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Jansen, Candice

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Coloured Black

The Life & Works of South African Photographers: Ernest Cole & Cedric Nunn

Candice Jansen

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Supervisors:

Professor Sarah Nuttall;

Professor Pamila Gupta and;

Dr. Rory Bester

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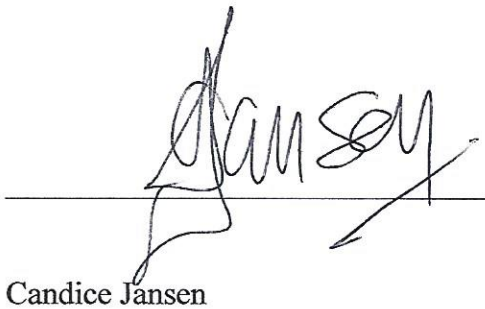
Abstract

This thesis reads the life and works of South African photographers, Ernest Cole (1940-1990) and Cedric Nunn (1957-). Both photographers are differently classified 'coloured': Ernest Cole was born Ernest Kole and had himself racially reassigned and Cedric Nunn is a fourth generation descendant of John Dunn, the White Zulu Chief who married forty-nine Zulu wives. Both photographers self-identified as Black during the apartheid period as visual activists. Cole produced the *House of Bondage* (1967) and Nunn was a founding member of Afrapix, the anti-apartheid photography collective influenced by Cole. *Coloured Black* suggests that Cole and Nunn deployed coloured as photographic practice in order to visualise racial critique. Apartheid is the ground upon which a genealogical method reads the politics of family in Nunn and Cole's social documentary. Nunn's family photography use his blood relations or 'coloured family' of Mangete, KwaZulu-Natal to domesticate racism and racial life. Cole photographed domestic workers in suburban Johannesburg during the 1960s, a time in South Africa during which apartheid was at its most visibly domesticated. Black freedom was then hiding in plain sight. The visual life of the family in apartheid terms is worked through Cole's contact sheets. Apartheid is visualised in Nunn's family photographs that remember the tension between the biographical and the genealogical within Black South African identity. The photographic medium will be examined as a means of exposing Black intramural surfaces, specifically the critically overlooked relation of difficulty within Black community between 'the coloured' and 'the bantu'. *Coloured Black* narrates the vulnerabilities bound up in Nunn and Cole's lives in both personal and archival terms. coloured is viewed through the lens of the photographic archives. How can 'coloured identities' be understood in Black terms? What can be made of struggles for appearance?

Coloured Black revisits the terms of race and photographic history in the afterlife of apartheid.

Declaration:

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It is submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Art History at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree, or examination at any other university.



Candice Jansen

On the 10th day of February 2020.

Vir Mammie en Deddie

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Coloured Black

The Life & Works of South African Photographers, Ernest Cole & Cedric Nunn

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"You're not Black, you're just like them, like the whites in the 70's and 80's who exploited us!" [Omar Badsha]

"You're not Black either." [Okwui Enwezor][1]

[1] This is a reported exchange between South African photographer, Omar Badsha and Nigerian curator, Okwui Enwezor at the Johannesburg opening of the landmark exhibition curated by Rory Bester and Enwezor, 'The Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life' in 2014. This exchange was reported in an article written about the events at the opening. Mathew Partridge, "Weird Scenes Inside the 'Rise and Fall of Apartheid'", The Daily Maverick, 12th February 2014, https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2014-02-12-weird-scenes-inside-the-rise-and-fall-of-apartheid/

Coloured Black begins with a scandalous and public exchange between two important figures in the history of South African photography. Badsha (1945-) is one of the country's key visual activists who served the domestic anti-apartheid struggle as a photographer and a trade unionist, who after apartheid, founded the indispensable, South African History Online. Enwezor (1963-2019) was a giant of the curatorial world, who helped put South African photography, along with African art on the map of the global contemporary art scene through a series of influential exhibitions and catalogue collections[2]. Enwezor and Badsha's exchange illuminates the difficulty of what Hortense Spillers' calls, "the intramural" or relations within communities. Enwezor and Badsha's exchange points to difficulties within their shared professional community as creative practitioners, and it also points to the difficulties within their shared space as Africans, which collapse upon a contested claim to Blackness. Badsha is an Indian-South African and of the Black consciousness generation in South Africa, who understands Blackness as a political identity. Enwezor calling him "not Black either" draws upon a biological conception of Blackness as an Igbo-Nigerian, who came of age in the diaspora outside of Africa. Enwezor and Badsha's words were spoken at one another like knives, in the heat of a moment in which truth was meant to hurt, bearing one another's vulnerabilities as Africans, and writing on the wall, the difficulties of the Black intramural with which *Coloured Black* wrestles.

