity of thinking in terms of space-time" (1992:84).[7] By arguing for an element of time in space, Massey is able to insist on space having a political dimension. Rather than attempting to either implode space and time or maintain their mutual exclusivity, Massey argues for a space-time tension "within an overall, and strong, concept of four dimensionality[...]Space is not static, nor time spaceless" (1992:77, 80). Like Lefebvre, Massey joins two maxims - "space is socially constructed" and "the social is spatially constructed" (1992:70) - to suggest that lived, experienced space interacts with representations of space, that the spatial realm is implicitly political

Most photographic theory emphasises the varying extents to which the photograph separates itself from space and time. Susan Sontag's 'surrealist' reading

photographic act (and its attendant relationship). They are generally unable to produce, tabulate and impose a discourse in the way that the photographer can make a strategic intervention with a camera. In relation to the indegene, the camera, in the hands of the missionary, was taken up as a tool of strategy, where strategy is part of "an effort to delimit one's own place in a world bewitched by the invisible powers of the Other" (De Certeau 1984:36). But as part of the colonial order, the camera is seen as a tactical instrument – the click of the camera a mere whisper in comparison to the larger noises of change.

The hegemonic approach to the photographic act within the mission space thus needs to be interrogated to test the dominant-submissive character of the self-other dichotomy. Space theory, in that it concerns the lived relations of production, provides a more nuanced notion of the power relations of photographic production than the simple opposition between the taker (of) and the taken (from). CPSA mission photographs from southern Africa probably constitute the most inconsistent body of colonial and mission imagery in the upholding of a dichotomy between the powerful, photographing 'self' and the powerless, photographed 'other'. This inconsistency might have to with the fact that, on the one hand, CPSA mission photographers, unlike many other colonial makers and takers of photographs (such as explorers, anthropologists, and commercial photographers), were often untrained amateurs with no photographic instructions from a 'higher' authority. This lack of a formalised system of photographic production and (re)production allowed the possibility of space that was not solely about the complete domination of the photographic subject. Thus, in assessing the photographic space of missions, it is

capture people off guard, with the photographic studio portrait or three quarter view, which generally demands the facial frontality of the sitter. The power of the consumer of that image can endorse, neutralise, or reverse the intentions of both the photographer and the photographed, thus shifting what might be one social meaning to another social meaning.

The application of Michel de Certeau's notion of a 'reappropriated space' - outlined in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) - to a concept of photographic space, quite importantly, disrupts traditional notions implicating the photographic act in the powerful subjection of the photographed.[24] And the photograph, as a representation of space, is testament to the lived experience of space. In certain colonial spaces, most notably the mission space, there is a reappropriation of the space of the photographic act that does not necessarily disrupt the photographic act itself. The power of a photographed alterity lies in an ability to "reappropriate" an already organised space, but in a way that establishes invisible differences that do not actually upset the organised space of domination: here, reappropriation as "silent production" (De Certeau 1984:xiv,xxi).[25] It is the 'silence' of re-production that is crucial to De Certeau's understanding of space, and it is this silence that is most notably absent in assessments of colonial photography.

The kind of photographic space being formulated here mirrors De Certeau's distinction between strategy and tactic: "strategies are able to produce, tabulate, and impose these spaces[...]whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces" (De Certeau 1984:30). The actions of the photographed within a photographic space are tactical in that they can only manipulate and divert the

relationships' (Lefebvre 1991:82-83), is important in the sense that it accounts for the particular links between photographic spaces and photographic relationships. Mission spaces, informed as they are by discourses of colonialism, engender photographic spaces that imply a number of photographic relationships of power. Implicated in power shifts are shifts in the social meanings generated by individuals or groups involved in the photographic act and process. The power of the sitter is often associated with a consciousness of the camera, with an awareness of being photographed. This 'power' appears to manifest itself most obviously when the sitter is able to directly confront the camera. This confrontation is summed up by Pierre Bourdieu as follows:

> It is certainly true that the spontaneous desire for frontality is linked to the most deep-rooted cultural values. Honour demands that one pose for the photograph as one would stand before a man whom one respects and from whom one expects respect, face on, one's forehead held high and one's head straight. In this society which exalts the sense of honour, dignity and respectability, in this closed world where one feels at all times inescapably under the gaze of others, it is important to give others the most honourable, the most dignified image of oneself: the affected and rigid pose which tends towards the posture of standing at attention seems to be the expression of this unconscious intention (1965:82).

The problem with this correlation between power, 'confrontation' and "honour" is that the photograph itself, while commonly used as the basis of such correlations, often gives no clue of the extent to which this compositional structure was the result of the photographed negating or complying with the desires of the photographer nor, indeed, to issues of culturally specific expectations (such as those raised by Bourdieu). In making such rationalisations about photographs, one cannot, for example, simply equate the snapshot photograph, with its characteristic capacity to

relationship, and in the context of mission photography, this relationship was largely informed by the linked ideological dichotomies between both 'civilisation' and 'barbarism', and 'Christianity' and 'heathenism'. Within the context of colonial photography, this formulation of the photographic relationship is forcefully and powerfully argued in books such as Malek Alloula's *The Colonial Harem* (1986). Alloula's theorisation of French colonial postcards of Algerian women is, however, simplistic in its conformity to a rigidly dichotomised photographic relationship, specifically in its reduction of photographic subjects and objects to polarities of power and anonymity respectively. While it is not the intention of this dissertation to refute the existence of powerful discourses of colonial domination, such discourses should not simply be *assumed* in the space of the colonial photographic encounter.

Photography, as a tool of 'mastery', is used to conceal the contradictions of the photographic space and relationship, thereby creating a homogenous space devoid of differences or peculiarities.[7] This homogenised space of the photographed (i.e. the objectified space), especially in colonial photographs, is the paradoxical, ambivalent space inhabited by what is the focus of both vision and interest, and marginalisation and prejudice. The static view of the photographic encounter, where "the authority is certain, the hierarchy clear and power is situated at viewer focus in a confident, controlled fashion" (Faris 1992a:214), neither acknowledges the power of the sitter, nor the power of the consumer of the image, both of whom can shift as cohorts or rivals in the pursuit of photographic power.

The introduction of space theory to a notion of the photographic relationship, specifically the idea that "any space implies, contains and dissimulates social

space in which certain relations of production have allowed or necessitated the taking of photographs.

Thus, photographic space is the space in which an attempt has been made to either successfully or unsuccessfully (for climatic, geographical, technical, social or political reasons) produce and/or reproduce photographs . While the term refers more to what happens outside of the photographic frame, it does not exclude what happens, visually, within the frame of the photograph. Contemporary theoretical conceptions of space are thus particularly appropriate to the study of colonial (and more specifically, mission) photographs. Within photographic space, there are certain parallels between space and photography, most notably around issues of the photographic relationship, time, and narrative, as well as arbitrariness and evidence. It is these issues that now need to be explored more fully.

3.

The relationship between the photographer and the photographed, between the subject who largely envisions and produces a photograph and the main object of that vision and production, constitutes the photographic relationship. The photographic relationship is commonly framed in terms of a rigid self-other dichotomy. Within this dichotomy, the photographer, as 'self', is the powerful taker (of) and the photographed, as 'other', is the powerless taken (from).[4] The photographer-photographed relationship traditionally implies a taker-taken

outcome of that production (an issue that will be taken up at a later point in this chapter).

While Lefebvre is critical of those who emphasise representations of space over the production of space (1991:38), his argument that the former is not to be trusted because of its illusionism, is a redundant dead-end, in that most cultural experiences of space take the form of visual and/or non-visual representation. While space "cannot be reduced to a [visual] text" (Buchanan 1994:129), one also cannot ignore the photograph as a product of the visualisation of space. That the photographic image becomes yet one more 'prop' on a changing spatial stage, is important to an understanding of the extent to which lived experience is based on, and distorted by, representations of space such as photographs. The crucial task, especially in the context of a dissertation such as this, is to critique the representation of space as the outcome of particular spatial relations. The photograph is thus important to an assessment of the impact of photographic practice (as one mode of production) on the construction of mission space, and vice versa.

Photographic representations of space are important exactly because they become part of lived relations subsequent to re-presentation. As a distortion, the photograph is an important social tool used in the (re)negotiation of space. And if "[s]pace can only be read, as far as it can be read at all, via the vehicle of its signs" (Buchanan 1994:135), it is important at least to approach the photograph as a sign of a particular kind of space. Both the indentations of tripods in the ground (replaced, today, by discarded spool boxes) and the images produced are also important spatial traces or signs. Photographs are the 'traces' of a photographic space, of a

to naturalness, to substantiality" (Lefebvre 1991:27-30). The implication of this emphasis on the artificiality of space, most notably the idea that space involves a series of re-productions, is important to the deconstruction of photography's status as 'real' and inseparable from its referent. Lefebvre's problematic belief in a single, 'true' understanding of space notwithstanding, *The Production of Space* is important in its emphasis on the spatialising practices, i.e. those practices which give a space its particular form and content.

Lefebvre's formulation of space is important to photography, specifically to notions of photographic space and photographic practice. An emphasis on historical and political contexts makes the use and meaning of 'photographic space' in this dissertation different from the notion of photographic space pursued by the authors who contributed to Steve Yates' *Poetics of Space: A Critical Photographic Anthology* (1995). In Yates' anthology, photographic space refers primarily to the content of the photograph, to the ordering of the visual space within a frame.[1] In contrast to this, the politicised notion of photographic space being formulated here is one that refers to spaces that facilitate and hinder the production of not only photographs, but certain kinds of photographs. In this sense, photographic space is a form of photographic practice, where the latter is seen as the range of practices implicated in the taking, making and meaning of photographs. Photographic space, as a concept, thus encompasses production and product. While taking photographs involves the lived production of a space (in the sense that space is physically engaged), the photographic image is a product, a static representation of space. The photograph is 'evidence' of a particular kind of production as well as being the

the spatial senses in which photographs are invoked as evidence.

2.

The title of Henri Lefebvre's seminal work on space - *The Production of Space* - alludes to what he sees as the essential character of space, namely, the idea of production.[16] Space is, first and foremost, produced. A produced space is a social or lived space manufactured in different, but not necessarily new ways, to meet the needs and demands of a society (Lefebvre 1991:31; also Foucault 1986:23). Spatial practices, in their various ways, structure and organise spatial possibilities that are conducive to particular practices of everyday life (De Certeau 1984:96). While Lefebvre suggests that an understanding of the product is inseparable from its production (1991:18, 36), he nonetheless emphasises that space is not so much about the product as about the relations between products, hence his declaration that it is important to "analyse not things in space but space itself, with a view to uncovering the social relationships embedded in it" (1991 [1974]: 89).[17]

In taking up a notion of space as produced or manufactured, Lefebvre rejects the idea of there being an 'original' space, on the basis that the production of a 'new' space always takes place in an already-produced space.[18] In this thoroughly Marxist framework, products conceal production through the illusion of transparency - "everything can be taken in by a single glance from that mental eye which illuminates whatever it contemplates" - as well as the illusion of realism - "its appeal

an assessment of politicised visual identities. To determine photographic image, one has to be aware of the extent to which the photograph once 'lay' acted as evidence of a particular subject matter and the extent to which it is now being used as part of evidence' of a particular kind of photographic practice, i.e. what has been called 'mission photography'

Tapping into the evidential value of photographs means being aware of the extent to which the personal motivations for taking photographs - the quest for memories, the assertion of power, the document of personal achievement, or simply "a means of escape or a simple distraction" - overlap with particular social functions and meanings of photography (Bourdieu 1965:14-15). It is important to determine the limits of what actors on the colonial stage can and must photograph and to see "the photographic act as the ontological choice of an object which is perceived as worthy of being photographed, which is captured, stored, communicated, shown and admired" (Bourdieu 1965:6).

8.

The dominance of representations of space over directly lived space, or "representational spaces" (Lefebvre 1991:38-39) is especially important in photography, where we 'live' history through images, and uncritically substitute images for actual experience. In mapping space through the artificial borders of the lens, photographs document space. But the photograph hides the acts of

the photographer discovers as truth (1995:15). But photography, especially in the colonial context, is as much about invention as it is about discovery. Newly discovered lands are re-invented to conform to strategies of colonialism.

While Bourdieu's rationalisation, along with those of Sekula (1978) and Bate (1993), is part of a more widespread dismissal of the 'evidential' value of photographic material as a purely positivist obsession with the perceptual certainties of historical evidence, an increasingly self-conscious criticality towards the construction of photographic content has, especially within the sphere of colonial photographic practice, to some extent, mitigated this approach.[7] While there is a need to critically "disentangle ourselves from the[...]implicit positivism" of photography (Sekula 1978:236), there must remain at least a modicum of post-mortem value which can be extracted from the photographs. In the second form of 'evidential' use-value, the photographic image stands as 'evidence' of the existence of a particular photographic practice or usage. To see how photographs might have functioned in a particular social space, one has to look to those photographs and search for 'evidence' of that particular use. It is this evidential function of photographs that is all too often ignored by advocates of a history of photographic usage.

Where the first form of photographic 'evidence' is directed at the photographic image as a container of material culture, the second form of photographic 'evidence' is directed at the photograph itself as the material culture of a certain social process. Both forms use the photograph as tools of historicism, as 'evidence' for the re-construction of social processes. This dissertation encompasses both procedures in

The use of photography as evidence in the writing of a history of mission photography has its own particular problems. One has to remain conscious of the fact that "the ordinary photograph, a private product for private use, [which] has no meaning, value or charm except for a finite group of subjects, mainly those who took it and those who are its objects" (Bourdieu 1990:87) can suddenly enjoy widespread meaning and interest through publication as a 'typical' view of a particular subject. The selectiveness of the use of the photographic imagery becomes more apparent when one compares the vast quantities of loose photographs with images that fit particular epistemic models, or were fitted into such models subsequent to their taking.

The fluid meanings applied to photographs have a bearing upon the use of photographs as 'evidence'. This evidential value takes on at least two different forms. In the first, and what is both the more immediate and problematic form, the photograph becomes 'evidence' of an unmediated 'truth', as objective proof of a given reality. The 'naturalness' of photographic language is ascribed to the belief that the photograph's selection from visible reality "is logically perfectly in keeping with the representation of the world which has dominated Europe since the Quattrocento" (Bourdieu 1990:74). Bourdieu suggests that "[p]hotography is considered to be a perfectly realistic and objective recording of the visible world because (from its origin) it has been assigned social uses that are held to be 'realistic' and 'objective'" (Bourdieu 1965:74). It is such a perception that presupposes Rudolf Arnheim's problematic distinction between painter and photographer as the distinction between what the painter invents as fiction and what

systems of power and domination. The abstract spatial mark itself (that is, the photograph), along with its social symbolic meaning, must be seen as coexistent, so that one may trace the development of the photographic process in the context of different material publics.' The notion of photography as 'capturing light' has an important implication for the status of the photograph as variously true and real, and linked to this, its status as incontrovertible 'evidence'. The photograph becomes the proof of its content: "there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what's in the picture" (Sontag 1977:5). The photograph, as a representational and experienced space, conceals its production and it is this concealment, this 'lack' which becomes the stumbling block in the use of photographs to re-represent historical colonial space.

As a process implicated in the discursive construction of colonial experience, photographs can make a particular contribution to an *understanding* of the colonial encounter. What needs to be clearly established, though, is the role of photography (as a medium of 'truth') in processes of colonialism. It is important to see mission photographs in the context of a belief in the natural and mechanical veracity of the photograph, a visual veracity that has its origins in the Renaissance quest for a scientific pictorial vision: "Perspective reconfirmed reality for the two-dimensional surface. Photography's capacity to record the light-reflected world reconfirmed veracity while preserving literal spatial representation as a primary artistic purpose" (Yates 1995:213). Photography, with its ready made perspective appears as the natural evolution and refinement of Renaissance space. This character of photography has certain implications for notions of illusionism, reality and truth.

possible fallibility of photographic practice is suppressed through both the conventions of 'realism' and the control over the arbitrariness of the photographic image. These conventions and controls reinforce the particular nuances of the social function of photographic practice, which is seen as the production and collection of 'souvenirs' of social importance (Bourdieu 1990:81). The perceived 'realism' of photographs, as well as the 'arbitrariness' of such images, contribute to the production of particular notions of importance. The issue of 'realism', most notably, the "myth of photographic truth" (Sekula 1987:86), has occasioned debates around the use of the photographic image as 'evidence' of a particular space. Realising the potential of the mission photograph as historical material is dependent on a critical difference between the photograph, as an instance of history, and the photograph in combination with text, as the inscriptions of a 'secondary' historical practice.

The basis of the (mis)use of the photograph as evidence is its construction as a semiological index, a status held because it is seen to be "the result of a physical imprint transferred by light reflections onto a sensitive surface" (Krauss 1985:203). The film negative and photographic paper are seen to capture and hold directly reflected light, just as sand captures and holds the imprint of a foot, or paper captures and holds the ink from a down pressed finger. The configuration of a photograph as indexical sign - as "space, mark, trace" (Faris 1992b:225) - does not preclude the photograph standing as an icon or symbol. So, in terms of this Saussurian framework, the photograph is *more* than just an indexical sign. The photograph is, at the same time, an iconic sign (in that there is a direct resemblance between the object and its representation), and a symbolic sign, denoting certain

spheres has implications for the writing of photographic histories, most notably the rupture of a single historical process.[4] Outside of textuality, photographs remain arbitrary records, a "floating chain of signifieds" (Barthes 1977:39), in which a 'single signified' is deferred or postponed in favour of differing meanings. While this position flies in the face of authorial intentionality, it does promise at least a functional history, which is an important indicator of how the photograph's arbitrariness has affected its shifts between various discourses. The different spatially-specific discourses which describe photographs allow images to straddle ideological positions and positioning. Languages of description locate the 'aesthetic', 'historical' or 'scientific' space of the photograph (Krauss 1985:139-143).

The apparent 'arbitrariness' of the photographic image, its discontinuity within a narrative framework, is thus an important factor that informs photographic usage. In assessing photographs, it is important to separate out the various uses of mission photographs, to focus, as Allen Sekula suggests, on the contingent rather than the immanent meanings (1978:231) and establish the extent to which secondary readings 'invent' wider and more 'profound' uses.

7.

This 'arbitrariness' of the photographic image is most crucial to the evidential value of photographs within photographic space. As part of a politics of visual representation, photography is a powerful tool of documentation and record. Any

space. These factors are aspects of photographic space that 'arbitrarily' impact on the construction of the social importance of the image.

Susan Sontag (1977:71) hints at the arbitrariness in photographs when she suggests that

> [p]hotographs turn the past into an object of tender regard, scrambling moral distinctions and disarming historical judgements by the generalised pathos of looking at time past.[...]A photograph is only a fragment, and with the passage of time its moorings come unstuck. It drifts away into a soft abstract pastness, open to any kind of reading (or matching to other photographs).

This position towards the photograph is not without its critics. John Tagg, for example, rejects the privileging of verbal over visual codes, particularly the perception that the photograph is too 'woolly' and needs to be 'cropped' by a caption. Tagg ascribes this perception to an "underestimation of the degree to which the photographic image itself already needs to be read as a rhetorical construction" (1988:188).[5] But while the photograph might function as an powerful agent of ideology, it nonetheless remains easily manipulated to suit particular ideological positions. As Tagg himself admits, the photographic medium, as a neutral vehicle, can be used to both entrench and undermine the power of a social group (John Tagg 1988:12).

The 'discursive spaces' of photography, its breathing "within two distinct discursive spaces, as members of two different discourses" (Krauss 1985:132), has certain ramifications for the 'discursive spaces' of colonial photography, most notably the number of representational adaptations that suited the ideological positions of different colonial enterprises. And the photograph's shift between these discursive

6.

While there are certainly differences between the visual image and the written text, this distinction is less acute when one looks at these media as part of a process of mark-making.[4] As such, image and word are unequal textured languages that vie for narrative positions and control over the meanings of re-production. In contrasting image and word here, one form is not being set up as more viable than the other, but rather as having different accuracies "related to the different anchorages of their authority: in place or space" (Hastrup 1992:14). Because the photograph is only a narrative 'moment', it can be adapted and/or manipulated to emphasise a particular spatial identity.[5]

While Sekula (1987) portrays the photograph as "an 'incomplete' utterance[...]that depends on some external matrix of conditions and presuppositions for its readability" (1987:85), his rationale is one that hinges photographic readability and meaning on an "implicit text[...]or system of hidden linguistic propositions" (1987:85). This analysis locates readability in an external textuality, in actual words that flesh out narrative meaning. There is, though, a closer connection between the 'arbitrariness' of the photograph, as an 'anarchic' (or at least ambivalent) invitation to random knowledge, and the production and collection of 'souvenirs' of social importance. This connection occurs when the social importance of the photograph does not necessarily or only lie with the content of the image (i.e. the people, objects, etc.), but the ideological place of that content within a particular discursive

> fixing them in our own denigrating vocabulary – 'ritual', 'myth', 'tribe'; in our own totalities – 'society', 'family', 'domestic', 'religion' – or in our patronage – their sacrifice required for dignity on our terms, the indignity of speaking for others' (Foster 1985:80).

Thus, in the creation of meaning about 'other' cultures, through postcards such as 'Picturesque Heathenism', the subject is displaced, firstly, by the taking and compilation of images, and secondly, by the addition of a caption to those photographs.

The importance of context is its capturing of the 'omissions' to photographic space: "the what is of photography, like that of anthropology, lies in its what it is not, its con-text" (Pinney 1992:90). The 'what it is not' becomes highlighted when the photograph is placed before a consumer audience as an 'historical' photograph, and where signifying practices encode and decode the social meanings of the images (Tagg 1988; Pinney 1992). There is, to some extent, a correlation between, on the one hand, what the photographs 'admit' (as text) and what they 'omit' (as context) and, on the other hand, the distinction between the construction of 'publicly' and 'privately' produced photographs.[5] In the dialectic between the socially constituted spatial and the spatially constituted social (Massey 1992:80), the narrative, and more specifically the photographic narrative, acts as a conduit and record of the emergence of colonial spatial relations. But the relational roles are not static: in the 'dialectic' between space and narrative, narrative is generated within a particular conditional space ('mission' space – 'colonial' space), a space that in turn affects narrative form (orality, writing, photography etc.).

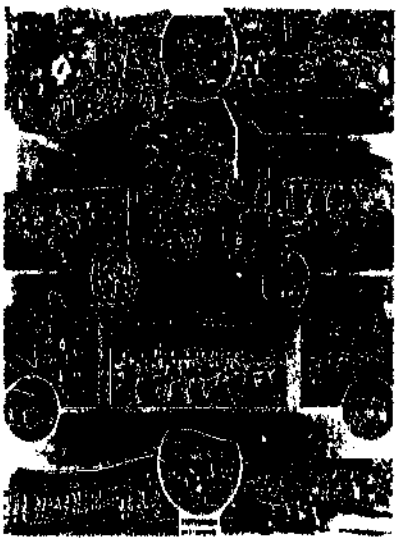


Fig. 2
'Picturesque Heathenism', n.d.
University of Cape Town Libraries, Cape Town
BC106/I/2.26

Since the visual image is mostly devoid of a comprehensive internal narrative and the written word lacks an immediately accessible internal spatiality, it is common for the mute voice of the 'speaking' photograph to be combined with the blind vision of a 'seeing' text. The narrative content of photographs is established by context, by surrounding each photograph with texts, with other photographic images and with written captions, paragraphs and chapters. In this way, photographic narrative is constructed outside of the photograph itself as an act of consumption rather than production. This combination of photographic images and written captions is commonly known as "talking pictures" (Hunter 1987:21). A colonial photographic example of this combination of images and text is an undated postcard entitled 'Picturesque Heathenism' (fig.2, overleaf). This postcard collage of scenes from initiation ceremonies is punctuated by various seated and standing figures. Visually, the presentation of controllable, domestic scenes devoid of conflict or labour, conforms to the 'familiarising' conventions of the 'picturesque'. The written caption, in emphasising this, also brings the ideology of 'heathenism' to bear upon the postcard. The uncivilised, unenlightened barbarism of non-Abrahamic ritual becomes the intended, taken-for-granted reading of this postcard. But the upholding of the discourse and ideology of 'picturesque heathenism' in this postcard depends partly on the photographic images to suppress alternatives. The homogenous vision of 'heathenism' is conventionalised (and by implication, controlled) by the 'picturesqueness' of European vision. Meanings of production and consumption are created by

The view that the photograph must necessarily be accompanied by a text to acquire meaning depends on the circumstances of production and consumption of the image. This occurs more frequently when the unfamiliarity of the 'captured' visual space needs to be 'neutralised' by the descriptive familiarity of the written narrative. As Faris points out,

> for anthropology, photography meant the necessity of caption - the space of the photographic print could not be trusted to speak for itself, transparency was not axiomatic, and text had to be added - for content was totally foreign to viewers (1992b:255).

The immediate spatial strength of the visual image stands in contrast to the narrative power of the written text. The weakness of the photographic image, as an independent narrative, does not negate its narrative potential, (a potential which varies according to circumstances of production and consumption). The form and content of the photograph can be produced in such a way that meaning, independent of written text, is strengthened. But that same independent meaning can vary under different circumstances of consumption. In the dialectic between text and context, narrative assertions are made by both the text (photograph) and the con-text (writing, other photographs). As such, the photograph is ambivalent: it is both a neutral, passive vehicle for a multiplicity of agendas, but once engaged, is partisan to any number of contexts. Bourdieu's suggestion that the photograph holds a decisive "narrative symbolism" or "transcendental meaning" (1965:91) is often undermined by context.



Fig. 7
'First Christian Wedding', n.d.
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB1625/Box 15



Fig. 8
'Men Working a Vacation Course', n.d.
MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg
266-Missions

basketry and cooking. Few archival photographs cross this divide, and where they do, in such images from Elim Mission Station as 'Men Working a Vacation Course' (fig. 8, overleaf), it is in the representation of boys and men undertaking tasks that were 'traditionally' seen as part of the male domain. The other common gender-specific subject matter in mission photographs of converts is the imaging of pathfinders and wayfarers – boy scouts and girl guides for African converts. In addition to the effects of physiognomy and clothing, visual sameness is betrayed by spatial difference. In early CPSA photographs such as 'A Native School' (fig. 9, overleaf) and 'Mrs Colenso and Family' (fig. 10, overleaf), spatial difference is realised visually in the separation of the seminary women and children from the mission families. In each of these two photographs the focus is different, but the separation is consistent.

Against the convert stands what is constituted as the 'heathen'. This, the second form of photographic difference, is most commonly invoked as a tool of comparison. The most blatant forms of this kind of photography are often produced in the early stages of a mission station's existence, as a crude visual rebuttal to an as yet untransformed space. A photograph from a CPSA mission in Ovamboland (fig. 11, overleaf), for example, clearly sets up differences in dress, hairstyles and facial markings, all of which are entrenched by the terse hand-written title on back of the image: 'Christians on Left, Heathen on Right'. This kind of photography is quite common when the camera is present at a station from its inception, such as at CPSA missions in Ovamboland, but is more unusual where mission and/or political control was established before photography made a real impact in colonial



Fig. 5
'Father Callaway at St Cuthbert's', 1930
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB815



Fig. 6
'Scenes from Industrial Class', n.d.
Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban
Inanda Seminary Papers

an African ministry. As a result, photographs such as this are more common in American Board archival material than in many other denominational collections. CPSA archival photographs from established missions, such as those in the Eastern Cape for example, are conspicuous in their lack of early images of an African ministry. A 1930 CPSA postcard, 'Father Callaway at St Cuthbert's' (fig. 5, overleaf), is an example of the 'whiteness' of the public face of such missions.

Photographic identity is most often based on the most immediate of visual differences, making physiognomy and clothing more easily discernible markers of visual difference than, for example, ritual belief. In each of the above examples, 'difference' is largely eliminated, except for the blackness of the subjects' faces. Similarly, dress, as one of the possible (but not constant) social signifiers of conversion, must be seen as part of a "desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as *a subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite.*[...]Almost the same but not white" (Bhabha 1984:126, 130). In a carefully posed photograph from the American Board Mission's Inanda Seminary, entitled 'Scenes from Industrial Classes' (fig. 6, overleaf), the girls are dressed in frocks and aprons, ready to bake ginger snaps. They are reformed and recognisable, except for the difference between their bare feet and their shoe-clad teacher. Similarly, in a CPSA photograph of the first Christian wedding at St. Mary's mission in Ovamboland (fig. 7, overleaf), the child seated in the foreground (assuming it belongs to the couple) is reminder of (an)other kind of marriage. Photographs of converts are mostly gender-specific in their representation of 'industrial' skills. Boys are pictured in carpentry and shoe-making classes, while girls' vocational training is imaged in the form of sewing,



Fig. 3
'Result of Pennies Collected in Heaven - A Native Mission in Natal' n.d.
MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg
266-Missions-Natal



Fig. 4
'Rev R.M. Ngcobo Adams, Native Pastor and Wife', c.1918
State Archives, Pietermaritzburg
5547

markers of these 'differences', are prolific in mission records, and take on at least four different forms.

Conversion was probably the first real measure of success in missionary attempts to Christianise Africa, and archival records abound with photographs that reflect this form of social intervention and change. Photographs such as 'Result of Pennies Collected in England - A Native Mission in Natal' (fig. 3, overleaf) present the viewer with converts in neat rows, all in 'westernised' clothing, each individual a testament to constructed notions of change and transformation. The white women and children are seated on benches, the black men stand or kneel, and the black women sit on the ground. This arrangement reflects, reinforces and naturalise Christianised hierarchies of social difference. In some senses an African ministry can be seen as an extension of this process of conversion. In American Board mission photography, for example, African ministers were the focus of much attention. The following hand-written caption on the reverse of a photograph entitled 'Rev. R.M. Ngcobo, Adams, Native Pastor and Wife' (fig. 4, overleaf) is testament to the missionisation of values and the value of African ministers to the American Board Mission:

> What is the comparative value to the State of this couple who shepherd one of our largest self-supporting Zulu churches. They speak English fluently, have a neat Christian home and spread their learning influence over the large area of their parish and beyond.

This photograph is implicated in an aggressive policy (more so than most other South African mission groups) on the part of the American Board Mission to develop

clothing and Christian baptismal names. Those images which did not succeed in this task, which succumb to the contested nature of 'conversion' are evidence of something other than just disposable visual manipulations. They are indices of the interconnectedness of cultural interactions. This is not to say that missions were not interested in African material and ritual culture, but rather that the photographs of the 'flock' were not so easily separated from an indigenous context.

3.

While the end of the nineteenth century saw a revolution in the availability and accessibility of camera equipment to a mass market, this technological advancement was stunted in colonial environments. Ownership and control of the camera remained largely in the hands of Europeans, especially in outlying areas of the colonies.[3] Photography was taken up by a number of mission groups and societies in southern Africa, and while their specific use of the medium varied, it was most often invoked to serve the various interests of 'entity and identification.[4] This context of control afforded missionaries the opportunity to represent *themselves* in the geographical space of Africa and create an image of 'Africa', without the threat of visual counter-narratives. In this material sense of ownership, the photographed were unable to 'snap' back. Early mission photographic practice, in attempting to control the 'mission' space, set up several notions of 'difference' that made the often fragile missions *distinct*, as much as it made Africa *different*. Photographs, as create

composite experience of individual spaces, exists only because imposed limits effect the continuous reformulation of diversities into "aggregate forms" (Noyes 1992:98). These aggregate (i.e. agreed upon) forms in mission space shift according to the needs of particular mission groups. Where imposed limits are not effected, text is often used as a tool of intervention in photographic space. Discourse, as a spatialising practice, is a tool to achieve the "mythical mastery of space" and turn the colony into "a stage upon which colonial desire may produce its phantasies [*sic*]" (Noyes 1992:211, 182). In the mission context, the camera was employed as a discursive tool of 'mastery'. It was often used very selectively, not only to master space, but more importantly, to master particular spatial moments in a mission's history.

In establishing identities for the various players in colonial space, mission photographs were commonly used to establish rigid dichotomies through, for example, the selective suppression of the convert's 'difference' and the active solicitation of its nemesis, the 'difference' of the unconverted. But if conversion idealistically involved "the removal of difference and distinction", and its proponents assumed, quite problematically, on the one hand that the significance and character of the transformation was the same for both Africans and Europeans and, on the other hand, that 'belief systems' were "free of all cultural embeddedness" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:244, 251), then its teleological conclusion was not always reflected in the photographs. So many mission photographs attempted to tear the African convert free from any 'cultural embeddedness' and establish the identities of 'otherness' through a focus on the dominant markers of conversion – 'western'

to examples other than just those from the CPSA.

Separating missionary and African positions is not meant to either fix or dichotomise the identities of the participants, but rather to explore the extent to which colonialism concerns "the displacement of one form of interconnection by another" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:8), and on this basis, examine the different interconnections played out with the introduction of photography to Africa. Thus, taking up photography as the visual outcome of the interconnection between groups in the colonial space, and drawing upon the different evidential values of the photograph, this chapter discusses attempts by mission groups to delineate colonial space, the extent to which such attempts were thwarted, becoming instead 'documents' of a mediated colonial space, and the implications this has for a notion of 'mission photography'.[4]

2.

In the unfolding of an uncomplicated narrative, colonial space would be about the simple de- and re-territorialisation/scription/culturation of a foreign landscape in a way that was conducive to various forms of productivity and control. In *Colonial Space* (1992), John Noyes attempts to 'uncover' the forms implied by colonial practices, suggesting that colonialism is about the reconciliation of individual experiences in the social realm, in a way that "render[s] the space of the colony as lucrative and easily administered as possible" (Noyes 1992:54). Social space, as a

missionary and anthropologist. This diversified use of the camera, as well as the manipulative use of the photographs themselves, has made even a narrowly defined subject-orientated notion of mission photographs a slippery fish.[3] However, the one subject that does hold even a loosely-defined notion of mission photographs together is a concern with the mediation of the identities of 'mission' (missionaries, mission stations and converts) and 'Africa'.[4] In reflecting upon this theme, however, it is important to emphasise the contested nature of both missionary attitudes and mission photographs, and as such, this chapter encompasses two different, but related issues.

Firstly, this chapter is concerned with a specific kind of interaction within colonial space, namely the photographic outcome of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century contact between missionaries and African peoples in southern Africa. The colonial photographic image has been implanted as a powerful tool of identity formation in the "contact zone" and was used to invoke various permutations of 'difference' to visually map the identity of the mission space.[5] But, while the camera often excelled at this task, it (and the photographer) were often unable to clearly reflect separate identities for 'missions' and 'Africa'. This, the second issue, will explore the extent to which missionaries were, in fact, in control of the representational act (by holding and then directing the camera at certain objects), and the extent to which the photographed subjects, through various means, not only obviated a smooth delineation of difference, but also disrupted the traditionally unequal power relations of the photographic act. In exploring these two issues, this chapter outlines the forms of mission space in southern Africa, and makes reference

2

Forms of Mission Space

1.

A 'form' of space implies circumscription - "a body with contours and boundaries" (Lefebvre 1991:181) - and in this sense, space and photography share a concern with frontiers and borders. As Michel de Certeau suggests, "[t]here is no spatiality that is not organised by the determination of frontiers" (1984:123). Photography, as a spatial practice, marks particular contours, frontiers, borders and boundaries by what is included and excluded as a subject of focus. The frontier, paradoxically, is a point of both sharing and difference (De Certeau 1984:127).

The principle spatial focus of this dissertation is the mission environment, and within this environment, the *different* photographic forms used to delineate the mission space. Where the last chapter dealt with a generalised interface between theories of space and photographic practice, this chapter is concerned with the use of the camera, as one kind of spatialising practice, to (re)produce various forms of space. It is specifically concerned with the extent to which southern African CPSA mission photographs reflect, engender or undermine particular forms of colonial mission space.

Missionaries not only used the camera to serve the interests of exploration and aesthetics, but also held 'one' camera to serve the sometimes contradictory roles of

spatialisation of both the photographer (who reproduces space within the limitations of a camera) and the photographed (who is 'captured' in the act of producing space). In the realm of the colonial visual imagination, the distinction between (historical) 'documentary' and (imaginary) 'fiction' is veiled by the ideological constraints of colonial discourse. While 'realism', in association with 'documentary', might imply an accurate, knowable and complete experience, and an avoidance of dramatised fictional forms (Loizos 1993:9), this perception is too often tied up with beliefs about the medium of photography. In looking at notions of the 'real', one has to negotiate 'realism' at the level of perceptions about the photographic medium itself, and also as a series of different kinds of photographic representation, each of which attempts to further enhance the existent status of the medium.

The irony of representation, or more specifically colonial photographic representation, is that the visual equivalent of reality is produced in the interests of 'difference'. The arbitrariness of the photograph, specifically its "mutability by caption and context" (Giroux and Simon 1994:98), makes the photograph, to a large extent, a pawn in a much grander politics of representation. It is a tool of useful production as much as it is a convenient vehicle for the re-production of meaning. It is this character of the photograph that upsets the formalised role of the photographic image in the production of a hegemonic colonialist discourse, and allows for the re-casting CPSA mission photography in this dissertation through an over-writing of the images used to perpetuate colonial visions of Africa.

'conflictual' (successfully adopting a confrontational approach because the writer does not have to actually negotiate the subject) and photography more often 'transactional' (operating through negotiation of subjects in space).[4] Locating photographic meaning in the domain of the subject overturns and supplants both the African subject as an object of differentiated identification and the power of the photograph to construct and signify particular forms of pure difference. In this sense, the photographs become no different from Bhabha's notion of ambivalent signs, where "difference returns as the same" rather than as the 'difference' intended by the image-maker (1990:305). Bhabha's notions of *mimicry* and *hybridity* are both relevant to a discussion of colonial photography in that they inform an alternative politics of power and representation. It is important to emphasise that while these two formulations are more absent from, than present in, colonial photographic discourse - the first section of this chapter being an adequate enough reminder of the limits of the application of Bhabha's theoretical models - they nonetheless inform a body of photography that is often overlooked.

In his assessment of Bhabha-speak, Robert Young contextualises 'hybridity' as an extension of the disavowal of the colonial system implied by 'mimicry' - where the mimicry of domination fosters an uneasiness on the part of the colonial authority, the discursive condition of hybridity facilitates 'resistance' (1990:148-149). For Bhabha, mimicry is

> at once resemblance and menace[...]the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed and the 'partial' representation rearticulates the whole notion of *identity* and alienates it from essence" (1994:127, 129)

> signification. The identity of cultural difference[...]is constituted through the *locus* of the Other which suggests both that the object of identification is ambivalent, and, more significantly, that the agency of identification is never pure or holistic but always constituted in a process of substitution, displacement or projection (Bhabha 1990:312-313).

The introduction of Homi Bhabha's particular brand of colonial discourse theory to this discussion of mission photographs is meant as part of a questioning of the production of meaning in photographic practice, and more specifically, the constitution of the objects and agencies of identification within the photographic act. The idea that colonial photography is consistently an act of controlled selection and wholesale manipulation (LaGamma 1992:39) assumes both that the photographer is always able to control the intersection of mobile elements in the picture, and that the basis of control is the holding of the camera. Similarly, the suggestion that "[t]he peripheral lacks order because it lacks the power of representation" (Ashcroft *et al* 1989:90) presupposes that dialogue is based only on shared representational forms, and does not acknowledge that negotiation can take place on different representational terms. In assessing photographic discourse (and while acknowledging its role in silencing 'other' voices), it is important not to privilege this discourse as the only form of expression and representation.

> This space of questioning [*the frame of representation*] - itself an effect of colonialist discourse - is for Bhabha the space where colonial subjects become agents of resistance and change. It is the space within which Bhabha locates the condition of post-coloniality itself" (Slemon 1994:24).