The intramural is not essentially about race. Communities are constituted by multiple differences be they class, geography, gender, sexuality or age. The intramural is a notion that

[2] See Enwezor, Okwui., and International Center of Photography. Snap Judgments : New Positions in Contemporary African Photography. 1st ed. Göttingen: Steidl, 2006; Enwezor, Achebe, Enwezor, Okwui, and Achebe, Chinua. The Short Century : Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994. Munich ; New York: Prestel, 2001; Enwezor, Richards, Enwezor, Okwui, Richards, Colin, and Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council. Trade Routes : History and Geography : 2nd Johannesburg Biennale 1997. Johannesburg: Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, 1997.

can pay attention to many kinds of interiors, but Spillers deploys it within a discourse of Black life in psychoanalytic terms, which she imagines the concept as a manner in which to address "interior intersubjectivity"[3]. In a 1998 interview with Tim Haslett, Spillers reflects on the intramural as an under considered (and avoided) world of Black study, which she argued then seemed preoccupied with "a perceived mainstream or dominant force". *Coloured Black* would contend that the complex Black intramural within the South African context similarly remains insufficiently unarticulated. In particular, the intramural difficulty between 'the coloured' and 'the '"bantu"'. Turning inward to this Black interiority can be riddled with danger, chiefly the danger of being misread. Pointing out '"bantu"'-coloured apartheid and dialectically making coloured-'"bantu"' contact can also perform a double gesture of violence that cuts into the wound of natal alienation and political betrayal for which there is no balm, only the hurt of a severing that lives on in the names of race with which Black peoples in South Africa remain divided. Thus, before explaining the terminology for its racialised subjects, the intermural within photographic discourse is brought into the foreground along with an introduction to the two photographers who personify, materialize, expose, and contend with arguments raised by *Coloured Black*.

What does it mean to read the Black intermural as a 'photography complex'[4]? As not photographic evidence but a photographic complex of exposure that may be neither visible,

[3] Hortense Spillers Interviewed By Tim Haslett For The Black Cultural Studies Web Site Collective In Ithaca, NY February 4, 1998.

[4] Historian James Hevia reminds us that photographic discourse tends to "focus attention on the effects of photography–the end product, the outcome–rather than on the techno-material process of photographic production and reproduction". To Hevia, photography is a complex, not simply an event, a printed image and its circulation, a mere function of a camera, or a photographer's genius. "In terms suggested by Latour", Hevia writes, "we might therefore see the photography complex as a network of actants made of human and non-human parts". When seen in this way, he argues "photography seems to be more like a heading under which a range of agencies, animate and inanimate, visible and invisible are clustered". Hevia maintains that "The photograph is thus neither a reflection nor representation of the real, but a kind of metonymic sign of the photography complex in operation". Cited from Hevia, J. 2009. "The Photography Complex: Exposing Boxer-Era China

nor recognised? What becomes of the nature of the photographic appearance of Black 'coloured classified' politics of vision? How does photography then serve and unsettle racial critique? Reading for the intramural, struggles to appear in South African photographic historical discourse, which can overlook 'coloured racialisation' as either subject or form. *Coloured Black* rests upon this absence. It surfaces black life through critical practices of photographic historicizing. It moves beyond a discursive art positioning of documentary photography after apartheid and refigures archival attachments. Photography as a time based medium, enacts the past as an ongoing present, which is how *Coloured Black* contributes to expanding the catalogue of historic Black photographers. Photographers who may not have fully entered into the art world after apartheid[5] as both subjects of study and unheard voices[6].

Blackness is by no means uncharted territory for South African art history. Enwezor and Oguibe's *Reading The Contemporary: African Art From Theory To The Marketplace* (1999) is a critical anthology that laid important groundwork with essays such as David Koloane's 'The Identity Question. In it he writes, "the argument for 'identity' in the work of Black artists, is only a smokescreen for an essentially racist questioning of their abilities, very much like the argument for the 'protection' of 'Otherness' or separate cultures that lies at the heart

(1900-1901), Making Civilization" in *Photographies East: The Camera and Its Histories in East and Southeast Asia*, edited by R. Morris, Durham, NC: Duke University Press (80).