Bhabha's analysis allows for a distinction between the different operational modes of colonial representation, and the extent to which, for example, writing is more easily

convert within this mission space. But, while they were fairly successful in demarcating these and other forms of difference, it is important to acknowledge that "the signs of identity and of difference are always a matter of invention and construction" (Ashcroft *et al.* 1989:55). While such views are accepted as the (often stereotypical) norm of the genre of mission photography, the artificiality of photographic inventions and constructions within particular genres cannot sustain this facade of 'naturalness'. There remains a body of archival material that stands outside of these discursive formations, photographs which point to the negotiated (and not only the forced) nature of identity formation within the mission space, a body of photographs which has escaped the retoucher's tailor-making tools (such as scratching, over-painting, 'fading', and etching) that were available at the end of the nineteenth century. These photographs as unintended markers of negotiation (outside of being markers of 'difference'), not only upset and expand traditional notions of the 'mission photograph', but also raise the issue of the way photographs are used as 'evidence' of historical construction and interpretation.

The role of African subjects in aspects of photographic practice, most notably the photographic act, also needs to be read from the perspective of the subject that disturbs totalising identities and does not simply mirror the intentions of the photographer. It is about, as Soja and Hooper suggest, the "*disordering* of difference from its persistent binary structure" (1993:187). Reading mission photographs as a negotiated space allows a reading of the African subject where their

> adding-*to* [in this instance, the photograph] does not add-up but serves to disturb the calculation of power and knowledge, producing other spaces of subaltern



Fig. 17
'Maraboon Mission Station', n.d.
MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg
266-Missions

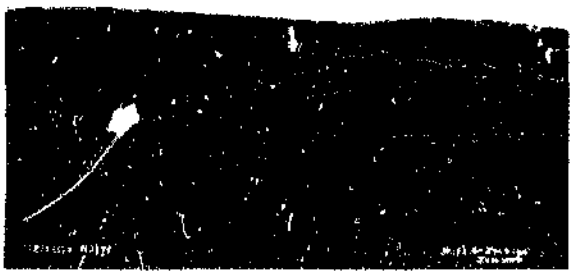


Fig. 18
'Mission Station, Zululand', n.d.
MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg
266-Missions

surfaces, indices of the topographical context of missions. In two numbered, titled and 'signed' photographs - 'Marraboon Mission Station' (fig. 17, overleaf) and 'Mission Station Zululand' (fig. 18, overleaf) - African people signify a continent. The former photograph, rather than displaying converts before the camera, employs ethnographic conventions to present the viewer with two frontally posed men carrying shields, two seated women, and six children of various sizes lined up in profile with pots atop their heads. The sense of Africa, temporarily eliminated by the 'western' architecture, is (re)introduced to the continent by the African people. Similarly, the latter image makes use of two boys as repoussoir figures deflecting the spectator's eye on to the African 'stage'. Ironically enough, this latter photograph, while archived as a CPSA mission, fails to identify the station in any substantial form. The selected use of African subjects in mission photographs also occurs in published works where, for example, an image of a Zulu man is 'displayed' on the outside cover of Mary Tyler Gray's *Stories of the Early American Missionaries in South Africa*, but the inside of the book is illustrated only with portraits of European missionaries and their wives.[47]

4.

Missionaries, in their approaches to the use and collection of photographs, not only attempted to visually demarcate differences between Christians and non-Christian and Europe and Africa, but also articulated an ambivalent position for the African



Fig. 15
'Keeping Cool', n.d.
Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban
Brueckner Papers, File 6

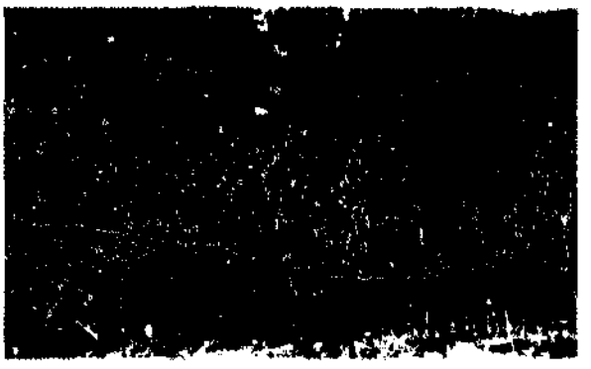


Fig. 16
'Persona Cleanliness - A Zulu Virtue', n.d.
Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban
Brueckner Papers, File 6

Fighting, Civilised Fashion' - verbally reconstructs the action in a more manageable and familiar form.[9]

The third mode of 'difference' in mission photographs perpetuates conventions of 'otherness', more broadly than the distinction between Christian and non-Christian, in the articulation of a difference between Europe and Africa. In a photograph entitled 'Dr Colenso and his Son' (fig. 14, overleaf), Colenso's son, long-haired and dressed as a sailor boy, is surrounded by mostly naked boys, as well as African men and a woman in various stages of 'undress'. Here, 'dress' is denoted by Western clothing alone. Similarly, in two contrasting, and almost sequential, photographs from an album belonging to American Board missionary, Karl Robert Brueckner, the difference between Europe (in Africa) and Africa, is quite clear. In the first, more intimate photograph, captioned 'Keeping Cool' (fig. 15, overleaf), young white boys and girls, all clothed in formal bathing suits, swim in a lush, waterfall-fed pool. Some children are oblivious of the camera and others confidently confront the photographer. In the second, more distant photograph, entitled 'Persona (*sic*) Cleanliness - A Zulu Virtue' (fig. 16, overleaf), a young, naked Zulu boy coyly confronts the camera at a sandy riverbank. Not only do the photographs establish differences between a clothed, confident Europe and a naked, 'innocent' Africa, but the captions also differently make statements of simple description and patronising judgement.

Related to this third form of 'difference' is the use of the constructed identity of Africa primarily as a tool of mapping rather than as only a marker of otherness. In this form, African photographic subjects become natural features of the earth's



Fig. 13
'Pondonese Fighting - Civilised Fashion', c.1910
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB894



Fig. 14
'Dr Colenso and his Son', n.d.
State Archives, Pietermaritzburg
840



Fig. 12
'Zulu young women at a school opening...', n.d.
Kil'e Campbell Africana Library, Durban
Inanda Seminary Papers

environments. At some CPSA stations in the eastern Cape, for example, photography came when the spatial identities of these stations had been clearly defined by buildings, an administrative infrastructure and a body of converts, and there was not a strong imperative to establish the distinctiveness of missions through the visual demarcation of the 'difference' of Africa. What one does find in photographs from well-established missions is a more subtle distinction between 'convert' and 'heathen'. For example, in a photograph taken at Inanda Seminary, captioned 'Zulu young women at a school opening. Except for Christian Missions all Zulu women would be like these' (fig. 12, overleaf), the Zulu women are lined-up against a wall (either accidentally or intentionally), staring curiously at the camera, while the school girls wander about freely, oblivious of the taking of a photograph. In addition to this, the caption alludes to a single, definable non-Christian Zulu women's identity. These two conventions both contribute to spatial divisions between Christian and non-Christian. The writing on the back of photographs becomes a means of inscribing identity on the 'backs' of the subjects in the images. While this might conform to "the well-known category of [missionary] images emphasising the alien nature of the stranger, the Other" (Jenkins 1993:100), and also to common forms of before-and-after 'propaganda' used to garner support from home countries (Webb 1992:52), it is by no means the only variation on this strategy of invoking 'difference'. A photograph from an CPSA mission in the eastern Cape (fig. 13, overleaf), c.1910, re-presents an image of the 'traditional' methods of combat of the Pondo people, but within the confines of a mission station, 'controlled' by the buildings that engulf the action. The hand-written title - 'Fencing, or Pondonese [*sic*]



Fig. 11
'St. Mary's Mission, Ovamboland, S.W.A., Christians on the Left, Heathen on the Right', n.d.
MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg
266-Missions-Anglican



Fig. 9
'A Native School', 1879
Local History Museum, Durban
H.55/314



Fig. 10
'Mrs Colenso and Family', n.d.
State Archives, Pietermaritzburg
842

that E.M. Wolfe, in *Beyond the Thirstbelt: The Story of the Ovamboland Mission* (1935), described as primarily concerned with "the knotty problems of buildings and transport, two of the worst worries of the Mission" (1935:36).[v] Wolfe's characterisation corresponds with the abundance of photographs in the scrapbook that are concerned with buildings in various stages of construction and completion (for example, fig. 23, overleaf), and the development of a successful system of transportation from St. Mary's mission to Ondangua and Tsumeb (for example, fig. 24, overleaf).[vi] Against this, images of religious activities (for example, fig. 25, overleaf), medical endeavours (for example, fig. 26, overleaf), sporting events (for example, fig. 27, overleaf), and local peoples (for example, fig. 28, overleaf), are all minor subjects in the scrapbook.

A record of a 'place' is the description of inert objects that co-exist within a field of vision (De Certeau 1984:117). The photograph is a 'place' in that frozen or static objects are distributed within the photographic frame. In both the group (for example, fig. 29, overleaf) and individual (for example, fig. 30, overleaf) portraits, in Crosby's scrapbook, people have been made inert within the photographic frame. The photograph is thus a location or place. The domain of 'space' is characterised by movement that causes the "intersection of mobile elements" (De Certeau 1984:117), by action upon the inert, frozen or static objects in a 'place'. Space is how one proceeds in an interaction with located objects - it is "practised place" (De Certeau 1984:117). In the evolution of visual meanings, Crosby engages the physical environment or place through his movement, and in this sense, the places through which he moves are 'practised'. In this spatialisation or engagement of space,

3

Snapshots in the Desert

1.

In August 1924, the CPSA's Reverend George Tobias, along with Bishop Fogarty (of Damaraland) and Reverend White (Organising Secretary of the Cape), secured a site for St. Mary's mission in the Ovamboland region of South West Africa, some 55km north of Ondangua, just south of the Angolan border.[1] St. Mary's was the first CPSA mission in the region, but a relative latecomer to an ethno-linguistic territory already occupied by Finnish Lutherans, German Rhenish and Portuguese Roman Catholic missionaries.[2] According to Tobias, the mission originated from a "desire" (AB206:37) on the part of the chief headman of the Ovakuanjama, Hamkoto Wakaluvi, to have a CPSA mission in the area, as well as his readiness to grant the CPSA missionaries a site with water.[3]

Alec Crosby, Tobias' brother-in-law, joined St. Mary's mission in September 1924 as a lay worker, taking up a position as "agricultural and industrial instructor" (AB206:70). He came from a background in surveying and mine management (with Moodie's Gold Mining and Exploration Company, as well as Sabie Rand) and held a government certificate in agriculture (AB206:33). Between 1924 and 1931, Alec Crosby compiled a scrapbook of 191 chronologically arranged and annotated photographs.[4] These images reflect a preoccupation with his designated task, one

'other' in mission photographs, has generated many of the ideas around hybridity and borderlands. This theoretical liminal zone, rather than being a space of 'otherness', should be seen (specifically in photography) as a space of utterances that are directed at the located metropolitan tripod (with its camera). The irony of colonial photographic representation is that its superficial similarity to the real world is so often produced in the interests of 'difference'. The escape routes out of a politics of visual representation are limited, since the powerful ideological position of the maker is often not undermined by either allowing an oppressed voice to speak or represent *itself*, or by making this relationship between maker and 'made' transparent (Faris 1992:171). But, as a genre, mission photographs cannot be seen as visual markers of one particular fixed view or version of 'difference', where speaking and silence are rigidly dichotomised. Archives are constantly turning up images that subvert generic models of the missionary medium at the turn of the century. While the notion of 'difference' is an acknowledged subject in mission photographs,[1] the permutations of, and control over such imagery, have been far less frequently debated. The meaning generated by 'difference' is put to a variety of uses, as much as this usage generates different meanings about 'difference'. The place of the CPSA missionising project, and more specifically, the photographic output of this project, needs to be politicised to more adequately reflect the numerous permutations of the colonisation of African culture. If the inhabitants of an early twentieth-century empire cannot write back, at least they can laugh back.

Hybridity's usefulness to mission photography is as a critique of the attempts by colonial discourses (here, mission photography) to entrench oppositional forms. Missions *did* attempts to clearly picture a number of oppositions, but a reading of the disruptive process of visual articulation is a reading of cultural differences of hybridity, particularly, the idea that the negotiation of differences was an unintentional element in colonial visual representation (as it is an intentional tactic of post-colonial representation). The key element which is transferred back is the disruption enacted from what has been *constituted* as a margin. The addition of this disruptive element is meant to 'equalise' the participation of photographer and photographed *in the space of the photographic act* (but not necessarily in the uses to which the resultant images are used). In this way, a notion of hybridity disrupts standardised perceptions of the photographic encounter (and the way we read such encounters), but by no means fragments the system of colonial representation. While Parry rightly challenges the view that such disruption in any way undermined or endangered the enduring, rolling action of the colonial machine (1994:11), this formulation of hybridity allows for a reassessment of traditional formulations of the photographic control of space.

5.

The need for a more theoretically nuanced politics of photographic representation, specifically around the problematic opposition between centred 'self' and peripheral



Fig. 22
'A Happy Group', *One Hundred Years of the American Board Mission in South Africa, 1835-1935*
Local History Museum, Durban.

briefly). This dislocation is furthered by the lack of dating of the photographs - they are stuck in the 'other' space of the historical present - which contrasts with the copious dating and chronology used in the written text. Together, these photographs present an abbreviated history of mission success - converts, an African priesthood, educational and social activities, and mission buildings. And in character with such compressions, no visual elements allude to either the 'disruptive' breakaways by the Ethiopianists and African Congregationalists (although these events are mentioned in the written text) or the persistence of 'tribal life'.[7] Instead, the viewer is reassured by images such as 'A Happy Group' (fig. 22, overleaf), a pretend-view of African tamed by sentimentality (but disrupted, perhaps, by the young age of the girls carrying babies on their backs).

Bhabha's notions of decentred power must be seen in the context of a criticism of strict binarisms. In his critique of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Bhabha suggests that "[t]here is always, in Said, the suggestion that colonial power is possessed entirely by the coloniser which is a historical and theoretical simplification" (Bhabha 1983a:200). If, as Bhabha suggests, cultural difference is "the momentous, if momentary extinction of the recognisable object of culture in the disturbed artifice of its signification, at the edge of experience" (1994:126), such 'difference' is not necessarily about the eviction of "the antagonistic pairing of coloniser/colonised" as a mode of oppression in favour of "a placid continuum, unhinged from the planned inequalities of actually existing social regimes and political struggles" - as is suggested by Parry (1994:15) - but rather that the attempts to reinforce such strategies of domination were not always so rigidly enforced.

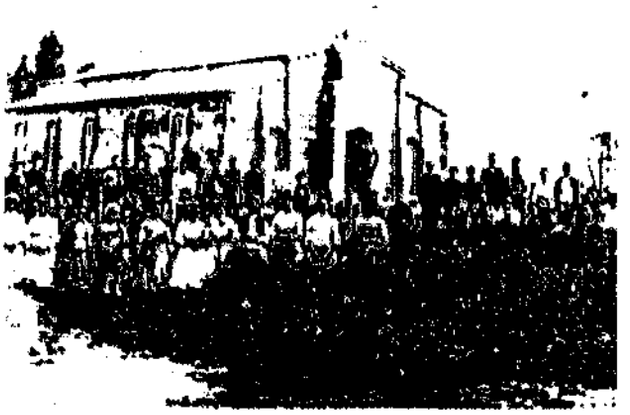


Fig. 21
'Missionary Station, Esthowe', 1889
MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg
266-Missions-Anglican

necessarily endorsing such forms of 'difference'). Thus, the idea of despatialising difference is meant as an attempt to reformulate the spatial terms by which mission photographs constructed 'difference'. These theories attempt to overturn the dichotomies *by addressing their very terms*. There are actual and conceptual counter-narratives "that disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities'[here, Christian converts and controlling missionaries] are given essentialist identities" (Bhabha 1990:300). The single woman not in 'western' clothing and with calabash atop her head in a CPSA image, 'Missionary Station Esthowe Zululand' (fig. 21, overleaf), disrupts the 'cleansed', oppositional photographic space of converts, clergy and church buildings. Discarded bodies in snapshot visions - symbolic in their 'lack' of interest - are common in many amateur mission (and colonial) photographs.[50]

The dislocated character of hybridity, and its usefulness to an assessment of mission photography, takes an interesting turn in the photographic representation of mission identity in illustrated commemorative histories of mission societies. *One Hundred Years of the American Board Mission in South Africa 1835-1935* is a good example of the genre.[51] What is important - photographically - in such publications is the use of photography within the narrative structure, and more specifically, the extent to which such imagery has little or no bearing on the written narrative, presenting instead a dislocated, abbreviated and sometimes anecdotal story of mission history. A photograph of the first convert - the 'archetype' of mission success - is dislocated in a chapter that deals with the political context of early missions, and it is only some three chapters later that this initial baptism is discussed (albeit very

space of everyday life, the space of "cultural differences and identifications" that subvert, translate and resist the "hierachial or binary structuring of social antagonism", i.e. cultural meaning as a form of totalisation (Bhabha 1990:292, 314). Hybridity, here conceived as the space of ambivalent power, is thus a theoretical response to the strictures o binarism:

> Cultural difference marks the establishment of new forms of meaning, and strategies of identification, through processes of negotiation where no discursive authority can be established without revealing the difference of itself (Bhabha 1990:313).

In this later sense, hybridity can be clearly differentiated from, for example, Mary-Louise Pratt's notion of transculturation, the latter being the process whereby

> subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture. While subjugated peoples cannot readily control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for (Pratt 1992:6).

Where Pratt's transfers between centres and margins maintain these binarisms (albeit in new forms), Bhabha's formulation of hybridity argues towards the interruption of binarisms, concerned as it is with strategies that subvert such binarisms and their particular locations of culture (Bhabha 1994:6).

Theories of hybridity, however formulated, must be seen in the context of a response to the rigid dichotomies established by colonialism. In that mission photographs consciously and unconsciously attempted to enforce clear dichotomies, one needs to at least critique these photographs in terms of that dichotomy (without

A number of critics have problemitised this early formulation of 'hybridity' in that it entertains the possibility of articulating clear differences between two pure, original cultural form (Young 1990:150; Ashcroft *et al* 1989:188; and Parry 1994:5). According to Benita Parry, for example,

> [f]or all his castigation of binaries, Bhabha posits essentialism or difference, nativism or cosmopolitanism, the claim to purity of origins or the immersion in transnational cultural flows, as the only possible positions for a postcolonial perspective (1994:19).

But while Parry is critical of Bhabha's binarisms, she is equally critical of the lack of an oppositional character in his formulation of colonial relations. Parry rejects what she sees as Bhabha's apolitical assessment of colonial relations, "enclosed as they are in a theoretical mode that subdues the continuing exploitation of the Third World and the growing disparities of resources and opportunities within the First" (1994:21). Parry thus invokes binarisms to critique Bhabha's lack of binarisms. For Parry, Bhabha "dispense[s] with the notion of conflict - a concept which certainly does infer antagonism, but contra Bhabha, does not posit a simplistic, unitary and closed structure to the adversarial forces" (1994:6).

Parry, whether consciously or not, ignores Bhabha's rationalisation of hybridity in *Nation and Narration* (1990), one which is inscribed against notions of unity and closure. In *Nation and Narration*, Bhabha's formulation is less rigid in that it is concerned with "the perplexity of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life" (Bhabha 1990:314). Hybridity becomes the characterisation of the



Fig. 19
'Missionary Lady Entering Hut', c.1915
Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban
Brueckner Papers, File 6



Fig. 20
'Basuto Converts , n.d.
MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg
266-Missions-Paris

The 'mirror' that reflects the image of the coloniser, rather than being flat and duplicative, is concave/-vex and distorting: "[t]he surveilling eye is suddenly confronted with a returning gaze of otherness and finds that its mastery, its sameness, is undone" (Young 1990:147). And it takes an odd turn in images such as 'Missionary Lady Entering Hut' (fig. 19, overleaf), where the half-swallowed woman is curiously watched by an African woman and children, one of whom appears to be laughing at the 'curiosity'. Rather than being about more orthodox forms of resistance, mimicry simultaneously 'locates' and 'dis-locates' colonial control. The visual content of the photograph contains a narrative that is oppositional to totalisation and closure. The dynamic nature of photographic space, its ability to be menacing in its resemblance, is reflected in a photograph of a family of 'Basuto Converts' (fig. 20, overleaf). In this heavily retouched photograph from a Paris Evangelical mission, the man, as well as his hat, are on African stools, while his wife and children are either standing or sitting on the ground. Here, resemblance is menacing only because two 'western' folding chairs lie discarded in the background, ignored in favour of carved stools and 'mother earth'.[4] Mimicry is about an imitation hoping to gratify but only managing to dis-ease by virtue of its 'impoverished' imitation (Bhabha 1984:126-127).

If 'hybridity' is an extension of 'mimicry', its evolution is realised in

> strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power[...it] reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority (Bhabha 1985:154, 156).

fig. 23), annotated with a caption detailing the physical presence of the building in terms of the thickness of walls and sizes of rooms (AB2006:24). The scrapbook photographs reflect an almost obsessional preoccupation with recording each and every stage in the construction of the mission as a reafflocation of the frontier zone. Each photograph becomes an important marker and reminder of the delineation of the place of the mission and the extension of the boundary of the frontier zone.

This early preoccupation with the organisation of a general, ever-changing space into a familiar, fixed place extends to an engagement of local peoples only *within* the context of the missionary place. For example, 'The Witch Doctor' (see fig. 30), whose practices were rejected by the missionaries, is engaged by the photographer within the controlled confines of the mission rather than the unknown, uncontrollable space beyond the immediacy of the mission. The frontally posed figure, lopsided by misjudged production, is isolated against a mission building (an icon of the fixity of a place). Unlike many of the scrapbook photographs, this close-up, almost three-quarte ength view of an awkward, out-of-place figure not only allows for the scopic observation of the details of dress, but also creates a sense of the powerless miscast. This snapshot vision underscores the attached caption: "Christianity is gradually undermining their power" (AB2006:22). Through the combination of image and text, in instances such as these, the scrapbook's narrating takes fragments from the unknown space beyond the frontier and absorbs them into the familiarity of the fixed place of the mission.

CPSA mission photography has mostly suppressed its various contradictions - the photographic material that entered the public domain conforms to the



Fig. 33
"A view of the mission from the East."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:2:i



Fig. 31
"The first well sunk on St Mary's Mission site, and at 60 feet good water was struck. The site in the summer proved unsuitable[...]having been sunk in a depression, and it caved in during the rains. It supplied the necessary water for the bricks for the first buildings."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:9



Fig. 32
"The start of making green bricks. Although a[...]brick is obtainable, the wastage is so much that it is not a payable proposition, unless for special work. The lime content makes the brick fragile. An experienced man might by mixing the soils obtain better results."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:11

1991:76; Coe and Gates 1977:9), but also stand as visual records and proof of different spatial practices. For example, in a photograph album attributed to Bishop Fogarty of Damaraland (AB2099), the ten annotated photographs of St. Mary's mission in the early stages of its development act as a 'summary' of both the CPSA's initial arrival in Ovamboland and Fogarty's direct and indirect involvement in that time-space. As a visual sequence, edited from everyday practice, the snapshots reflect Fogarty's role and interest in the production of a CPSA missionary place in Ovamboland. As the newly appointed Bishop of Damaraland (1924-1939), Fogarty was the 'caretaker' of an evolving mission in his diocese, and the selection of photographs not only visually summarises the establishment of a 'safe' place in the desert, but also immortalises the mission in the fluctuating frontier space. Most of these photographs also appear in Crosby's scrapbook.

Unlike Fogarty's generalised overview of the start of St. Mary's mission, Alec Crosby's scrapbook is a copious visual and verbal record of the details of the missionisation of space and is focused on his part in the building of the mission as a negation of the uncertainty of the frontier. The initial photographs, such as digging a well (fig. 31, overleaf) and brick making (fig. 32, overleaf), represent mere scratches on the earth, vulnerable to collapse and crumbling at any time.[5] But the narrative quickly turns to images of mission buildings, which constitute just under a third of the total number of photographs in the scrapbook. Typical shots include both general views of the mission station and its perimeter (fig. 33, overleaf), accompanied by the geographically-specific caption, "A view of the Mission from the East" (AB206:20), and views of specific buildings under construction, such as such as the hostel (see

undertaken through an assessment of the debates around, and prioritisation of, the aforementioned three issues, as well as a consideration of the extent to which these issues differently impact upon the interpretation of the narrative in the scrapbook.

Crosby's scrapbook, as a frontier narrative, incorporates photographic snapshots and textual annotations as conventional devices to organise and integrate an image and vision of St. Mary's mission in the uncertainty of the frontier zone.[4] These conventional devices are used to reintegrate the fragmented 'space' of the frontier into the 'place' of the mission, with the resultant narrative sequence being as much about the construction of a missionary 'place' as about the extent to which snapshots retain and relinquish their autonomy in image-text relationships. This exploration and explication of the snapshots and textual annotations in Crosby's scrapbook is grounded in notions of snapshot photography outlined by Brian Coe and Paul Gates in *The Snapshot Photograph: The Rise of Popular Photography 1988-1939* (1977) and Graham King in *Say 'Cheese'! The Snapshot as Art and Social History* (1986), as well as a reading of Roland Barthes' writings on the image-text relationship in *Image-Music-Text* (1977) and *Camera Lucida* (1981).

2.

In locating, fixing and summarising everyday practice, snapshots immortalise people, places and events (King 1986:xii). These 'undying' photographic summaries are not only keepsakes and reminders of particular everyday practices (Baldwin

> [s]oft wax is to form what black is to colour, what idolatry is to religion, what nakedness is to clothing, a nullity. Each of these Africanist creations must be called by a name that is thereby negated: form is undone by soft wax, religion by idolatry, etc. But to be left with a 'real' nullity is to fall silent, to cease reading and writing, to die. So the nullity takes on a concrete form, or rather any form that you wish, so that it reflects any desire (1985:49)

The photographic medium not only stands as a powerful and largely uncontested moulder of the 'soft wax' of African space, but also reflects differing visual obsessions with, and desires for, the negation of the frontier space and the production of a concrete missionary place. Place nullifies space. The object of the photographic view is not so much a silent void, as a malleable form.

The photographs in the scrapbook are characteristic of the snapshot genre. Taking the original use of the word, first coined in 1808 as hunting term to describe "a hurried shot, taken without deliberate aim" (Kouwenhoven 1974:107), one can characterise the snapshot as an informal photographic record of daily social life. In this sense, snapshot photography is a practice of everyday life. Snapshot photography, as a fragmented genre in a fragmentary medium, is a particularly acute form of nodal fragment or sequence, and more than most other genres of photographic practice, is open to textual manipulation. As such, snapshot photography often results in the presentation of a 'reality' different to the 'reality' presented by other photographic genres. While the snapshot photograph, like the studio portrait or ethnographic photograph, is primarily concerned with visualising people, it can be distinguished from these other genres in terms of intentionality, production and content. Since most definitions of the snapshot genre are contested, any exploration of the scrapbook photographs in terms of this genre needs to be

photographs at that mission some 30 years later, photography was used at St. Mary's mission from its inception in 1924.[5] As a result, St. Mary's mission photography, in the 1920s, informally focused on the initial penetration into an 'uncivilised' and 'hostile' frontier, while St. Cuthbert's mission photography, at the same time, was more concerned with the formal representation of the fruits of an active 'civilising' process, in both work and leisure.[6]

In *The Road to Botany Bay* (1989), Paul Carter suggests that the frontier is the space of "communicated difference" (1989:163). In this sense, Crosby's scrapbook photographs reflect an attempt to visually and verbally communicate and differentiate a missionised version of the Ovamboland frontier. The photograph is an important tool that not only communicates 'difference', but also focuses and fixes 'difference' in a particular place. Photographic 'difference' is most commonly articulated in terms of what is photographed and not photographed (where the latter pertains to what is neither desired nor allowed). The photographs in Crosby's scrapbook are implicated in attempts to transform the frontier from the openness of 'space' to the closure of 'place'.[7] The frontier, however, is not so much a clearly discernible boundary as an indistinct realm or zone within which 'differences' between coloniser and colonised are constantly (re)negotiated.

In *Blank Darkness: Africanist Discourse in French* (1985), Christopher Miller highlights the extent to which Africanist discursive practice engages Africa as 'soft wax' that can be transformed at will. As a variation on the Foucauldian theme of the 'silent' Other, Miller evolves the following usage of 'soft wax':

Crosby takes photographs. The photographs become a documentation of his particular spatial engagement, but at the same time, the photographs themselves become static places through the fixing of the negative as a positive print. The photographed location or place is then further secured through the written text that annotates the photographs in the scrapbook. In this chapter, it is the security and manageability of place that will be explored in relation to the uncontrollable changes of space.

The camera inscribes space in various ways. In the early stages of missionisation (if the camera is at work), photography is often used to spatialise various forms of 'otherness'. But this focus on a 'hostile' space eventually becomes a deliberation upon a 'tamed' place, and is commonly realised in photographs of converts and countless images of buildings (churches, schools, etc.).[xx] While mission photographs are representational re-articulations of an already articulated physical space, the relationship between articulation and re-articulation is not always consistent. Some mission photographs are conscious efforts to duplicate an existing place (e.g. mission buildings), while others are deliberate attempts to reformulate the space of the frontier (e.g. the space of 'traditional' practices).

Spatio-temporal discrepancies amongst CPSA mission stations resulted in differences in the content, meaning and effect of photographs produced at these missions, differences that pertain to both the *initial* photographic output of the missions, and their respective photographic outputs at similar points in time. For example, where there is a substantial time gap between the formation of St. Cuthbert's mission in the eastern Cape in 1865 and the first appearance of



Fig. 29
"The headman's wives and daughters, just after bringing in bundles of grass in exchange for salt. This headman is a heathen and has over 20 wives. His household consists of about 75 people. He is considered wealthy, owning at least 800 head of cattle. The women do all the cultivating, although the men do a portion of the work occasionally."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:15



Fig. 30
"The Witch Doctor'. Christianity is gradually undermining their power. One of the greatest evils in the past was the murdering of twins and the outcasting of the mother. The superstition being that the father was father of one of the children and the devil the other. Killing them both made sure of the devil. Now however it is still considered a disgrace, and a heavy payment has to be made to witch doctors to appease the devil, and the woman may not exit from her hut for a year. This particular witch doctor had twins last year."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:23



Fig. 27
"Bridges at the winning post. The race was 40 feet and the prize a mouthful of sugar."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:85



Fig. 28
"Some of the guests."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:161



Fig. 25
"1st wedding."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:197



Fig. 26
"Tobias extracting a tooth. He was heard to say 'I give them pain, but I get the tooth.'"
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:193



Fig. 23
"The new hostel is 35' x 20' x 13.5' with 18 inch walls divided into two classrooms 17' x 17.5', 2 hostels 17' x 17.5', a long room 17' x 39' opening into a chapel 17' x 17.5', so that the hall can be used as a church, and curtained off for small services. The hall can be used as a school or entertainment hall."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:25



Fig. 24
"The full crawler with trailer loaded 2.5 tons in difficulties in the heavy sand 50 miles in the thirstbelt. The steering gear of the trailer broke down and gave a lot of trouble and was impossible for the load being so heavy."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:217

snapshot is 'innocently' used as a more accurate representation of reality.

In assessing responses to photographs, Roland Barthes, in *Camera Lucida* (1981), distinguishes between "*stadium*" and "*punctum*", where the former is a general interest in, and enthusiasm for a photograph, and the latter is a disturbance on the photographic surface, an "accident which pricks me" (1981:26-27). The importance of *punctum* lies in the fact that "whether or not it [*punctum*] is triggered, it is an addition: it is what I add to the photograph and *what is nonetheless already there*.[...]The *punctum*, then, is a kind of subtle *beyond*" (1981:55). While Barthes does not acknowledge the relativity of *punctum*, for example, in his suggestion that the "*stadium* is ultimately always coded, the *punctum* is not" (1981:51), it is nonetheless an important notion in the construction of meaning. The snapshot does not necessarily reveal more, it only reveals differently, and it is this 'different' revelation that is exploited by the written narrative in Crosby's scrapbook.

The power and influence that the snapshot photograph might have as evidence does not reside with the photograph itself, but in the context of the production and re-production of the photograph. As John Tagg suggests, the power wielded by photographs "belonged to the agents and agencies that mobilised them and interpreted them, and to the discursive, institutional and political strategies that constituted them, supported them, and validated them" (Tagg 1992:143). The ease with which the photograph itself becomes soft and subservient to the dictates of the written text depends in part upon the extent of fragmentation in the photograph, a fragmentation determined by the nature of the photographic medium and the composition of the image.

gendered compositional use of standing and seated) and the informal seated positions of the 'heathens' in the background. Here, the context of production, specifically the attempt to delineate a boundary between missionised and non-missionised peoples, *within* the mission space, plays an important role in the extent of formality and informality in the photographs. However, images of 'heathen' local peoples (from 'outside' the mission) tend to be prearranged, while snapshots of mission workers and 'converts' (from 'inside' the mission) are more often (but not always) quite spontaneous. Here, visual practices are implicated in processes of dichotomisation.

As an everyday practice, the snapshot often contains 'excess' information not necessarily found in textual references. Snapshots are seen to "show society's lighter moments, its 'off-duty' face, revealing so much more than its official one" (Coe and Gates 1977:15). This perceived absence of pre-arrangement in the snapshot is often the reason for its special status as evidence: "[t]he casual circumstances of the snapshot, taken in familiar surroundings and in familiar company, could relax the subject and elicit a more natural pose and expression" (Coe and Gates 1977:11). In this sense, the studio portrait is the visualisation of aspirations, while the snapshot is seen as the visualisation of 'real', everyday conditions: "[t]he snapshot portrait also may gain an additional element of documentary value from the extraneous and 'irrelevant' detail which the professional photographer would have ruthlessly excluded from his portraits" (Coe and Gates 1977:11). Snapshot photography, however, is just as constructed as any other genre of photography, but because the construction is not as readily apparent in the form and content of the image, the



Fig. 40
"A group of Ovambos taken on Xmas Day 1924. The natives on the right are Finnish converts and those sitting down are heathens."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:15

aspects of the frontier that is absent in Duggan-Cronin's photograph (the latter being a careful attempt to construct a front-and-back visual knowledge about its subject). But the perception that the snapshot is a record of spontaneous rather than posed production not only raises certain issues regarding the different historical values of such photographs (to be explored later), but more importantly, here, raises at least three problems associated with attempts to distinguish between spontaneous and posed photographs.

Firstly, how does one clearly differentiate between 'spontaneous' and 'posed' images? Interpretations of snapshot production make no attempt to establish the parameters of 'spontaneous' and 'posed' *within* the genre of snapshot photography. Linked to this problem is the presupposition that the 'spontaneous' snapshot *necessarily* reveals more to the viewer and historian than the 'posed' snapshot.[30] A third problem with spontaneity is the extent to which one can, with any certainty, determine whether the actual conditions of production were 'spontaneous' or 'posed', based solely on a reading of the visual image, especially since the photograph only captures the photographed, without much trace of photographer and/or the photographic space.

The space of production, particularly in mission photographs, plays an important role in determining both the nature of the photographic event and image, and the perceived formality or informality of the image.[31] For example, the distinction between 'converts' and 'heathens' in Crosby's scrapbook (fig. 40, overleaf), in addition to being marked by the use of different clothing, is accentuated by the formal standing and seated poses of the 'converts' in the foreground (again the



Fig. 39
Alfred Duggan-Cronin, 'Bale at Moitsupeli's', *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, Kimberley, Alexander McGregor Memorial Museum,1942.



Fig. 37
"Capt Nelson sent a team of donkeys to pull us through as the water was so deep that the oil and magneto had to be removed."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:151



Fig. 36
"Native women dressed up to partake in a native marriage custom."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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end (Ondangua and Tsumeb) of a journey. This movement through an emptiness (fig. 37, overleaf) is made even more fragile by the fact that the truck is being pulled by a team of donkeys. The fragility of the journey is constantly reinforced in annotations that make reference to the mechanical failures of trucks and tractors.[1] The conscious engagement of the people in their landscape is not reflected in the photographs: only one - (fig. 3(overleaf) - engages non-colonised life at a visual level

3.

The photographic act is an important part of snapshot photography. The idea that the production of a snapshot is a sh[illegible]stant act (Baldwin 1991:76; Coe and Gates 1977:9; King 1986:1) is often the basis for the perception that snapshots make "no attempt to manipulate the subject or wait for ideal conditions" (Coe and Gates 1977:11). For example, the initiates carefully lined up in Alfred Duggan-Cronin's 'Bal at Moitsupeli' (fig. 39, overleaf), taken from *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, stands in contrast to 'Native women dressed up to partake in a native marriage custom' (see fig. 38) from Crosby's scrapbook. The scrapbook photograph is more a record of experience taken in passing, with not much attention to detail. While the group of six women are anthropologically lined-up, one of them is distracted, looking at the two women on the side instead of at the camera. This photograph suggests a failure to reintegrate the fragmentary space of the frontier, suggesting a lack of control over

live in Ovamboland, of that I am quite sure" (1935:9) - and maintained throughout her narrative, in descriptions such as this:

> As there are no streams or rivers, no hills or even a stone in Ovamboland, the flatness of the country is only broken by the palm trees and the great earth and sand castles of the termites, who are the real and rightful owners of the country. It was just made for them and suits them to perfection. Like the devil their master, they hate the light of day and love darkness because their deeds are evil (1935:13).

Crosby places transportation at the heart of Ovamboland's underdevelopment, in a way that emphasises the development of an *uncontested* place:

> The transport problem is of considerable interest to the Mission, as they desire to develop the native industrially and train him agriculturally, so that when he goes out to work he is of immediate use, and to do this satisfactorily it is necessary to have means to transport the goods he may produce.[...]Natives are urgently required for the development of mines, and if a reasonably priced method of transportation can be devised, it would probably help recruiting to a great extent.[7]

The transport photographs in Crosby's scrapbook, in demarcating space and delimiting the frontier, visualise the missionisation of the frontier space, i.e. turn a space of "communicated difference" into a space of differentiation, into a self-contained and uncontested missionary place.

In engaging the landscape, Crosby penetrates an empty space that does not extend beyond the immediacy of his own travelling party. The photographs reflect a vision of travelling in a vacuum, in a space without clearly articulated frontiers, focused only on the problems of the tractors. It is a 'space' that is traversed rather than occupied, a space in between the 'places' of beginning (St. Mary's mission) and

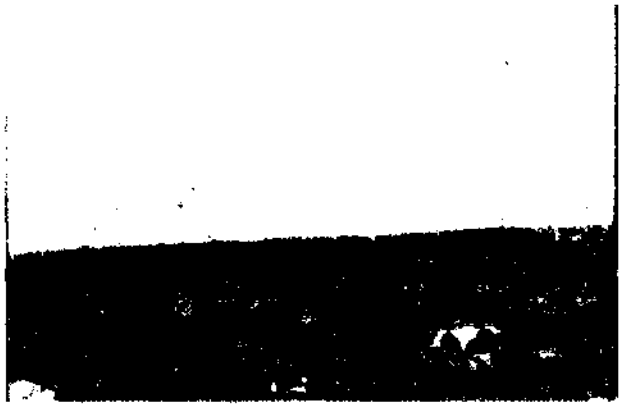


Fig. 35
"The road along the Etosha pan is excellent and large herds of various game are to be seen. About 39 miles from the Police Post, a water hole is passed. There are two wells here within 100 yards of each other. One gives drinkable water most of the year round and the other is brak."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:133



Fig. 36
"Mr Woom[...]fixing propeller shaft with the aid of nails and wire. Lions approached to within 30 yards during the night."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:181

missions. Where the character and action are 'foreign' (to the European viewer), for example, the narrative breaks down, and the intervention of the written text becomes paramount. This reliance on the written word for narrative unity allows for greater manipulation of and divergence from the narrative structure itself. The photographs of 'The Witch Doctor' (see fig. 30) is testament to this feature of elaboration. The written text - mentioned above - becomes the starting point for spectacle rather than representation. In terms of the creation of narrative between photographs and written text, the narrative is formulated through the written engagement and/or re-contextualisation of isolated photographs. When Crosby visualises an empty landscape (fig. 35, overleaf) or a landscape inhabited only by the transport party (fig. 36, overleaf), his record of spectacle is generated by accompanying texts that make no reference to local peoples, but are particular in their mention of "large herds of various game" (AB206:130) and lions that "approached to watch" them in their encampment (AB206:181).