[5] These Black photographers and lens-based visual artists include Santu Mofokeng; Omar Badsha; Zwelethu Mthetwa; Bernie Searle; Zanele Muholi (Van Der Walt Ehlers, Martine. "Zanele Muholi Colloquium, 24 March 2014 : Conference Report." 24 (2014): 162-65.), including Thabiso Sekgala and Sabelo Mlangeni, including Andrew Tshabangu.

[6] See for instance Krantz, David L. "Politics and Photography in Apartheid South Africa." History of Photography 32, no. 4 (2008): 290-300. He discusses "struggle photography", the vernacular term ascribed to politically-aligned image-making practices, exemplified by the anti-apartheid collective, Afrapix. Krantz in part defines it as, "The reality captured by the photograph is from the vantage point of the subjugated person" yet does not cite one Black photographer (although he does use one image by Omar Badsha). Instead Krantz relies on the voices of David Goldblatt, Paul Weinberg, Guy Tillim and the former constitutional judge, Albie Sachs to make an argument that "Afrapix's legacy is multiple".
See also Wiesner, André. "Rediscovering the (Extra)Ordinary." Javnost - The Public 14, no. 3 (2007): 7-29.

of Apartheid"[7]. Enwezor's 'Reframing the Black Subject: Ideology and Fantasy in Contemporary South African Representation' addresses the "often elusive sense of Black complexity in racialized discourse"[8] caught "between authenticity and stereotype"[9]. Enwezor and Koloane made critical interventions at the time that makes possible *Coloured Black's* critique of race through intramural relations of apartheid identities.

The Black intramural can also disrupt matters of genre in photographic study. Patricia Hayes[10] understands photography as visual and public history, not through art discourse. In 'The Uneven Citizenry of Photography: Reading the "Political Ontology" of Photography from Southern Africa' (2015), Hayes draws on Ariella Azoulay's deployment of photographs to argue:

> "the prospects of shifting the discussion from the confines of the art disciplines are potentially very liberating. Specifically, debates on South African photography have been very deeply affected by a move away from "documentary" as part of a transition away from the apartheid and anti-apartheid movements"[11].

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[7] Oguibe, Enwezor, Oguibe, Olu, and Enwezor, Okwui. Reading the Contemporary: African Art from Theory to the Marketplace. 1st MIT Press ed. London: Cambridge, Mass.: Institute of International Visual Arts; MIT Press, 1999 (333).
[8] Ibid (390).
[9] Ibid (398).
[10] Hayes, Patricia. "The Form of the Norm: Shades of Gender in South African Photography of the 1980s." Social Dynamics 37, no. 2 (2011): 263-77.
Hayes, Patricia. "Seeing and Being Seen: Politics, Art and the Everyday in Omar Badsha's Durban Photography, 1960s-1980s." Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute 81, no. 4 (2011): 544-66.
Hayes, Patricia. "Photographic Publics and Photographic Desires in 1980s South Africa." Photographies 10, no. 3 (2017): 303-27.
Hayes, Patricia. "Santu Mofokeng, Photographs: "The Violence Is In The Knowing"." History and Theory 48, no. 4 (2009): 34-51.
[11] Hayes, Patricia. "The Uneven Citizenry of Photography: Reading the "political Ontology" of Photography from Southern Africa." Cultural Critique 89 (2015): 174.
Hayes making this point in 'Power, Secrecy and Proximity: A Short History of South African Photography', where she argues: "[t]here is the history of photography but there is also the photography of history. I think that this is where 'documentary' has been underestimated. For the history it produces has immeasurable influences, and inter-ocular effects that enter the art world, among other things. As South African photography now enters the art galleries in a serious way, we should remember it is not the first or the last presence of photography" (151)

Hayes' misgivings about the move away from 'documentary' arise from her belief in this genre's temporal and political implications for how photography from the apartheid era can be read in the contemporary. She argues,

> "Part of the problem is the ongoing belief and investment in the very notion of genre, and the need for artists and art historians to define new work against what is often a straw man constructed out of reductive examples of anti-apartheid photojournalism as "documentary" (Garb; Van Robbroeck). In South Africa this has produced a gulf between "then and now" that has left a massive imprint on ongoing aesthetic and political dynamics, and often creates the impression that politics was something in the anti-apartheid then, and a more aesthetic regime is of the post-apartheid now."[12]

Hayes' point about genre is a critical one that echoes Abigail Solomon-Godeau's idea of 'genre-fication', which she cautions against as it:

> "inelegantly refers to those processes providing the institutionally necessary illusion that photography can be "disciplined" …. And while the use of categories is necessary to organize a given field, genre-fication and museo-fiction function generally, then as now, to produce questionable art histories of photography provided with requisite ancestries, pedigrees, and (needless to say) canonized masters"[13].

Coloured Black therefore could be understood as an un-disciplined deployment of photographic discourse, rather than as a disciplined exegesis of photographers, Ernest Kole and Cedric Nunn as 'documentary photographers'[14]. The analysis of coloured-'"bantu"' difficulties exceed the parameters of both photographers' works and the speculative and

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[12] Ibid. Hayes does not reference art historian, Michael Godby, who I would include in this mode of photographic scholarship. See Godby, M. "After Apartheid - 10 South African Documentary Photographers." African Arts. 37, no. 4 (2004): 36-41. Godby, Michael. "Thinking South African Photography." Safundi 15, no. 2-3 (2014): 149-54. 'Then and Now' by Michael Godby in, Godby, Weinberg, Paul, and Albany Museum. Then & Now: Eight South African Photographers. Johannesburg: Highveld Press, 2007.

[13] Solomon-Godeau, and Parsons, Sarah. Photography after Photography: Gender, Genre, History. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017 (2).

[14]See the Special Issue on South African Documentary Photography and Wylie, Diana. "Introduction." *Kronos*, no. 38 (2012): 9-21. http://www.jstor.org.turing.library.northwestern.edu/stable/41940659 who also discusses the 'blurriness' of photography and the categories of photojournalism, documentary, and art.

biographical untethering of these exposures in one sense, "dispenses with the documentary", to use the words of photographic historian, Drew Thompson. Thompson raises disciplinary concerns about Tina Campt's speculative approach in a review of *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (2012)[15], which is important to *Coloured Black*'s methodology. He claims that for "scholars based in sub-Saharan Africa, 'the speculative' proved unsatisfying in trying to understand the specificities of colonialism and liberation in Southern Africa under apartheid and in unpacking photographs' roles as historical actors"[16]. Thompson acknowledges, "*Image Matters* is undoubtedly controversial for a visual historian", asking "to what disciplinary criteria can we hold Campt, who herself trained as an historian?". He argues,

> "[t]he disciplinary critique associated with history can be useful not only in thinking about the ways in which meanings of photographs change over time, but also in examining the particular circumstances in which these meanings and attributes of photographs either disclose or conceal themselves over time through varying usages. In essence, how does one historicise the 'affect' of photographs?"[17]

Thompson's questions are important because *Coloured Black* is not a photographic history nor is it a history of photographs, but rather it is invested in understanding the particularities of Black intermural life under conditions of apartheid in South Africa. Photographic exposures are both historical actors and sites of memory, subject to Thompson's disciplinary critique. However, Thompson could also be read as conflating 'photographic evidence' with 'photographic meaning'. *Coloured Black* makes visible precisely photographic meanings that cannot be seen, only *visibly felt*, which are informed by the historical but deploys historic Black hapticity to contemporary uses of political and racial critique. It attends to what Campt

[15] Thompson, Drew. "Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe." History of Photography 39, no. 3 (2015): 305
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

calls, “the hapticity of Blackness”[18] to make the apartheid "coloured"-"bantu" both seen and felt. *Image Matters* asks critical questions relevant to both the photographic meaning and materiality of Black image archives that ask of us, “[h]ow do we account for that which we cannot identify, and how do we engage details that exceed context?”[19].