Snapshots of attempts to develop an effective transportation route through the desert constitute the most prolific subject matter in the scrapbook, at just over a third of the total number of images, and raise similar issues concerning the frontier space.[11] The new focus on transportation not only implies the completion of pressing structural work at the mission, but also marks an engagement with the land in terms of the technical possibilities and limitations of the further outward extension of the colonial *place*. As the photographic focus widens, Crosby's scrapbook becomes a fixation on the 'inhospitability' of the landscape, an attitude mirrored in E.M. Wolfe's opening sentence of *Beyond the Thirst Belt* (1930) - "God never meant anyone to



Fig. 34
"Two of the native preachers and the Chieftain and Nicodemus' wife."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:161

conventions of frontality and distance. In their encounters with the 'unknown', specifically African cultural 'traditions', both inside and outside of the boundaries of the mission station, CPSA missionaries were cast to either reframe (in instances where the 'unknown' threatened the organised space of the mission station) or exclude contradictions (in instances where missionaries encountered 'disruptive' practices outside of the mission space). 'The Witch Doctor' (see fig. 30) image is an example of this kind of reframing. Similarly, photographs of the festivities to celebrate the rebuilding of an Ovambo kraal (see fig. 28, and fig 34, overleaf) focus on Finnish converts and exclude any views of 'heathenism'. Southern African CPSA mission photography is peculiar in its very limited 'capturing' of non-missionised spaces. Here John Noyes' notion of an 'empty' space is crucial - 'emptiness' is a "*qualitative* emptiness", a space devoid of human 'quality' rather than human inhabitants (1992:196). In the space of colonial missionisation, 'quality' is governed by conversion and the upholding of missionised values. Because African 'tradition' lacks 'quality', it lacks a photographic space. Instead, CPSA mission photography is mostly about the reclothing of the subject.

In *Camera Lucida* (1981), Roland Barthes suggests that

> [n]ot only is the Photograph never, in essence, a memory[...]but it actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory.[...]The Photograph is violent: not because it shows violent things, but because on each occasion *it fills the sight by force*, and because in it nothing can be refused or transformed" (1981:91).

This valorisation of the autonomy of the photograph's internal meaning - a feature of *Camera Lucida* - is difficult to justify in terms of the snapshot output of colonial

Christian fa... s a central issue in the missionisation of colonial spaces. The cultivation of an efficacious 'public' face for individual mission stations and the denominations to which they were affiliated (the number of conversions being the principal barometer), was an important part of the missionisation of colonial space. Photography was one of the means whereby CPSA missions in the eastern Cape 'publicly' managed the issue of 'heathenism'. If every photograph is indeed a 'privileged moment' to which one can repeatedly return (Sontag 1978 18), then the postcard photograph, as a *disclosed* public view, is a particularly acute kind of privileged moment.[7] St. Cuthbert's and St. Matthew's missions produced and disseminated photographic postcards that bore witness to the 'transformation' of a 'heathen' space into a 'Christian place.'[8] Colonial domination demanded ideological forms such as mission postcards to ensure the establishment and development of mission spaces as agents of 'civilisation' and 'progress'. Mission postcard production was an important cultural apparatus used to control the visual meaning and understanding of mission spaces, thereby establishing a Utopian vision of 'collective solidarity' and acting as one of the social cements that held colonial mission spaces together. The power of the photograph was carefully capitalised upon in the 'public' version of the postcard.

Making, sending and receiving postcards was a common social practice during the first half of the twentieth century. While it has been used by various African missions (most notably the Paris Evangelical mission in Barotseland), it only makes up a small part of the history of the postcard genre. In their assessment of photographs from Africa in the ...ford Mission Archive, Jenkins and Geary suggest

Postcards from a Fallen Frontier

1.

By the turn of the century, the CPSA had divided the eastern Cape region of South Africa into the Diocese of Grahamstown, covering the region from Port Elizabeth to the Kei River, and the Diocese of St John's, situated between the Kei and Mtamvuna Rivers. In the first half of the twentieth century, St Matthew's (Grahamstown) and St. Cuthbert's (St. John's) were probably the most well-established CPSA missions in the eastern Cape. Osmund Victor, in *The Salient of South Africa* (1948), not only suggests that St. Matthew's is "one of the most famous of South African mission stations" (1948:120), but is also quick to paint an Arcadian vision of the St. John's territory:

> Here, as almost nowhere else, a visitor to the diocese will say the African is free to live his own life, in his own way, settles peacefully in his own village, owning his own land and untouched by the fretful fevers of race troubles without (1948:122).

In spite of the pervasiveness of the missionising project in the eastern Cape, however, Victor laments "the unwillingness of many to give up heathen rites" (1948:126).

This contest over 'heathenism', specifically the attempt to garner converts to the

the narrative as a construction of a mission place in spite of the fluidity of a 'real' space. For Barthes, "[e]very photograph is a certificate of presence" (1981:87), but this presence is the presence of the referent and not, importantly, the presence of power of representation.

Crosby uses photographs in his notebook to articulate and validate certain notions of missionary places and frontier spaces. In presenting the photographs, the act of written narration overrides the formal arrangement of the photographs not only because the photographs are fragments, but also because snapshots are particularly acute forms of fragmentation. As fragments, and even as linked sequences, they allow themselves to be easily interspersed and directed to communicate a missionised version of the Ovamboland frontier.

The kind of space that the photograph is made into by virtue of its use, determines the spatial character of that photograph. Thus, while the photograph might have been taken as a passing snapshot, that spatial character is denied by virtue of a particular written engagement with the photograph, by the power of the re-production which turns the photograph into a 'documentary' place. The photograph is a commodity of fixed production, but also an entity of anarchic consumption. The relationship between image and text in Crosby's notebook is an attempt to control the anarchy, to harness the images for a particular kind of place.

notebook neutralise the shortcomings of the snapshot view (in terms of negating the fragmentation of the frontier). The photograph often relies on an accompanying written text - a caption or essay - to direct the viewer to the particular kind of spatial engagement at work in the photographic image. Where the photograph has 'failed' to centre the subject in the picture frame, the addition of text contextualises the apparent lack of knowledge in the photographs. Here, for example, 'half-bodies' (see fig. 29) becomes the most characteristic example of the fragmented snapshot. Because of the relative speed of the production of this particular kind of photograph, bodies extend to the boundaries of the photographic space. When the visual narrative is broken or fragmented like this, the written narrative steps in to invoke, through the same process, the narrative unity. The 20 wives, and daughters of a 'heathen' headman (according to the caption), in this photograph, have just brought bundles of grass to the mission, to exchange for salt, and are posing for the camera (AB206:14).

5.

A problem in photography is the apparent inseparable 'one-ness' of the image and its referent, 'as if the Photograph always carries its referent with itself[ ]the referent adheres. And this singular adherence makes it very difficult to focus on Photography' (Barthes 1981:5, 6). Coming to terms with Crosby's scrapbook means separating the image from its referent, thereby enabling an assessment of

separate captions both bring a tone of missionary temperance to an understanding of two quite unrelated images, neither of which, by themselves, reveals such moral attitudes. A separation between spontaneous and formal photographs based on an appeal to the content of the image, prioritises the event contained within the image over the place or context of production of the image.

In characterising the textual annotation as a "parasitic message" (1977:25) with a nascent "*repressive* value" (1977:40), Barthes establishes this narrative element as one which is invested with ideology (in its epistemic sense): "the text *directs* the reader through the signifieds of the image, causing him [*sic*] to avoid some and receive others; by means of an often subtle *dispatching*, it remote-controls him towards a meaning chosen in advance" (Barthes 1977:40). This process of textual annotation thus anchors 'correct' meaning(s): "in every society various techniques are developed intended to *fix* the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs; the linguistic message is one of these techniques" (Barthes 1977:39). Crosby's terror is the terror of the frontier, where the unarticulated nature of such spaces has to be 'placed' in the mind of the colonist. The textual annotation "loads the image, burdening it with a culture, a moral, an imagination" (Barthes 1977:26). The imaginary moral culture of colonial missionisation is the dominant tone in Crosby's frontier narrative. In all this, the photograph is 'arbitrary', a weak utterance open to any number of cultural codings.[v]

Where the greater sense of fragmentation in the uncomposed snapshot allows for greater spatial intervention, the greater sense of compositional arrangement in the formal print directs that spatial intervention. The written texts in Crosby's



Fig. 44
"Cooking ... ·le, before the kitchen was built. The tree is also a fruit tree, from which the natives ... beer. It is a strong drink and during the fruiting season is responsible for a good deal of drunkenness. The Finns make it a rule that their converts must not drink it. We shall also take a strong line over it."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:17



Fig. 43
"The sub-native headman with his five wives and ? children. He is a neighbour and a very decent fellow, but during two months when the marula beer flows freely, he is liable to be far from sober."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:157

between photographs and written annotations, is useful in that it attempts to account for the introduction and impact of the written text as a structural element in the understanding and meaning of photographs. The power of the written annotation in the structural relationship is that "[...]the text produces (invents) an entirely new signified which is retroactively projected into the image, so much so as to appear denoted there" (Barthes 1977:27). The denotative quality of the photograph lends its analogous quality to the text, and the annotation takes on the attributes of the 'truth' of the photograph. This process is made that much easier by the photograph that, in itself, lacks an explicit connotative message, such as the 'snapshot'.

Not only does the notion of the candid, spontaneous snapshot imply the containment of an essential 'truth', but it also ignores the extent to which such a 'truth' might be determined by, or reside in the photograph's written context. If anything, the 'critical truths' in Crosby's scrapbook lie in the moralising annotations that negate any threat to the displacement of the mission. This is apparent in two unrelated images that are annotated in similar ways in order to effect the presence of the mission by negating local practices. This negation is formulated in the captions that accompany the photographs. The annotation to a photograph of a "sub-native headman" and his family (fig. 43, overleaf), for example, claims that the man is "a neighbour and a very decent fellow, but during the two months when the marula beer flows freely, he is liable to be far from sober" (AB206:154). Similarly, a formal photograph of the makeshift kitchen at the mission (fig. 44, overleaf) is annotated with a text about the fruit tree in the background, from which beer is brewed, and which results in "a good deal of drunkenness" (AB206:16). These two

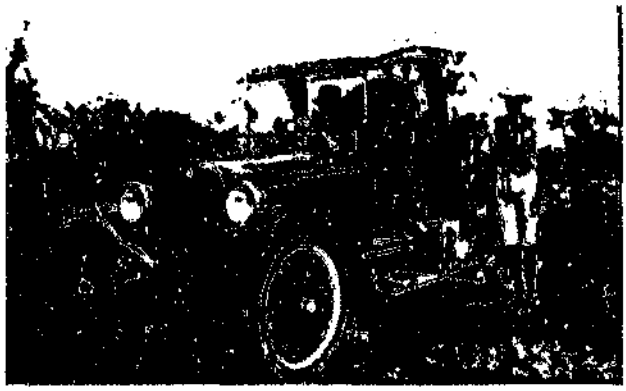


Fig. 41
"The Dodge Van, with the back portion of the van removed. Crosby and 2 Ovambos after his first trip to Outjo. Taken at Ondongua. This car has had very rough usage and inexperienced driving, but came through with colours flying. It helped to ease the way very much in the beginning."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:5



Fig. 42
"Tobias and Crosby under the camp tree with a wireless set on Tobias' right. Lack of knowledge of how to manipulate the wireless resulted in having it sent back to Windhoek. At Windhoek the Bishop obtained excellent results, and he intends returning it after giving a demonstration."
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB206:7

attitudes of the photographers to the photographed. The sense of ambiguity in snapshots is exacerbated both by the unknown subject matter and circumstances of production (King 1986:60), and by the image being one small fragment of reality, devoid of contextualisation.

This brings me to the issue of the spatialisation of these fragmented photographs, to the creation of a narrative through the linking of both photographs with other photographs and photographs with written texts. The linking of disparate photographic sequences partly overcomes the isolation of the fragment. At an initial level, the recovery of narrative meaning occurs through the repeated focus on gestures and motions of common peoples and objects. The recurrence of the Dodge van in photographs from Crosby's scrapbook (fig. 41, overleaf, fig. 42, overleaf), for example, results in the overlapping of photographic sequences, and the strengthening of the narrative of a missionised place. The different episodes that make up Crosby's scrapbook, while at times depicting a wide ranges of actions, are unified at the level of gesture, motion and character associated with the construction of buildings and the development of transport routes. The integration of sequences at the narrational level generates an enhanced meanings: "[t]he narrational level is thus occupied by the signs of narrativity, the set of operators which reintegrate functions and actions in the narrative communication articulated on its donor and its addressee" (Barthes 1993:285). Together, the photographs form a nodal sequence and the unfamiliarity of a photographed space is linked by any number of commonalities to make up the familiarity of missionised place.

Barthes' image-text structuralism, as an attempt to understand the relationship

particular nodal view, from one point in a range of spatial possibilities, thus reflecting the limitations of the lensed 'gaze' of the photographer. Photographically, the enclosure of a sequence, or nodal space, is carried out by the photographic frame that denies a contextual antecedent and consequent. In addition to the medium, fragmentation also occurs in the formal composition of the photographic image. The formally and carefully arranged photograph is generally not as fragmented as the snapshot photograph, and as such, each can be differently spatialised. Here, fragmentation is not so much about the disjuncture of a boundary, as the 'incompleteness' of information.

Snapshot content is conventionalised, rather than aestheticised. The hurried quality of many of the mission photographs in the scrapbook reflects the short time given to pondering aesthetics, suggesting that the scrapbook exists as an aside to more pressing religious demands.[3] In terms of the compositional devices that frame a definitive content in snapshot photographs, King highlights "a catalogue of the flaws and foibles that characterise the visual surface of the snapshot genre" (1986:60).[4] These flaws are mostly rationalised in terms of the amateurism of the photographer.[5] But the use of unconventional cropping in the photographs from Crosby's scrapbook, rather than necessarily being unintentional, reflects a dismissive attitude to what is constituted as peripheral to colonial vision. Half-bodies abound in the Ovamboland snapshots (see fig. 29), not only emphasising the fragmentary nature of the images, but also the extent to which 'anonymous' local peoples exist beyond the frontier of the mission. Like the spontaneous/formal distinction, flaws suggest meanings outside the physical image, and allude to

4.

The snapshot's content ranges from the visualisation of any subject in the public domain (Strand 1974:49), to an emphasis on people (Coe and Gates 1977:47), and sometimes even a special focus on family affairs (Gree : 1974:3; Cowin 1974:8). The photographs in Crosby's scrapbook are mostly concerned with the public domain, with the general environment of the everyday practice of the mission. In these photographs, the people mark the space of the frontier. They are frozen, upright 'pillars' that demarcate the colonial occupation of a place, not unlike the poles of the perimeter fence (see fig. 33). But the visual 'presence' of the pillars is often guided by ideological notions of privilege. The upright, formality of the Finnish converts in the foreground, and the 'lower' presence of the seated 'heathens' in the background (see fig. 40), is testament to a different kind of spatial presence in that this image is a document of the borderland where the reintegration of the fragmented space of the frontier into the place of the mission remains unresolved and ambivalent.

In terms of effecting the transformation of a fragmented space into a unified place, the photograph is 'handicapped' by being a fragmentary moment in a much larger and longer sequence of events. The photographic frame creates a 'natural' border between objects inside and outside the field of the camera's vision. What is seen by the photographer as a con-text, as a subject surrounded by an environment, is turned into a visual text, into a cut-out version of the naked eye's expansive environment. The photographic lens is only able to envision the landscape from one



Fig. 46
No Title, n.d.
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relegate the initiation ceremony to an *unseen* private realm at the periphery of 'public' vision. The public-private distinction is thus problematic in two senses. In the first and more general instance, what do 'private' and 'public' actually mean? How 'private' does something have to be in order that it be 'private'? And in the second instance, once one has established the artificial parameters of these groups, how does one account for the shifts between these two realms? What these two instances suggest is that ideological pressures infiltrate the constitution of public-private as much as they maintain the opposition between these categories.

This distinction needs to be re-characterised to more properly reflect the spatialisation of postcard practice, to give credence to the generalised and localised distributions and movements of photographic postcards. Such a conception and analysis of the postcards is directed at the demarcation of 'privilege' rather than 'public-ness', and hopefully accounts for the travelogue of the postcard from availability to the public-at-large, to localisation through personal collection or inscription, and finally reintegration into the general domain through preservation in an archive with public access. The postcard moves in and out of 'public' and 'private' realms, but in each of these realms the 'privileged' status of the view remains constant. The notion of 'privilege' in postcard practice is emphasised by the inclusion of elements such as a chalkboard highlighting the team's status as "inter-institution football champions" (fig. 46, overleaf). It is not only a postcard of "St. Matthew's XI", but also an image of a team that triumphed over other missionary institutions.

(1994:79). The mission postcard is but one vehicle for the production of consent in the public sphere: "The public sphere produces consent via circulation of discourses that construct the 'common sense' of the day and represent the existing order as natural and/or just" (1994:95). Within the 'official' public sphere of colonial South Africa, mission postcards 'naturalised' conversion as part of a 'civilising' process, and thereby acted as vehicles for the production of consent about the missionising process.

This particular connotation or signification, is problematically opposed to the 'private' image, to the personal album for example, whose access and availability is limited or restricted. The problems raised by a spatial distinction between public and private spaces raises the question of the plausibility of a similar distinction between public and private identities, between personal snapshots and public postcards. The public-private distinction not only implies a strict divide between the two categories and some sort of control over the maintenance of those categories, but also that movement between these two categories is a transgression or violation. Between the public and private spheres,

> there are no naturally given, a priori boundaries[...]These terms, after all, are not simply straightforward designations of societal spheres; they are cultural classifications and rhetorical labels. In political discourse, they are powerful terms that are frequently deployed to delegitimate some interests, views, and topics and to valorise others (Fraser 1994:88,89).

The opposition between 'public' and 'private' is an ideological opposition (Jameson 1992:52) fashioned and refashioned by the particular use to which a photographic image is put. Mission postcards, for example, through cultural classifications,

This notion is refined by Fredric Jameson in his distinction "between such an 'imaginary representation' and its narrative conditions of possibility', where the former is the "fantasy text" and the latter "as those conceptual conditions of possibility or narrative presuppositions which one must 'believe'[...]in order for the subject successfully to tell itself this particular daydream" (Jameson 1981 181-182). The narrative condition of possibility in the postcard of the housemaster, prefect and staff (see fig. 45) is a belief that the figures in the photograph do not have an existence outside of the context of the photograph, and that they, as converts, are wholly different from the rest of 'heathen' Africa. Images of converts are thus the fantasy texts reproduced for public consumption in postcards.

As material culture, the postcard is most commonly (and quite problematically) associated with the 'public' sphere. The postcard itself is conventionally denoted by what appears on the reverse of the photographic image: by combinations of words and phrases in one or two languages, such as 'post card', 'communication', 'address only', and 'foreign postage - 1d'. The connotation that the postcard is a 'public' image is partly due to these marks on the reverse side of the photograph, marks which implicate the genre in the sending of a *disclosed* image and message from one person to another.

The power of the mission postcard, over and above being a photograph, lies in its constructed place as a 'public' representational practice. Nancy Fraser establishes the 'official' public sphere as "the prime institutional site for the construction of the consent that defines the new, hegemonic mode of domination"



Fig. 45
No Title, 1931
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB1290/E2

housemaster, prefect and staff (fig. 45, overleaf) epitomises the arranged group portrait in a outdoor setting, and valorises the role of the mission in the dissemination of Christian education. At the same time, the postcard functions to meets the needs of any visitors in providing a "relic of their pilgrimage" (Beard 1992:519). This postcard has the following hand-written message inscribed on the reverse of the image: "To the Warden with the compliments of the HM. Prefect and Capts 1931" (AB1290/E2). While the warden was probably neither a visitor nor a pilgrim, the postcard nonetheless stands as a reminder of a particular historical moment,[7] as well as the coloniser in the colonised space and a validation of the Warden's efforts.

The contested spaces around postcard production are, however, silent. Like Roland Barthes, Althusser suggests that

> the peculiarity of ideology is that it is endowed with a structure and a functioning such as to make it a non-historical reality, i.e. an *omni-historical* reality, in the sense in which that structure and functioning are immutable, present in the same form throughout what we can call history" (1993:35).

Mission postcards, in their presentation of a subject, give no sense of their history within photographic practice; they are despatialised. This silent space of the postcard is an ideological practice. Ideology is used to "enslave other minds by dominating their imaginations" (Althusser 1993:37), and as such

> represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence[...]these 'world outlooks' are largely imaginary, i.e. do not 'correspond to reality'[...]they constitute an illusion (Althusser 1993:36).

Ideology effects appearances of coherence without actually achieving any 'real' coherence - it is deceptive, or as Fredric Jameson, in *The Political Unconscious* (1981), suggests, 'Utopian' "insofar as it expresses the unity of a collectivity [...]all such collectives are themselves *figures* for the ultimate concrete collective life of an achieved Utopian or classless society" (Jameson 1981:291). While postcards, importantly, affirm the 'collective solidarity' of the missionaries' Utopian vision of Africa, it is photographic practice which ensures the sense of collective unity within the image. Here, the photographic act is the depoliticised Utopian moment.

Photographic practice, as an instance of both spatialisation and identity formation, is 'political' in the sense that the photographic image is not a transparent reflection of photographic practice. The postcard, as a particular visual experience of space (as distinct from, for example, the 'snapshot'), is the product of a politicised process in which largely uncontested meanings are established *in the interests* of mission identity. Postcards are about a process of redefinition, starting with the 'capturing' of an experience, followed by valorising of that experience as a worthy of (and conforming with) a specified mission identities, and ending up with the re-*scribing* of its identity by the sender of the image. Each of these stages of postcard practice involves the suppression of differences in favour of a 'master' narrative, to the extent that representation becomes misrepresentation and the original context of production is hidden behind the image and text.

If one approaches the postcard photographs as a barometer of mission 'identity', then it is quite clear that the eastern Cape CPSA missions were concerned with an identity underpinned by education and its associated activities. A postcard of a

(rather than social belief) is developed in Louis Althusser's *Essays on Ideology* (1993), as the organisation of practices which generate and perpetuate meaning. Althusser attempts to shift the notion of ideology from the theory of ideas to the practice of everyday life: "[i]deology has a material existence" in that it "always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (Althusser 1993:39, 40). The photographic postcard is an everyday practice that involves the production and dissemination of photographic images on cards of varying sizes. In terms of the generation and perpetuation of meaning, this practice, fairly uniquely, involves the rescription and reinforcement of meaning by different authors - image, printed caption and hand-written message together act as a powerful (and largely incontestable) conveyor of meaning about the missionisation of space.

The postcard view is, on the one hand, closed, in that visual representation is fixed, but on the other hand, is opened by the presence of an 'authorised' space, on the reverse of the photograph, to re-mark the image. The ability to ensure domination depends on a capacity to effect control over the ideological apparatuses of everyday life (Althusser 1993:11, 20). Within postcard practice, control is deferred at each of the three stages of authorship. The apparently mediatory line of dominant ideology ensures "a (sometimes teethgritting) 'harmony'" between the various practices of domination (Althusser 1993:24).[9] Photography, especially in postcard form, is an important representational practice that ensures the apparently 'harmonious' missionisation of space, without necessarily being an instrument of direct oppression.

Ideology (1993). The second part of this chapter is concerned with mythologising certain social beliefs about conversion, specifically the way conversion and the converted body are visually understood in a binary opposition of 'difference'. This section is based on Roland Barthes' reading of ideology in *Mythologies* (1993). The use of Althusserian and Barthian notions of ideology in this chapter forms part of an exploration of mission postcard practice as a material manifestation of both the ideological beliefs and structures of colonialism and missionisation and, as such, is not meant to be a overview of the many and various contested definition of ideology.[54]

2.

John Tagg, in *The Burden of Representation* (1988), connects ideology and photographic practice by suggesting that "photography is itself an apparatus of ideological control under the central 'harmonising' authority of the ideology of the class which, openly or through alliance, holds state power and wields the state apparatuses" (1988:166).[55] Ideologies of missionisation are constituted and reproduced in representational practices such as photography. In the social form of the postcard, these representational practices played an important role in effecting the 'harmonious' missionisation of colonial South Africa.

Missionisation is about the transformation of the social structure of African society. A notion of ideology that concerns itself with problems of social structure

identity politics" (1993:fn8), this chapter explores the extent to which these images are implicated in a "field of social identities [that] is not one of full identities but of their ultimate failure to be constituted" (Laclau 1990:38). It is an exploration of the ultimate failure to properly constitute an identity for the mission convert. In exploring the 'public' face of CPSA missions, as constructed and reflected in eastern Cape mission postcards photographs, this chapter will, like Gupta and Ferguson who attempt to "turn from a project of juxtaposing pre-existing differences to one of exploring the construction of differences in historical process" (1992:16), explore the visual construction of differences between 'heathens' and 'converts' in postcard practice. Like cultural power that "actively *produces and reproduces* difference as a key strategy to create and maintain modes of social and spatial division that are advantageous to its continued empowerment" (Soja and Hooper 1993:184-185), mission postcard practice is used to differentiate key aspects of missionisation advantageous to the maintenance and empowerment of missions. By authorising particular versions of mission life through 'publicly' acceptable postcards, CPSA missionaries stage-managed a visual denial of the contested nature of missionisation, a contest that centres on the nature of 'conversion' (as process) and the 'convert' (as social category) as categories of 'difference'.

This exploration of the construction of visual differences is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on ideologising difference in the public sphere, specifically the role postcards, as social practice, played in generating and perpetuating notions of 'public', 'private', and 'privileged' difference. This section is underpinned by a notion of ideology outlined by Louis Althusser in *Essays on*

(Ruby 1988:327) and for eastern Cape missions, the postcards of converts played an important role in visualising the solidarity of a symbolic victory over 'heathenism'. Postcards produced and disseminated as part of this 'public' face are important markers of often carefully constructed identities, and as such, raise a number of issues concerning both the theorisation of identity and the ideological role of photography in the production of largely uncontested and static visual identities for missions.[5]

In the various theorisations of identity politics, little, if anything, has been said of the link between identity and ideology, a peculiar anomaly since ideology is such an integral cog in the machinery producing unified, stable identities. The primary thrust in contemporary formulations of identity politics is the revaluation of socio-political and cultural fixities, to the extent that 'identity' has become a cultural paradox - it is at once an affirmation of sameness and a refusal of duplication. It is this paradox that underpins the negotiation of affirmations and refusals in identity politics. These negotiations are often (but not altogether) eliminated in photographic practice, due to the powerful, controlling role of the photographer and *his* lens. The power of a photograph lies in the fact that it is not a transparent reflection of a politicised practice - since the image hides the contested space of its original production - but nonetheless appears to be a 'real' reflection of that practice.

In taking up the 'public' identity of CPSA missions in South Africa this chapter focuses on pre-World War II postcards produced for St. Cuthbert's and St. Matthew's missions in the eastern Cape. Rather than taking up mission postcards as a reflection of what Soja and Hooper call the "urge to unity' that pervades modernist

that the camera was often used to record both the conditions of existence and the growth of missions (1985:56). CPSA mission photographs housed in the UCTSA archive reflect similar themes, often starting with the constructions of structures (such as buildings, fences and wells) and then turning to the work of developing congregations. By the time photography arrived at CPSA mission stations in the eastern Cape in the 1890s, however, many missions had been established for some 30 to 40 years and were well on their way to 'cultivating' congregations, and the postcards from St. Cuthbert's and St. Matthew's reflects this status quo. The CPSA mission postcards from the eastern Cape are taken from photographs made in 'natural' rather than studio settings. Amongst the postcards produced for the mission, there seem to be none of the picturesque landscapes so common in commercial postcards produced in the first half of the twentieth century.[5] It is possible to ascribe this to the fact that since missionaries (but not necessarily lay workers like Crosby) were generally concerned with the social, cultural and ideological conversion of people, postcards would naturally reflect this particular preoccupation.

Postcards make sense of, and stand for, particular experiences (Beard 1992:521), and were used by missionaries as visual metaphors for the experiences and identities of mission groups, stations and individuals. As the sanctioned source of 'profound symbolic attachment' (Ruby 1988:328), the postcards bring to the fore key aspects of colonial Christian identity. Mission postcards, as part of colonial photographic practice, project images of 'worth' that become the symbolic content of identity. Postcards are seen as "symbolic manifestations of[...]socio-political identity"

Conclusion

While it cannot be denied that Christianity's position within European culture guaranteed it a place in the plans of colonial expansion, and that European Christianity was favourable towards colonialism (Neill 1966:412-13), it is important to maintain an awareness of both "the nuances involved in mission interactions with colonial politics and[...]those variables that have shaped the nature and impact of missionary attitudes and actions in the political arena" (Strayer 1976:11). A nuanced and, to some extent an ambivalent view of missions, as differently and simultaneously accepted and resented, feared and disregarded, is one that needs to be taken up in this discussion of mission photography. Locating the photographic outputs of missionaries and mission groups within the context of colonialism requires careful attention to the particular spatial circumstances of various mission groups and stations. One cannot simply transfer models of missionisation or the particular experiences of missionaries from one context to another. It is problematic, for example, to simply take Johannes Fabian's (1983) hegemonically formulated understanding of central African colonialism, as a tightly knitted web of political, religious and social imperialism, and overlay that formulation on to a southern African context. Mission photographs cannot simply be stereotyped as either the innocent records of missionaries or the powerful tools of colonialism. They exist in between these two poles as attempts to fix the insecure shadows of a constantly changing space. French and German missionaries were certainly more prolific in

multiplicity of possible 'meanings' embedded within the museum postcard

threatens a particular spatial position, no matter how weak that position might be, so that the oppressor is a threat to the survival of the oppressed, as much as the working class is a threat to the rule of the dominant class. Ideology, whether as social belief or social structure, legitimates the power of dominant groups by promoting, naturalising and universalising same or similar beliefs and obscuring different beliefs through denigration and exclusion. To say that something is ideological is "to claim that it is powered by an ulterior motive bound up with the legitimation of certain interests in a power struggle" (Eagleton 1991:16).

Notions of power are central in photography: "the forms and relations of power which are brought to bear on practices of representation or constitute their conditions of existence, but also the power which representational practices themselves engender" Tagg 1988:21). Here photography plays an important role in the representation of the dominant, colonising culture:

> The dominant culture represents itself as *the* culture. It tries to define and contain all other cultures within its inclusive range.[...]Other cultural configurations will not only be subordinate to this dominant order: they will enter into struggle with it, seek to modify, negotiate, resist or even overthrow its reign (Clarke *et al* 1976:12).

It must be stated, however, that ideology is not exclusively about power and domination. Ideologies co-exist in asymmetrical relations of power, where some ideologies enjoy greater status over other ideologies. Mission postcards are about the imposition of ideologies of colonialism over ideologies of pre-existing African beliefs and structures. Similarly, the fragmentary nature of the colonial space prevented the reign of a single, dominant ideology, and one is faced, instead, with a

photographic images, a distinction must be made between hand-written and printed captions. Naming is seen as an important element of identity that contributes not only to the myth of the 'authentic' experience, but also to systems of classification by 'naming'. I am referring not only to the personal names of people(s), but also to the naming of, amongst other things, social groups and ceremonies, place-names, and objects.

4.

What, then, is the role of the ideological manifestation of myth in society? Social contradictions and contests over both the process of conversion and the category of convert are concealed through distortion in order to create 'normalising' appearances. This introduces the element of power in ideological processes of missionisation:

> normally, a ruling class ideology will explore various strategies of the *legitimation* of its own power position, while an oppositional culture or ideology will, often in covert and disguised strategies, seek to contest and to undermine the dominant 'value system' (Jameson 1981:84).

Ideology naturalises the status quo, to the extent that "[e]fficient ideology is accepted and unquestioned" (Stanlazewski 1995:33). If ideology is a functional necessity crucial to social cohesion, how can society live without ideology (Walsh 1993:240)? Ideologies, like postcards, function to mediate individual and social understandings of the world. The form of ideology is an embodiment of threat. Ideology is that which

system has been refashioned in a way that not only reflects racial segregation but also attempts to make the Pathfinders, for converts, an adequate replacement for practices such as initiation that had been rejected by missions. A similar postcard from Grace Dieu Diocesan Training College (fig 49, overleaf), more dramatically, focuses on the Christian bases of the Pathfinder Movement. In this sense, the Grace Dieu postcard reflects changes in social practice more directly than the St. Cuthbert's postcard, which is more a display of social change.

In an analysis of postcard representations of mission converts, it is important to distinguish between the body as subject and the body as object. Where "the body shows itself" in individual, personalised photographs (such as conventional portraiture), "the body is shown" in more anonymous acts of photographic representation (Prochaska 1991:46). This dichotomy is apparent in photographic representations of mission personalities and groups as both 'subjects' and 'objects'. Where the former becomes the characteristic form attributed to members of the clergy, the latter is the characteristic form attributed to the converts and non-converts. In postcards of eminent members of the mission staff, such as Father Callaway from St. Cuthbert's mission (see fig. 5), the body shows itself as a subject, whereas in postcards of converts, such as a football team or group of Pathfinders (see fig. 46 and fig. 48), bodies become objects of conversion and advertisements of a well advanced missionising programme.[7] Similarly, the naming of individuals, as part of a process of creating personal identities, takes on an interesting form in the CPSA postcards from the eastern Cape, especially in the context of a politics of identity around converts and conversion. In examining the written context of the



Fig. 48
'Pathfinders', n.d.
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AB1290



Fig. 49
'Diocesan Training College, Grace Dieu, Pietersburg. Pathfinder Service in Camp.'
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB750

constituted in ways that deny the historical character of both the process and the category.

The practice of usurping 'traditional' forms by instituting an equivalent Christian practice (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:234), and the effect that this expropriation has on the missions, finds resonance in the formation of the Pathfinders.[3] Here, the image captured and fixed by the mission postcard is often as much a reflection of the changes in the structures of missions themselves as it is of the changes undergone by converts. As Gupta and Ferguson suggest, "the cultural certainties and fixities of the metropole are upset as surely, if not in the same way, as those of the colonised periphery" (1992:10). Importantly,

> People who are ultimately disadvantaged by the social construction of consent nonetheless manage to find in the discourses of the public sphere representations of their interests, aspirations, life problems, and anxieties that are close enough to resonate with their own lived self-representations, identities, and feelings. Their consent to hegemonic rule is secured when their culturally constructed perspectives are taken up and articulated with other culturally constructed perspectives in hegemonic socio-political projects (Fraser 1994:85).

The postcard emphasises one public sphere over another because it is a controlled form of communication. By excluding certain views, postcard practice draws a distinction between public and private, foregrounding the former and pushing the latter into the background. The often-repeated postcard view of Pathfinders from St. Cuthbert's mission (fig. 48, overleaf) - essentially racially segregated 'black' scouts - is a marker of a dual adaptation by both African boys and missions - the boys, as the 'colonised periphery' have undergone conversion, but at the same time, the scouting



Fig. 47
"Heathen Dandies"', n.d.
Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
AB815/CA/1

structuring of absences, but also conceals any contradictions in the meaning of the two poles of this opposition. An important element of missionisation is the recuperation and reinvention of the cultural signs and practices of 'otherness', since "the Other is a scandal which threatens his [petit bourgeois] existence" (Barthes 1993:151). This threat is neutralised by denial (trivialised, naturalised and/or domesticated in a way that induces 'sameness') or exoticisation (transformed into a spectacle). Exoticism is a mechanism for dealing with the irreducible Other:

> [t]he Other becomes a pure object, a spectacle, a clown. Relegated to the confines of humanity, he no longer threatens the security of the home.[...]For, even if he is unable to experience the Other in himself, the bourgeois can at least imagine the place where he fits in (Barthes 1993:152).

An exception to this postcard norm, which comes by the hand-written title, "Heathen dandies who came to the Jubilee" (fig. 47, overleaf), might be an anomaly simply because it is not a 'real' postcard.[7] While the unconverted are not photographed, and therefore not visually experienced by the viewer, they are nonetheless recuperated in an imaginary place outside the photograph that frames the converts. Here, importantly, the unconverted are transformed into cultural signs that signify the potential that has been realised in the converts represented in the mission postcards. Conversion and converts are stages in the process of recuperation and reinvention of Africa as 'civilisation'. Colonialism and missionisation, as political and cultural institutions, reproduce in concrete terms prevailing ideologies about the meaning of 'civilisation', to the extent that 'civilisation' is taken for granted. Mythologies around the process of conversion and the category of converts are

and 'converts' disappear, myths only hide and distort the process and category, to the extent that the liminality of converts is the mimicry of missionisation. In the postcard of the prefects and housemaster (fig. 45), the prefects are the camouflage around the housemaster – the prefects are part of a "resemblance that differs/defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically", making the postcard a visualisation of "a colonial encounter between the white presence and its black semblance" (Bhabha 1984:131). The converts in the photograph are the 'third men', different from both the missionaries and the community from which they came.

Myth

> is a language which does not want to die: it wrests from the meanings which give it its sustenance an insidious, degraded survival, it provokes in them an artificial reprieve in which it settles comfortably, it turns them into speaking corpses (Barthes 1993:133).

In the mythologising of colonial space, postcard subjects become 'speaking corpses'. And when missionisation is presented both photographically, and in the postcard form, the 'normalising' vision of 'speaking corpses' becomes ever more convincing to a public audience.[9]

One of the most conventional ideological tools used to conceal contradictions around 'conversion' and naturalise a Christianised status quo is the binary opposition, which attempts to clearly demarcate an oppositional rather than a shared space. The opposition between 'converts' and 'heathens' is one of the most commonly theorised binarisms in histories of missionisation. The use of binarisms not only mystifies the contested process of conversion itself through the careful

'conversion' any problematic status.[10] The abstraction of 'conversion' in these postcards "makes spiritual commitment into a choice among competing faiths, and 'belief systems' into doctrines torn free of all cultural embeddedness" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:251). It also denies the inter-connectedness of change amongst competing groups.

Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* (1993) focuses on the mythologising of bourgeois culture as universal nature:

> I resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn, and I wanted to track down, in the decorative display of *what-goes-without-saying*, the ideological abuse which, in my view is hidden there.[...]What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality[...]and what myth gives in return is a *natural* image of this reality[...]myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose the memory that they once were made (1993:11, 142).

The codes and conventions of myth distort and conceal the historical character of 'Nature', and thereby create 'universal' meanings suitable to a socially powerful bourgeois class. The mission postcard erases the memory that the convert is 'made', presenting instead a photograph whose memory is a 'natural' image of a Christianised Africa. Importantly, though, "*myth hides nothing*: its function is to distort, not to make disappear" (Barthes 1993:121).[11] The CPSA mission postcards distort the contested nature of conversion by presenting an image and vision that takes no cognisance of, for example, the continued practice of circumcision amongst 'converted' boys.

Converts are thus presented to the outside world as a natural *present*, without any sense of an historical *past*. But rather than making the histories of 'conversion'

3.

As a tool of vision, mission photographs are notable for their pursuit of both a sameness that is different (the *recognisable* 'other') and a difference that is the same (the convert). Mission postcards raise certain issues regarding 'conversion' and the representation of the 'convert', including the presentation of an uncontested process of conversion, the spatial location of the 'convert' in the mission environment, and the system of signification that supports the convert's social status (language, naming and clothing). Most of the CPSA mission postcards from the eastern Cape depict 'converts' to the Christian faith, isolating the actual context of conversion and presenting the viewer with an 'uncomplicated' scene of religious transformation. Such 'uncomplicated' images perpetuate a "nonoppositional completeness" devoid of any contested cultural struggle over meaning and identity (Clifford 1991:240-241).