Saidiya Hartman’s groundbreaking essay, ‘Venus in Two Acts’ is another critical text through which *Coloured Black* makes sense of impossibilities that arise from the Black intermural difficulties it surfaces. Hartman narrates her own journey into telling a story about Black captivity that is not only impossible to tell, but that also is a story that was also not made to be told asking, “how does one rewrite the chronicle of a death foretold and anticipated, as a collective biography of dead subjects, as a counter-history of the human, as the practice of freedom?”[20] Hartman questions at the edges of knowability, where Blackness is bound up and held captive within archival regimes that leave little choice but “to respect the limits of what cannot be known”[21]. *Coloured Black* thus needs the speculative as a critical means to not only account for the limits or absences of the intramural as archive, but also to not drown in its excesses, having to navigate the tides of having too much to know and having little to understand, for which the only sense to be made is apartheid.

[18] Campt, Tina. Listening to Images. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
[19] Campt, Tina. Image Matters : Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2012 (86).
[20] Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in Two Acts." Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism 26 (2008): 3
[21] Ibid (4).

1.1 Coloured Photographers & Black Exposures

Coloured Black reads the life and works of two South African photographers, who both were differently classified as 'coloured' and both self-identified as Black during apartheid. However, *Coloured Black* is not a comparative study[22], it surfaces biographical, genealogical, archival and visual histories to stage a larger argument about the Black photographic intermural in South Africa. The first photographer, Ernest Levi Tsoloane Kole (1940-1990) was a "member of the Bapedi"[23], born in Eersterust, Pretoria. He is one of the earliest Black photographers to have formally studied photography via correspondence with the New York Institute for Photography after escaping "'bantu"' education during the 1950s. He also is of a critical generation of Black artists, typified by the cultural production in Johannesburg of Drum Magazine, a publication that he briefly worked for, under the editorship of Tom Hutchinson. *House of Bondage* (1967), his first and only photography book was also a first for South Africa at the time. He had left the country on an exit permit in order to publish the book in 1966 after spending around seven years photographing the encyclopaedic effort at exposing a Black experience of apartheid across fourteen photo-essays and almost two hundred images. *House of Bondage*, banned by the apartheid state has been called "one of the great photography books of all time"[24] and its photographer had become a mythic figure. By 1984, Ernest had all but vanished from his career as a photographer and a life of legibility in New York City, when the journal 'Creative Camera' wrote this about him:

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[22] This is not the first time that Ernest is brought into dialogue with a coloured artist. See Mulhearn, Kevin, Batchen, Geoffrey, Bishop, Claire, Chave, Anna, and Enwezor, Okwui. Critical Positions in Recent South African Photography, 2010, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. Mulhearn pairs Ernest with Bernie Searle to discuss matters of colouredness and creolization in his chapter, 'Either I'm Nobody, or I'm a Nation': coloured and Creole Subject Positions in South African Photography. I would argue that Mulhearn falls into the kind of discourse on 'coloured identity' I earlier discussed and considers how Ernest's work explores themes of creolization as a strategy of resistance and dissimulation.

[23] Cole, Ernest. 1967. *House of Bondage*. Ridge Press. Random House Publishing. New York City.

[24] Unknown author. 'Drum South Africa's Black Picture Magazine', Creative Camera. No 235/236 July/ August 1984.

> "…the great comet of Black photojournalism. For a few years he produced a great many outstanding pictures which were collected into the biographical indictment, *House of Bondage*…. Since then he has disappeared photographically. He has been reported from Stockholm, Toronto and, more probably, New York; he has been reported on drugs, in drink, even begging on the streets. These may all be untrue, but tragically he is not photographing. We hope our information is wrong".

Creative Camera's analysis was not entirely true. Kole's archive has been recently 'discovered' after almost fifty years of disappearance. Some 60 000 of his negatives from South Africa and the United States (he was photographing up until the late 1970s), along with a suitcase of clippings, notes, and contact sheets from his work for *House of Bondage* were recently 'discovered' without provenance in a private Swedish bank[25]. Kole's life in photography has now begun posthumously, whereas Nunn's (1957-) is more indicative of a stratum of Black photographers in South Africa whose current lives in photography and photographic archives exist in states of precarity. Nunn is of the generation of Black photographers influenced by *House of Bondage*, who came of political age in the post-1976