Teleologically, conversion is "a process involving the removal of difference and distinction" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:244), where concurrence means conformity to Christian ideals. So where conversion is, *ideally*, an uncontested process of the de- and re-territorialisation of identity, the mission postcard only captures and fixes the product of this process. The dominant markers of this process are often clothing and naming, of wearing 'western' clothing and being baptised with a Christian first name. These significations are common in postcard views from the eastern Cape, where college, Pathfinder or sport uniforms, and the inscription of Christian first names on the reverse of some postcards, point to the changed status of the individuals represented (see fig. 45 and 46). This visual uniformity denies

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AB2119f (1879-1980)

AB2134 (1962)

AB2139f (1929)

AB2140 (1989-90)

AB2194 (nd)

AB2198fol (1924-39)

AB2225 (1809-72)

AB1097f (1890-1936)

AB1098 (1913-22)

AB1101 (1977)

AB1102 (1863-1904)

AB1107 (1918-77)

AB1155 (1910)

AB1171 (1924-46)

AB1219 (1898-1963)

AB1290 (1932)

AB1376f (1930-54)

AB1420 (1903-80)

AB1422f (1937-81)

AB 1429 (1945-67)

AB1431 (1980-81)

AB1501 (nd)

AB1607f (1872-1913)

AB1610 (1859-1982)

AB1625 (1924-76)

AB1653 (1874-1982)

AB1659 (1904-82)

AB1678f (1838-1901)

AB1691 (1878-1976)

AB1770 (1938-82)

AB1796 (1850-1908)

AB1809 (1913-85)

AB1820f (1952)

AB1839 (1942-75)

AB1878 (1884-1984)

AB1886 (1856-1982)

AB1933 (1982-86)

AB1958fol (nd)

AB1961 (1892-1986)

AB1964f (1870)

AB1973 (1880-89)

AB1974 (1948)

AB1975 (1914-87)

AB1976 (1913)

AB1978 (1903-32)

AB2029 (1915-84)

AB2032fol (1887-1908)

AB2035f (1932)

AB2036f (1936-67)

AB2072 (1944)

AB2099 (1912-33)

AB2115 (1980)

AB2116 (1880-1910)

Appendix A

No index, list or inventory of photographic material in the Church of the Province Archive (Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg) existed when this dissertation was started. What follows here is a comprehensive list of CPSA photographic material in the archive, with accession numbers and dates, compiled from the individual inventories of all the archive's holdings.

AB188 (1931-32)
AB206 (1924-31)
AB207f (1865-1910)
AB219f (1864-1923)
AB247f (1893-1959)
AB307 (1904)
AB359 (1950)
AB382 (1878-1917)
AB534 (1935-48)
AB590f (1968)
AB636 (1874-1931)
AB749 (1925-27)
AB750 (1906-69)
AB762f (1908-09)
AB769 (1888)
AB799 (1876-1971)
AB815 (1908-34)
AB831 (1961-72)
AB846 (1971-73)
AB848f (1973)
AB851 (1924-73)
AB890 (1869-1907)
AB894 (1865-1970)
AB934 (1882-1970)
AB1001 (1895-1961)
AB1091 (1789-1972)

of photographic practice and colonialist discourse forms the basis of the mission photograph's particular contribution to the spatial demarcation of colonial missionary and African identities. In weaving together these two spatial markers – photographic practice and colonialist discourse – a politics of visual representation becomes properly engendered.

being a malleable discursive entity the mission photograph is often an insecurely captured shadow, able (to differently) and unable (to always) constitute the geographical space of the 'frontier' and the social identity of 'culture'. An assessment of the effect of mission photographs necessitates a theoretically nuanced politics of representation.

A discussion of discourses of photography is important to an understanding of the status and use of the medium in the colonial context. Colonial photography is a record of re-dress, a document of the transformation of space through a literal and figurative re-clothing of the landscape. The indexical realism of photography has two mounting effects. Firstly, that it is a panoptic vision, and building on this, secondly, that it has a mythical status as evidence. It is these two qualities that form the basis of photographic practice's role in the colonisation of Africa. In Foucault's "regime of truth", epistemic delineations determine particular truths and falsehoods (Foucault 1977:13). Mission photography is naturally implicated in the suppression of its own particular discursive space and is part of an arbitrated politics of representation that comes out of the intersection of photographic practice and colonialist discourse. Mission photographic practice is part of the broad ambit of visual imperialism, where cultural supremacy

> is communicated by presenting what is natural, normal, and desired in culture through the dominant culture's set of racial or gender stereotypes, and what is unnatural, abnormal and undesired through the subordinate culture's set (Kuehnast 1992:185).

The extent to which photographic imagery is complicit in ideological representations of 'truth' is largely dependent on the use-value attached to such images. This nexus

the contested nature of missionisation

While photographic space might include two modes of looking - the expansive panoramas of the 'naked' eye and the enclosed vistas of the camera's viewfinder - it is the latter, the photographic act, that becomes the naturally framed place, limited by the proscriptions and prohibitions of the lens. Framing "decide[s] looking from looking at" (Faris 1992b:255). De Certeau's characterisation of a movement from space to place parallels the shift within photographic practice from site (location) to sight (looking at) to site (location of a view). Unlike Banta and Hinsley's *From Site to Sight* (1986), which implies the visioning of space, site-sight-site emphasises the location of physical places within photographic space. It is these limitations that not only redefine an already produced space, but also force the photographer to capture one space over another. The encounter between the photographer and the photographed, including the attendant strategies of representation, raise the issue of the social relationships that facilitate or hinder the production of a photographic space (in the context of the 'uneven' interactions between missions and Africa). Thus photography involves a double rescribing of the landscape. The boundaries of a space are rescribed by both the boundaries of the photographic lens, and the boundaries of a photographer's narrative desires. Within photographic space, both the tripod and the lens are unable to either locate, infiltrate or capture certain practices that run counter to the goals and intentions of missionaries.

Particular languages of description locate the meaning and value of photographs, lending an arbitrary quality to the photographic image. While colonial space is mediated, the arbitrary quality of the photographic image negated this mediation by

postcards are an attempt to ideologically naturalise a social and cultural status quo in a space that has been geographically 'conquered'.

The focus on photographic usage raises certain issues regarding a more general theorisation of photographic practice. Each of these issues is concerned with the possibilities and limitations of the photographic medium within different functional spaces, but all point to the narration of meanings that lie outside of the space of the photographic text. This separation between functional and photographic spaces is crucial to an understanding of the intersection of colonialist discourse and photographic practice, in that it allows for a more effective delineation of the photographic medium's particular contribution to visual identity. These issues include the genres of photography produced and collected by missionaries; the relationship between photographic space and the generation of narrative meaning through (con)text, the consequences that this relationship has for the arbitrariness of photographic space, and the implications this has for the evidential value of the photographs. Each of these factors renders a photographic politics of visual representation different from other forms of visual colonialism.

Mission photographs attempted to be essentialised versions of an ideal colony, and as such, many of the genres of photography produced and collected by CPSA missionaries involved the exclusion of certain subjects from view and the emphasis on certain kinds of 'difference'. As such, these genres are simultaneously about the derision and refutation of 'heathenism' and a conformist view of 'civilisation'. The various photographic genres thus played an important ideological role in the construction of largely uncontested identities, stage-managing the visual denial of

postcards and personal snapshots. The selection of particular examples in this dissertation is meant to exploit the fragmented nature of mission photographic practice, and highlight the extent to which 'mission' photographs cannot easily and readily be fixed as a 'genre' in the history of colonial photography.

One of the more curious features of CPSA mission photography in southern Africa is that while the CPSA was one of the largest operating mission groups at the turn of the century,[9] photographic archival material from this group is comparatively smaller in quantity and significance than from other mission groups. In looking at CPSA mission photography, a distinction needs to be made between 'founding' and 'second-phase' missions and the different kinds of photography that were produced by these different missions.

The sequence of chapters three and four in this dissertation is meant to emphasise the difference between photographs produced at 'founding' and 'second-phase' missions. Crosby's scrapbook (admittedly the narrative of a lay worker, but nonetheless an important aspect of the genre as outlined in this dissertation) is a frantic overdeliberation upon the agoraphobic threat of the frontier. It reveals, ultimately, the extent to which the photograph is unable to properly fix the terror and uncertainty of the frontier. Photographs are traces of a space in which certain relations of production have allowed and/or necessitated the making of such images, and in this sense, the overwhelming geographical character of Crosby's frontier narrative is directly implicated in the context of a 'founding' mission in Ovamboland. Similarly, the mission postcards from the eastern Cape, in their deliberation upon social identity, are characteristically the photographs of 'second-phase' mission. The

their documentation of African culture than some of their English counterparts, and it is difficult to isolate distinct approaches to photography by some of the English-speaking mission groups and societies operating in southern Africa. More often than not, it was either the missionary's personal interest or an association with an institution, that resulted in particular or distinctive photographic outputs.

In outlining an approach to photographic history, Abigail Solomon-Godeau argues for a history of photographic usage rather than a history of photographic genius, not of "remarkable men" or "remarkable pictures", but of "photographic uses" (1991:xxiv). Solomon-Godeau's view is reiterated by Giroux and Simon (1994:95), who insist upon the importance of a critical photographic practice that can account for the *production* and deployment of photographic imagery. The way the photographic medium was used, in the service of colonial enterprises, has been the focus of this discussion of representation. Usage is determined by both the proclaimed meaning of the photograph, and the "the surplus of meaning which it betrays by being a part of the symbolism of an age, a class or an artistic group" (Bourdieu 1990:7).

This confluence of individual and social 'visions' is what differentiates particular mission photographic practices. The use of 'mission photography' as a preferred term of designation in this dissertation is part of an emphasis on the uses to which photography has been put in a mission context. While mission photographs can be grouped in terms of religious affiliation, this identity is fractured not only by the uses to which individuals put photographs in the mission context and the kinds of images they pictured, but also the production of different photographic formats, such as

[3] Mary W. Tyler Gray's undated booklet, *Stones of the Early American Missionaries in South Africa*, is part of the Local History Museum collection (H/87/130) in Durban.

[4] Parry, in her critique of Bhabha, rejects the transactional in favour of the conflictual view of colonialism (1994:12).

[5] These Tonga-type stools (from an area around the Zambezi river that was already operated by French missionaries) might have been supplied to the subjects for the purposes of the photograph. This observation was made by Professor Anitra Nettleton from Wits University's Art History department.

[6] While the lone calabash-bearer could be analysed as an iconic index of 'Africa', deliberately included as 'heathen' in opposition to the converts, this is probably unlikely, due to the fact that it is a single figure (normally such dichotomising practices make use of at least two or three 'heathens') as well as her distance from the main group of converts.

[7] This illustrated history is part of the Local History Museum's archival collection (H.95/847) in Durban.

[8] The American Board missionaries were certainly not uninterested in African culture, and the absence of photographs of African life in centenary publications such as this is conspicuous exactly because the sources for such illustrative photographs - the missionaries' personal collections - often included an array of images of 'tribal life'. Karl Robert Brueckner's collection of personal albums, loose photographs and professional postcards includes many views of 'anthropological interest', mostly of adornment (beadwork) and scarification. And the fact that the compilers of the centenary edition made use of some of Brueckner's other photographs (and were thus probably aware of his collection), only endorses the view that the photographic focus of the book was based on conscious exclusions. The exclusion of African culture from commemorative publications is not without exceptions. A book entitled *Our Free Methodist Missions in Africa to April 1907* includes many photographs of African cultural practices, but again, the photographs are dislocated both in the context of the written narrative and in terms of dating.

[9] See, for example, Geary (1991).

[10] Fogarty and White accompanied Tobias to Ovamboland to facilitate land negotiations with the Ovakuanjama and once the mission site had been secured, they returned to Windhoek (Wolfe 1935:28-30).

[11] The gradual colonisation of Ovamboland dates back to at least 1851, when the European explorers Francis Galton and Charles John Andersson made the first known survey of the region (Kokkonen 1993:157). The Finnish Missionary Society was the first mission group to establish itself in the region in 1870 (Shejavali

asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination[, and] conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (1993:69).

[3] This assessment of mission photographs is based on a survey of local archival collections and does not include any of the major collections in countries outside of South Africa (such as the London Mission Society collection at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, or the collection of German Trappist photographs at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Cambridge). Photographic material from the following South African archival collections was examined: Cape Archives (Cape Town), Cory Library (Rhodes University, Grahamstown), Department of Historical Papers (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg), Local History Museum (Durban), Killie Campbell Africana Library (University of Natal, Durban), MuseumAfrica (Johannesburg), Natal Archives Depot (Pietermaritzburg), and South African Library (Cape Town).

[4] The hand-held Kodak Camera, with its internal roll film, appeared on the market in 1888, and through the turn of the century, cameras became smaller, more refined and increasingly popular.

[5] The pervasive use of photography by mission groups in South Africa is reflected in the extent of archived photographic material from the following mission groups: American Board missions, Anglican missions, Baptist missions, Berlin Missionary Society, Dutch Reformed missions, Glasgow Missionary Society, London Missionary Society, Moravian missions, Paris Evangelical missions, Rhenish missions, Roman Catholic missions, Swiss Missionary Society, and Wesleyan missions. It should be noted, however, that the extent of the usage of photography varied amongst missions, as did the purpose for which the medium was invoked.

[6] There is often a reluctance, on the part of mission societies, to move outside the immediate sphere of the mission station. This reluctance to use the photographic medium as a tool to 'understand' African cultural practice, stands in contrast to a general willingness amongst such groups to 'understand' and formalise particular African languages. This emphasis supports Jenkins' speculation that missions "placed a higher value on words than pictures in the past" (1993:89). Where such photographic ventures have been undertaken, it has been more on the part of the individual, than as a result of a specific mission policy to make photographic records. While there was an emphasis on the need for ethnographic training amongst missionaries, little of this advice concerned the use of photographic material. The emphasis on an understanding of language, without necessarily having any knowledge of social and cultural practices, might account for the lack of photographic documentation of cultural practices - one does not need a camera to compile a Zulu dictionary.

For example, the 'fear' of the camera within colonial space is but one example of how consuming groups differently conceptualise the meaning of the photograph. For discussions of perceptions of the camera as an instrument of magico-spiritualism and/or death, see Jeffrey (1981:56-58, 64), Pinn (1992:219), Taylor (1992:189) and Warner (1995).

While these examples of criticality do not even attempt to meet Alan Sekula's firmly Marxist call for a "coherent oppositional politics" (1978:234) they nonetheless take cognisance of the mystification of the photographic image. See Edwards (1992), Geary (1986), Geary (1991a), Jenkins and Geary (1985), Levy (1990) and Webb (1992).

John Tagg (1988, 1992), for example, emphasises the manipulations that lie behind social use of and meaning generated by photographic practice, but does not carry that sense of criticality to his own use of photographs as 'evidence' of a particularly constructed social process.

Such an over-writing mirrors Walter Benjamin's suggestion that the photograph's 'real' (and revolutionary) potential is often realised through the addition of 'subversive' captions which rescue the image from "from the ravages of modishness" (1987:24-25).

[4] One reason for the 'disorder' within the 'mission photograph' genre might be that, unlike the clearly defined conventions for the visualisation of subjects of *anthropological* interest in, for example, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, mission organisations did not issue embarking missionaries with organised instruction on the use of the photographic medium. For an assessment of how William F.P. Burton managed the dual role of missionary and ethnographer, see Godby (1993).

[5] A stamp, used by the Natal Archive Depot in Pietermaritzburg to categorise mission photographs, includes space for the following categories of information: 'mission station', 'buildings and scenery' 'church community', 'mission work' and 'native life'. The stamp makes no provision for the name of the photographer underscoring the extent to which these photographs are often documented and collected for their face-value visual evidence. While most mission collections include at least some photographic material, the number of images in each of these four categories varies greatly according to the historical and geographical character of each mission. 'Church community' and 'native life' are two categories that are most often and strongly dichotomised, hence the focus on these subjects in this dissertation as part of an exploration of the contest of meaning in mission photographs.

[6] Mary-Louise Pratt defines 'contact zones' as 'social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly

In this sense a photographic 'narrative' is not dissimilar to the use of 'narrative' in a particular tradition of European paintings which "illustrate an incident from literature or history, genre scenes from everyday life, present or past, and those in which a story is implied" (Digiulio 1986:1). Photography presents a momentary vision which implies a wider sequence of events. Some authors are adamant about the non-narrative quality of the photograph. Lemagny, for example, suggests that "[a]lthough involved with issues of space, like the theatre and movies, photography is not an art of movement and of narrative as they are.[...]The incorrect way to look at a photograph is to imagine that it is telling a story" (1995:136). This view, taken to an extreme, completely subordinates photographs to the text and, as Abigail Solomon-Godeau points out, simply "guarantee[s] the truth" of the text (1991:xxiv).

Also important, in this regard, are the shifts that photographs undergo, moving between public/admissions and private/omissions, such as in cases where the informality of the private photograph often serves the public formality of mass-circulation and publication.

Attempts to separate photography and writing ignore the essentially 'read' character of the photograph - meaning is created through the text because one learns to recognise the textual substance of the letters 'F', 'A', 'C' and 'E', in the same way that one recognises the granular textual substance of the photographic image as a face. Where the text does eventually 'overtake' the photograph is when the volume of directed meaning is at stake.

Giselle Freund, for example cites a number of examples where the meaning of published photographs have been altered through the use of different captions (1982:162-173).

Tagg ascribes the power and prevalence of photography in society, firstly, to the ideological encoding and decoding of photographs and secondly, to the specific and controlled environment in which photographs are produced and consumed (1988:188).

Tagg's analysis emphasises the 'privileged' status of the photograph over its indexical status, the function of the photograph over its representational quality (1988:189). As within a monetary system, where different currencies have different values, so within photographic practice photographs generate different values and have different statuses. It is this 'currency of the photograph' its varying ideological and material 'value' in particular social practices that is important (Tagg 1988:122). That there are different photographic currencies implies that there are different photographic histories.

As John Tagg points out, "[t]he very idea of what constitutes evidence has a history[...]which implies[...]relations of power" (1988:4-5).

[2] This position is probably best exemplified in an often quoted passage from Susan Sontag's *On Photography*, where she states that "[t]o photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed" (1977:14).

[3] In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes articulates one form of these differences and peculiarities as 'punctum', as those parts of a photograph that disturb the surface of the image and its attendant meaning: "[a] photograph's *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)" (1981:27).

[4] This distinction is, as De Certeau suggests, an attempt to "gauge the difference or similarity between the production of the image and the secondary production hidden in the process of its utilisation" (1984:xiii).

[5] In his analysis of the city space, de Certeau points to certain tactical invisibilities: "Beneath the discourses that ideologise the city the ruses and combinations of power that have no readable identity proliferate, without points where one can take hold of them, without rational transparency, they are impossible to administer" (1984:95).

[6] De Certeau's use of the terminology of warfare mirrors, somewhat less forcefully, Susan Sontag's critique of tourist photographs, the act of which "help[s] people to take possession of space in which they are insecure.[...]The very activity of taking pictures is soothing, and assuages general feelings of disorientation that are likely to be exacerbated by travel" (1977:9-10).

[7] The photograph is a tactic that reorientates and deflects existing visions of space. Importantly, 'tactic' implies weakness and otherness (de Certeau 1984:37), and it is as such that photographic practice must be constituted as much as it is seen as a tool of controlled, pervasive power.

[8] Massey's essay, a response to Ernesto Laclau's *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1990), focuses on the temporal quality of space. Ernesto Laclau denies space a political dimension by distinguishing between time as political, as concerned with dislocation, freedom and possibility, and space as ideological, as concerned with closure, stasis and determination (Laclau 1990:42-43, 68, 82). By overriding dislocation, space denies the freedom that is conducive to politics.

[9] De Certeau's notion of 'space' is thus an equivalent of Lefebvre's 'representational space', in that the latter is concerned with "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols" (Lefebvre 1991:39).

[iii] This approach is adopted by Elizabeth Edwards in *Anthropology and Photography*, where she defines an 'anthropological' photograph as:

> any photograph from which an anthropologist could gain useful, meaningful visual information. The defining essence of an anthropological photograph is not the subject-matter as such, but the consumer's classification of that knowledge or 'reality' which the photograph appears to convey. Material can move in and out of the anthropological sphere (1992:13).

[iv] The contested nature of space theory is acknowledged by authors such as Lefebvre (1991:3) and Massey (1992:66).

[v] A notable art historical exception is David Summers' 1991 essay 'Real Metaphor: Towards a Redefinition of the "Conceptual" Image', which attempts to account for differences between 'perceptual' and 'conceptual' spaces in art.