[25] Almost thirty years after his death, Ernest's archive or what remained of its life in exile surfaces More than half the negatives were made in the United States as Ernest had received a grant from the Ford Foundation after the success of *House of Bondage* to document Black life in the rural South of America. These images had never been published, along with the majority of the negatives from South Africa, which for the most part cover the subject matter of the book's essays. The story of Ernest Cole, the photographer has now only begun. Since his death, it was believed that his archive was lost save for a little over 500 vintage prints which still are in the possession of the Hasselblad Foundation as the biggest collection of photographs by a single photographer in the organization's catalogue. The prints' route to the Hasselblad Foundation is unclear, but what connects Ernest to them is the late, Rune Hassner who was a driving force in Ernest's exposure to the Swedish photography scene. Ernest joined him, along with nine other Swedish photographers in the collective and agency, Tiofoto. Then by the late 1970s, Ernest had vanished from Sweden and his career as a photographer and Tiofoto dissolved. The group's materials were donated to the Hasselblad Foundation and Hassner became its directorHe died in 2003. Three years later, David Goldblatt wins the Hasselblad Prize and its then director, Gunilla Knape shows Goldblatt the Foundation's Ernest Cole prints. Knape spent four years researching Ernest's life and his family established a trust. In 2013 at the Fowler Museum at the UCLA, *Ernest Cole: Photographer* kicks off a world tour of 113 prints, including in South Africa, where a solo Ernest Cole exhibition had never been mounted before, except in the Apartheid Museum. The Trust currently has instigated legal action against the Hasselblad Foundation who claims to have paid Ernest for the collection, yet cannot produce the necessary documentation. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-11-30-photographer-ernest-cole-of-bondage-and-freedom-discovery-of-trove-of-negatives-a-game-changer/ https://www.magnumphotos.com/arts-culture/society-arts-culture/ernest-cole-rediscovered-archive/

upsurge of mass mobilization against apartheid. He was a one of the founding members of Afrapix, an anti-apartheid aligned, "non-racial" collective of photographers that among other things, developed a photographic library that sustained a grassroots alternative media network as well as more mainstream press and anti-apartheid efforts in exile. Afrapix also produced some of the most important photographic interventions of the late apartheid period such as *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart: Essays by Twenty South African Photographers* (1986) and *Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa* (1989).

Nunn worked between Johannesburg and Durban, two key nodes for Afrapix activities. Another co-founder, Paul Weinberg described Cedric as the organization's point man in Durban[26]. By the 1980s, Nunn had thrown himself full-time into a career as a photographer, a vocation that he saw as his only viable choice. Unlike many of his counterparts, Nunn had a rural upbringing in KwaZulu-Natal and little formal education, having left school for factory work at the age of sixteen. As an autodidact, Nunn benefited from the experience of photographers like the late, Peter McKenzie, Badsha, and the larger cultural arts movement in South Africa. Nunn has enjoyed a degree of exhibition success locally after apartheid and published two books. The first, *Call and Response* (2011) perhaps a premature retrospective, even if he had by then photographed for thirty years and his more recent, *Unsettled: One Hundred Years War of Resistance by Xhosa Against Boer and British* (2015). He believes, "if I think back, I might not have been a photographer today if it had not been for the solidarity of this experience"[27].

[26] Paul Weinberg interviewed by Candice Jansen (29 November 2017)
[27] Cedric Nunn interviewed by Candice Jansen, Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).

Coloured Black refers to Nunn and Kole, as well as the other biographical subjects of significance to the story of each photographer's life and archive by his or her first name. This practice of naming was born out of the difficulty of referring to Ernest in name. Ernest was born 'Ernest Kole', who at pass-getting age for a '"bantu"' subject to the Population Registration Act of 1950, had himself classified 'coloured' and became 'Ernest Cole', the name with which he is still remembered today. According to Ernest's nephew, Ernest never carried a pass in his life[28]. He did not always refer to himself as 'Ernest Cole'. His birth name surfaces in four critical sites. At his gravesite, on his headstone, at the Mamelodi Cemetery, he is referred to both as 'Ernest Kole', "our brother" and Ernest Cole, "Photographer". On the gravesite inventory list, he is named 'Ernest Kole'. The other two times 'Ernest Kole' appeared in Ernest's handwriting. He had written his name as 'Ernest Kole' on a 1968 Western Union receipt[29] and in a copy of *House of Bondage,* gifted to a prominent civil rights activist couple from Detroit. His inscription reads:

> "[t]o brother Arthur and sister Carolyn Reese. The brotherhood you belong to pays the same tribute to suffering the world over and if we don't do something about this problem ourselves we shall be a slave race forever. Love Ernest Kole"[30].