[vi] Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* was originally published in French in 1974.

[vii] This shift of emphasis from product to production is meant to expose the role of mental, physical and social spaces in the joint establishment of various epistemes (Lefebvre 1991:11). Lefebvre drops physical space as a focus of major attention in his book, and instead concentrates on the dialectic between mental ('ideal') and social ('real') spaces as *constructions*, each of which "involves, underpins and presupposes the other" (Lefebvre 1991:14).

[viii] A similar spatial argument is followed by W.J.T. Mitchell in *Landscape and Power*, where he argues for a notion of landscape *painting* not as the uniquely central medium that gives us access to ways of seeing landscape, but as a representation of something that is already a representation in its own right.[...]landscape is already artifice in the moment of its beholding, long before it becomes the subject of pictorial representation" (1994:14). As such landscape (more generally) is understood "not as an object to be seen or a text to be read, but as a process by which social and subjective identities are formed.[...]as a medium of cultural expression, not a genre of painting or fine art" (Mitchell 1994:1, 14).

[ix] In *Poetics of Space*, John Bowlt, for example, focuses on issues such as viewpoint (1995:45), Rudolf Arnheim locates the [illegible]ographic exploration of space in the formal language of distance, gradient, contrast, visual counterpoint and the compression of depth (1995:9-13), and Leo Steinberg is preoccupied with transformed picture planes (1995:196).

[x] Lefebvre's rejection [illegible] representations of space not only presupposes a more real and true understanding of space (a downfall alluded to earlier), but it also undervalues the visual image as the articulation of an understanding of space.

somewhat naive in grasp of processes of acculturation when he states "In comparatively few areas have missionaries deliberately tried to westernise their converts; but converts are imitative, and have always been inclined to make the same mistakes as their western friend, imagining that things which are merely western trappings ought to be accepted by the new Christian as evidence of the sincerity of his faith" (1966:416). Contrast Neill's view with, for example, E.A. Ayandele writing on the relationship between missions and secularisation:

> Convinced that they were superior to Africans in science and technology, in government and jurisprudence, in the display of humanity and the practice of virtue, in the improvement of the quality and nobleness of man, and in the material prosperity of society, an achievement at their time attributed to Christianity, the missionaries were intent on loving Africans as they loved themselves, truly desiring to see Africans inherit the kingdom of God which they themselves hoped to inherit through the instrumentality of Christianity (Ayandele 1979:256).

An example of the contradictions in missionary practice is the general reluctance of the Roman Catholic Church to ordain Africans into the priesthood, right up to the 1950s (Neill 1966:291-92), as opposed to American Board missions which actively encouraged a local African ministry. Also, Strayer adds the fact that missionaries were sometimes ambivalent with regard to Western culture - espousing the pure virtues of rural African village life (as opposed to urbanisation and industrialisation), but denouncing the 'heathenism' of African custom and belief (in favour of Christian ethics and education) (1976:12).

[2] The relevant chapter in Beidelman's *Colonial Evangelism* originally appeared as an article in the journal, *Africa*, in 1974. Wyllie is responding to this original version.

[3] Beidelman himself, for example, while arguing for a nuanced approach to missions, is nonetheless adamant about missions being part of a colonial structure: "[t]he study of missions reveals that Europeans responded to alien cultures in ways which were callously ethnocentric and mindlessly romantic, at times poignantly altruistic and confusedly well-meaning" (1982:6).

[4] This last-mentioned factor is not as ubiquitous as Gray suggests - the Anglican effort in Ovamboland, for example, only gained momentum after the former South West Africa was wrested from German control.

[5] While the photographer's name is unknown, the inclusion of etched initials in the bottom corner of the image, the high quality finish of the print and the very organised composition all suggest that this is a professionally-made photograph.

Endnotes

[1] Mary-Louise Pratt's notion of the 'contact zone', characterised by "highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (1992:4), is weighted in favour of the coloniser because of its particular reading and privileging of Western discourses. Not only do Western discourses of colonialism (here I am making a specific appeal with regard to photography) need to be read differently, but their power also need to be seen as the privileging of writing and photographing over, for example, physical resistance.

[2] Fabian cites the running of trade schools and the implementation of the colonial administration's demand for language conformity as some examples of mission complicity in the colonial enterprise (1983:169-181).

[3] Fabian both acknowledges the existence of mission versus political administration conflicts (1991:163), suggesting that the triad's shared ideology was not so much a conscious programme but rather the result of "deep convictions held by our Western culture which served as points of articulation between mundane and religious projects" (1991:169).

[4] Strayer suggests that "the character of the changes associated with the missionary intrusion did not always prove as politically and socially disruptive nor as psychologically traumatic, as common images of the 'lonely Africa' might indicate" (1976:12). This division between Christian and non-Christian is, however, strongly reinforced in mission photographs. It is obviously difficult to limit, as Strayer seems to do, these phases of African mission historiography to particular times and spaces. Each of these perspectives has maintained currency outside of the spatio-temporal limits set by Strayer.

[5] Neill ventures to suggest that "missions would not have been dangerous[...]if they had not come in the closest alliance with the physical power of the conquering nations" (1966:12). On the topic of Portugal introducing crops to Africa, Neill comments that "one cannot but wonder how any African managed to live at all before these life-giving products were introduced (1966:12). Neill is also at pains to point out that 'the primary concern of almost all missionaries was the well-being of the people whom they had come to serve" (1966:413).

[6] Administrators promised a new life-style and material comforts, which could be achieved through a formal education, a professional job in an urban colonial environment, the speaking of a European language and the playing of cricket or tennis (Ayandele 1979:263).

[7] Neill is pragmatic in his understanding of Christianity as "a natural and inevitable accompaniment of the expansion of the West" (1966:413), but is

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Association, the Pathfinders became a parallel, self-governing organisation in 1936 (AD843/RJ/Pp1.5.2.3). The girls' equivalent, the Girl Wayfarers Association, was founded in 1925 (A349/C43/10).

[5] This distinction is made by A. Rouille and B. Marbot in *Le Corps et Son Image: Photographies du Dix-Neuvieme Siecle* (1986), and cited by Prochaska (1991).

[6] While this process might work in certain instances, it does become more difficult to uphold when white missionaries sit amongst black converts, or when the anonymous converts suddenly become named. In the case of the former, there seems to be no set pattern with regard to the integration of missionary and convert within the same image. And with regard to the latter, the fixity of the distinction becomes exposed when the postcard moves back to the local level, into the archive of particular missionaries or mission stations, as it is here that the objectified bodies in the postcards are transformed into subjects through the hand-written inscriptions of individual names on the reverse of the postcards.

[7] In making this distinction, I must acknowledge the limitations of looking at 'unused' postcards, and the extent to which their use in a practical context can change interpretations and meanings. James Clifford emphasises the importance of the context in which postcards are made available to the public. The recognition of an individual personality by one audience, might be distinct from "the exoticism and pathos registered by an audience of strangers" (1991:232). It is too much of a generalisation to implicate a captionless postcard with anonymity and a captioned postcard with personal identity. The uncaptioned photograph can be just as meaningful to someone who recognises the subject of the photograph, as the name in a caption is meaningless to a person unfamiliar with the person's identity.

[8] According to Du Plessis' statistics in *A History of Church Missions in South Africa* (1911), the CPSA was third highest amongst mission groups in its number of stations and out-stations, and second only to the Wesleyan Missionary Society in terms of numbers of communicants, baptised and adherents (1911:464).

[v] Althusser's notion of ideology, quite problematically, establishes the State as a powerful, monolithic force, against which there is little space for individual intervention (Cormack 1992:11-12; Eagleton 1991:21). It is reductionist not only in its preoccupation with the unified and co-ordinated operation of the state (at the expense of more individualised and competing institutional structures), but also in its use of essentialist notions of class identity (Tagg 1988:24-7). It does, however, provide a framework for understanding the systematic reproduction of power at different social levels.

[vi] Missionary 'Utopia', here, is a Christianised Africa, more than a classless Africa.

[vii] While postcards can be re-scribed by those who mark and send them, the textual annotations are mostly just inscriptions that affirm the visual identities, making this practice a powerful tool in the 'naturalisation' of 'converts' and the process of 'conversion'.

[viii] The postcard was like a 'specimen' in a collection - where the ethnographer collected samples, the visitor collected postcards. In both instances, an identity is proposed through collected representation.

[ix] Comaroff and Comaroff (1991) point to 'backsliding' and excommunication as instances that invalidate 'conversion' as a credible index of spiritual commitment: "the significance of conversion to Africans themselves cannot be assumed to conform to European preconceptions" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:250).

[x] While Barthes' notions of myth, like Marxist notions of 'false consciousness', quite problematically imply an alternative, 'true' reality that is known only to an elitist minority, it nonetheless provides an important tool for an understanding of the generation and perpetuation of meaning in colonial space.

[xi] In *Mythologies*, Barthes makes few direct links between 'ideology' and 'myth' (although his footnoting alludes to the influence of Marx and Engels' *The German Ideology*), but he does make at least one didactic connection: 'ideology' is the implication of myth in general history and everyday practice (1993:128).

[xii] In 1902, Kodak began printing the word 'POST CARD' on the back of printing paper in order to make the postcard genre more accessible to anyone with a camera (Ruby 1988:339), and it is possible that the simple combination of the word 'Agfa' and a series of dividing lines for a message and address could in fact be of a similar kind to that used by Kodak.

[xiii] The first troop of the Pathfinder Movement, established for African and 'coloured' boys, was formed at Grace Dieu Diocesan Training College, Pietersburg, in 1922 (AD643/RJ/Pp1.5.2.3). Initially a branch of the South African Boy Scouts

Prochaska, quite simplistically distinguishes between the commercial value of postcard photographs and the sentimental value of private photographs (1991:40). The production of CPSA mission postcards, however, was not driven by commercial ends, but by the necessities of projecting a particular mission identity. While most of the mission postcards seem to have been produced by missionaries, the re-production of the loose photographs as postcards seems to have been undertaken by commercial firms.

That the postcard view is "a highly conventionalised and stereotypical pictorial genre" (Geary 1991b:49) probably accounts for the favour given to postcards by scholars using photographs as historical evidence (Geary 1991a:38). The uniformity of style in mission postcards, most notably in group portraits of 'converts', can be attributed to at least two factors. Firstly, postcards in general sustain social rather than artistic identities (Ruby 1988:340). Mission postcards were more concerned with the presentation of a properly constituted mission identity than with the individual capabilities of the photographer. And secondly, postcard producers attempted to present a consistent commercial identity, so that even within a range of views on a particular subject, a certain visual approach is apparent.

The idea that 'ideology' does not have a single, acceptable definition, but rather has a range of sometimes incompatible definition, has been highlighted by various authors, including Eagleton (1991:1) and McLellan (1986:1). Althusser and Barthes are, however, both resolute in their insistence on a revolutionary potential for ideology. In terms of mythologies, Barthes insists that there is

> one language which is not mythical, it is the language of man as a producer: wherever man speaks in order to transform reality and no longer to preserve it as an image, wherever he links his language to the making of things, metalanguage is referred to a language-object, and myth is impossible. This is why revolutionary language proper cannot be mythical (1993:146).

Similarly, Althusser, suggests that

> the proletariat must seize State power in order to destroy the existing bourgeois State apparatus and, in a first phase, replace it with a quite different, proletarian, State apparatus, then in later phases set in motion a radical process, that of the destruction of the State (the end of State power, the end of every State apparatus) (Althusser 1993:15).

This position mirrors the 'vulgar', but often quoted extract from Marx and Engels' *The German Ideology*: "The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control, at the same time, over the means of mental production, so that, thereby generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it" (1970:64).

These include: tilted horizons, unconventional cropping which cuts out parts of objects, unusual framing effects in which the intended object of focus is unintentionally made peripheral, blurring, the 'invasion' of the photographer's shadow into the picture frame, the banality of the subject matter, and an ambiguity which obscures overt meaning and invites speculation (1986:49-60).

In terms of the authorship of snapshot photographs, definitions mostly agree that the snapshot is the work of casual amateurs with "no particular interest in[...]acquiring skilled photographic techniques" (Coe and Gates 1977:9; also Baldwin 1991:76; Green 1974:3). Paul Strand, however, suggests that the snapshot can be the work of a professional photographer (1974:49). This allowance, though, is based on the presupposition that the snapshots of such photographers are at least similar in production and content to the work of amateurs.

While the strength of Barthes' argument lies in his separation of the photograph from the text as different kinds of messages, its weakness lies in his characterisation of photographic and textual messages as 'uncoded' and 'coded' respectively. The photograph, even as mechanical process, is always coded.

Generally, written and film narratives are not as easily 'colonised' as individual photographic sequences because they are not as fragmented or nodal as the photographic image. Thus, the photograph is not able to transgress its nodality in the same way that is possible in the written, oral or film narratives.

Barthes distinguishes between Photography and the photograph by suggesting that the former is "that thing which is seen by anyone looking at a photograph and which distinguishes it in his eyes from any other image" (1981:60).

Osmund Victor stresses the joint role of religion and agriculture in a 'victory' over certain aspects of 'heathenism': "The two go hand in hand. With the Bible came the plough, and the Bible and the plough between them have knocked the bottom out of polygamy" (1948:123).

Rather than being a 'slice of life', which implies a unique but everyday experience, the photograph, as here taken as a 'privileged moment' as it implies an emphasis on a conscious choice.

This chapter is based on an assessment of the few eastern Cape postcards that form part of the CPSA collection. There is nothing to indicate that postcard production was a common practice amongst eastern Cape CPSA missions. Postcard production at Grace Dieu Diocesan Training College, however, was quite prolific. The decision to focus on the eastern Cape postcards is based on a wish to explore these images in the context of what was once a contested frontier zone and, at the time of the production of the postcards, was a space in which African cultural practice persisted in close proximity to (and in spite of) Christianisation.

[10] Julia Hirsch, in her book *Family Photographs* (1981), makes a distinction between 'formal' and 'candid' photographs: formal family photographs reflect the "character" of a family that appears to be "united, stable, and dignified", while candid family photographs capture the "personality" of accidental displays and chance impulses (1981:81-82). For Hirsch, that "which destroy[s] the decorum of the formal portrait give[s] energy to the candid one" (1981:82), leading her to the problematic conclusion that the candid photograph has "like a signed confession or an hour of psychoanalysis[...]laid bare some critical truth to which we can assent" (1981:106).

[11] The distinction between formal and candid photographs is partly determined by the relationship between photographer and photographed. The consciousness of the photographer is heightened in the careful organisation of the camera space, and similarly, consciousness of the photographed is heightened through an awareness of the camera's gaze. The heightened consciousness of the photographed undermines the representational power of the photographer, allowing the sitter to conceal emotions and deny intimacy. In this sense, the photographer-photographed relationship, specifically the relative formality and candidness of the photographs is *negotiated* (albeit on a somewhat biased playing field).

[12] The missionaries were in the enviable position of being providers of 'western' clothing, a source of much status amongst the Ovambo people. In his report for the year 1928, Tobias petitions parishioners to supply each pupil teacher with three khaki outfits per year since, according to him, clothing would "encourage" teachers to stay, "keep them contented" and thus dissuade them from leaving for the mines: "They see young men who go to work on the mines returning with neat new clothing, while they themselves are more or less in rags" (AB851:Ha5). Tobias made this plea after two pupil teachers had already left for the mines in 1928.

[13] The tone in Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* (1981) is more emotive and sentimental than the clinical structuralism in *Image-Music-Text*. The value of *Camera Lucida*, as photographic theory, lies not so much in Barthes' extensive (and repetitive) deliberations upon the personal meanings of individual photographs, but rather in a number of important assertion he makes about the social impact of photography, assertions that are mostly antithetical to his earlier positions in *Image-Music-Text*. The principle difference between the two books is that, where *Image-Music-Text* positioned the photograph as a weak structural element overridden by textual interventions, *Camera Lucida* displays a new-found respect for the autonomy, influence and power of the photographic image as a holder of memories and ingitor of nostalgia.

[14] Early snapshot photography was primarily seen as an activity of leisure (Coe and Gates 1977:15), a notion that seems out of place in relation to the context of the production of photographs produced for Crosby's scrapbook.

[1] The development of a lightweight hand held camera at the end of the nineteenth century made the transportation of photographic equipment, as well as the taking of instant images, much easier than in the mid-nineteenth century.

[2] The formality of St Cuthbert's mission photography is most characteristically reflected in the postcard photographs that emanate from the mission, a subject that is the focus of the next chapter of this dissertation.

[3] See Chapter 2 for a more detailed exploration of Michel de Certeau's distinction between 'space' and 'place'.

[4] Narrative here denotes the "devices, strategies and conventions governing the organisation of a story (fictional or factual) into a sequence" (O'Sullivan *et al* 1983:149).

[5] Crosby notes that the wells were prone to caving in during the rainy season (AB206:8), and that the bricks, because of their high lime content, were quite fragile (AB206:10).

[6] Crosby wrote and published articles on 'tractor trials' (beg[illegible]n January 1926), a series of tests with different tractors and trailers to determine the best source of power to transport goods over rough terrain from St. Mary's to Ondangua and Tsumeb. The 'resolution' of the transport problem is articulated at the end of Crosby's scrapbook:

> Arrival at St. Mary's Mission 1927 after a successful haul of 220 miles [354km] in excellent running time.[...]transport by means of caterpillars in the sand [illegible] is as easy as riding down the main street [of] Johan[illegible]sburg on a bicycle (AB206:225,237).

[7] This quote appears in a newspaper article written by Crosby - 'Motortransport [*sic*] in Ovamboland' - that appeared in *The Cape Argus*, 2 April 1927, and is pasted in his scrapbook (AB206:170). It is most likely that this view reflects Crosby's individual background in mining rather than Church policy towards local populations.

[8] Crosby's unwavering self-involvement is not quite so apparent in Wolfe's Ovamboland - the latter at least takes cognisance of the region as an 'inhabited' space. In a discourse that is primarily concerned with mission history, Wolfe is generous in her written descriptions of 'traditional' housing, clothing, farming and ritual practices. While Wolfe is eager in her descriptions, her deductions are simplistic to say the least, ascribing the non-musical nature of the Ovambolanders, for example, "to the flat country in which they live and the lack of the sounds of running water and singing birds" (1935:34).

1970:24). While Germany had established a fully-fledged colony in the south-western region of the African sub continent by 1889, they never managed to assert direct administrative control over the Ovamboland region, and it was only in the 1920s that the South African government finally brought the region under full colonial rule (Kokkonen 1993:158).

Wolfe, more pessimistically, locates this 'desire' in the context of political expediency:

> The natives had agreed cheerfully to the coming of the Mission chiefly because they understood that the Government was now English (as opposed to German), and they considered it quite natural that the English would send their own Mission to teach them to worship God in their own particular way (1935:30).

Crosby's scrapbook, which also includes newspaper articles and brochures on the mission station's activities, is housed in the Department of Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand (AB206). While the scrapbook is attributed to Crosby, this cannot be said of all the photographs. Many of the images include Crosby as subject, and there are visual and written references which suggest that at least Reverend Tobias and Miss Fox (a medical sister) were also taking photographs at the mission station. A blurred photograph of Tobias in the act of taking a photograph (AB206:115) and a loose photograph with a written attribution to Miss Fox on the reverse of the image (AB206:27) are but two examples of differing photographic authorship in the scrapbook.

Wolfe's book is one of the few published works dealing with the Ovamboland mission. Her book describes the geography and people of the region, the establishment and development of the mission, her own arrival and medical work at the mission, and the development of satellite mission stations. It includes eight photographs, the majority of which are taken from within the confines of St. Mary's mission station and pertain to aspects of mission activity.

A number of 'landscape' photographs, for the purposes of this analysis, are included as part of 'transportation', since they were taken to illustrate the geographical difficulties facing the development of transport routes between the mission station and centres of trade.

In CPSA photographs from Ovamboland, the predominant focus on buildings might have to do with the reterritorialisation not of a 'native' space (as is the customary application of the term), but of a space once occupied by German Rhenish missionaries (who left after South Africa took over the South West Africa mandate) and still occupied by Finnish missionaries (who initially objected to the presence of the CPSA missionaries).

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