That Ernest had himself classified 'coloured' is the most cited fact of his life (even if he never mentioned it himself in his few published writings). Sean Jacobs' speculative essay, 'The Passing of Ernest Cole' is an important and rare engagement with Ernest as a

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[28] Leslie Matlaisane correspondence, 2017. Yet, Leylveld in House of Bondage also suggests that Ernest carried an "African reference book" as well as a coloured ID. Even though Lelyveld and Ernest were close, and after interviewing him in New York City in 2018, I came away wondering how much he actually *knew* Ernest, having been unable to speculate on why Ernest held certain positions. Ernest was good at hiding. I look forward to speaking with Abdullah Ibrahim, with whom Ernest spent consistent time with in New York City.

[29] Archival Source courtesy of the Ernest Cole Family Trust.

[30] Online listing for a signed copy of *House of Bondage* sold by Vincent Borrelli, rare and contemporary book seller for $3,000.00. Courtesy of the Hasselblad Foundation Library

biographical subject. Many believe that Ernest had himself classified as coloured in 1966 in order to leave South Africa on an exit permit. According to family, he had himself classified 'coloured' early on in life, before he began working as a photographer. We do not know when or why Ernest Kole chose to change his surname. *Coloured Black* does not imagine that Ernest wanted to be 'coloured' in order to not be Black. Jacobs could be read as suggesting, Ernest exhibited a desire to 'be coloured'[31]. Could it be assumed that Ernest wanted to 'be coloured', if he did not want to be classified '"bantu"'? *Coloured Black* addresses how 'Ernest Kole' became 'Ernest Cole' and names Ernest by his first name to make the vanished person, 'Ernest Kole' appear, but to keep him separate from and to not be mistaken for 'Ernest Cole', the photographer or photographic persona.

Cedric was born into 'coloured'. He is a fourth-generation descendant of John Dunn, the infamous 'White Zulu Chief' of the nineteenth century. At the height of his influence, John held sway in the imperial policy of Natal, instrumental in securing Tsonga labour for Natal settlers, which was critical to the development of a migrant labour route along the coastal length of Zululand, between the Hluhluwe and Thukela rivers. John also held sway with the last independent monarch of the Zulu Kingdom, King Cetshwayo, without whose permission this migrant labour route could not have existed, which also served the King with goods like guns and liquor, blankets, and exotic skins. Keeping colonial Natal and the Zulu Kingdom happy served these authorities and also it served John who understood that to serve the

[31] Jacobs asks, "Who helped Cole's prepare for his question to become coloured? Did he look or sound like a coloured? Like A Pretoria coloured? What do Pretoria coloureds sound or look like? Did Cole act coloured around his mother after he successfully passed? What kind of coloured did he become? Other Coloured? Malay? Cape Coloured? Did some of his family see him as a race traitor? Did they admire his decision? In the 1950s at least 10 percent of whites were coloureds passing for whites. How many Africans passed for coloureds?" Jacobs, Sean. *The Passing of Ernest Cole*. Centre for Historical Reenactments (undated) *Passages:References and Footnotes*. A curatorial project by The Centre for Historical Enactments in collaboration with the Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism.
(p.3)

interests of power was also to serve himself. Serving the interests of power allowed the accrual of significant personal wealth that included land and forty-nine wives. With the exception of one, all John's wives were Zulu. *Coloured Black* tells biographical stories about Cedric's relatives, most of whom share family names such as 'Dunn' and 'Louw'.

Coloured Black makes use of subjects' first name. The difficulty that arose from referring to Ernest Cole, who could also be named Ernest Kole. Coloured Black does not conflate Ernest Cole with Ernest Kole, but rather refers to him as 'Ernest' in order to name him Cole or Kole as necessary. Most of Cedric Nunn's family relatives share the surname, Dunn and so referring to family members by their first name helped identify biographical subjects within genealogical histories. The practice of using first names references the history of domestic work under apartheid, and it also surfaces in Ernest and Cedric's photography in Part II. In the end, the use of first names also performs an enforced familiarity which was a feature of the times in which the photographers and their subjects lived. Racial names, categories, and slurs naturalised a familiarity or closeness between 'european' superiority and Black bodies.

1.2 Race as Medium

W.T.J. Mitchell's *Seeing Through Race* (2012) poses an evocative challenge for revisiting matters of race and apartheid, which *Coloured Black* takes up with Mitchell's central question, 'what if race were a medium?' Mitchell's proposal to figure race as "something we *see through*, like a frame, a window, a screen, or a lens, rather than something we *look at*"[32] offers a means to differentiate racial meaning from the photographic appearance of racialised subjects. Thinking about race as a medium helps create a critical space between seeing and what is made visible to begin theorizing race not as what is represented, but as that which can

[32] Mitchell, W. J. T. *Seeing through Race*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012 (XII).

also be represented *with*. *Coloured Black* thinks through race and 'coloured' as photographic practice along with paying attention to how Black intermural relation or the sense of apartheid between 'the coloured' and 'the "'bantu"'' appears. Identifying this Black apartheid through a medium such as 'coloured' needs categorical or definitional clarity and a theoretical positioning in order to understand how Black intermural difficulties are visibly felt through what a coloured medium is constituted by. What follows is a brief account of the history of 'coloured' in South Africa and a short literature review of 'coloured identities' in academic scholarship but first, a rationale for the use of racial terminology.

South African scholar, Thiven Reddy, in 'The Politics of Naming: The Constitution of 'coloured' Subjects in South Africa' reminds us that "each category of classification [during apartheid] has its meaning in relation to other categories" and even "the system of classification as a whole"[33]. Thus, if the 'coloured category' is understood as the place for what Reddy calls, "a problem identity", he argues:

> "[a] set of characteristics which is the norm for all people becomes the abnormal, the dangerous, the Other. Unless *all* these stable, racialized categories are problematized, located in discourses and made the focus of countless attacks and contests, the dominant discourse or racial classification and its material expressions in everyday social relations, will remain in the formidable position it sadly won for itself in South Africa"[34].

Coloured Black interprets Reddy as having made a call to defamiliarize race, much like Mitchell. Whereas Mitchell remediates the reading of race through a differently constituted optical frame, Reddy remediates the reading of race through the relationality of classification,

[33] Reddy, Thiven. 'The Politics of Naming: The Constitution of coloured Subjects in South Africa' in Erasmus, Zimitri. *coloured by History, Shaped by Place: Perspectives on coloured Identities in the Cape*. Social Identities South Africa Series. Cape Town : Maroelana: Kwela ; SA History Online, 2001 (64-79).
[34] Ibid (78).

a similarly defamiliarizing gesture, since classification is meant to divide and make discrete. Yet according to Deborah Posel, the apartheid state system of classification was built upon a "hybrid conceptualization of race"[35] or "a strategic ambiguity with respect to race"[36]. Reddy and Posel point to kinds intramural dynamics of apartheid race classification: Posel pointing out the vulnerability and power within the central organising principle of South African race law and Reddy, pointing out the contradiction that apartheid classifications were constituted relationally.

Therefore, how then can 'coloured' be differently constituted in order to be deployed as a medium, through which a Black intermural dynamic can appear? What is the difference between writing 'coloured' and coloured? Why does *Coloured Black* use the terms, 'european' and "'bantu"', instead of white and Black African? Following on from Reddy, if coloured needed defamiliarization, it needed to not change itself, but rather change its relation and since it is understood here as Black, that meant that the 'Black African' lost its relationality to coloured as 'African' since this study is about Blackness, not Africanity. *Coloured Black* does not explore this category of person and how 'African' became a category of race in South Africa after apartheid, which also excluded African peoples who were assimilated into 'coloured categorization'. The category of 'African' had come to replace 'Bantu' but 'coloured' classification remained.

Coloured Black writes of 'coloured' when referring to it as an identity or when places, people or things are identified as 'coloured'. Coloured appears lowercase and unmarked when it is named in relation to ''european's' or "'bantu"'s as an apartheid construction. Coloured is

[35] Ibid
[36] Ibid (87)

written in upper case when it is referred to as a structural position and used paradigmatically, in the same manner in which Black appears, although Black people, community or other kinds of Black identified social phenomena will not appear in lower case. The use of 'coloured' in these senses is an attempt to take race off the Black body and understand it as a practice of categorization that has remained in place within the South African census, that sense making statecraft that makes no sense[37], more than fifty years before apartheid. The existence of a 'coloured' classification has remarkably remained stable since the category first appeared in the 1911 South African census that listed "Mixed and Other coloured", along with "'european' or White" and ""bantu"". 'Mixed and Other coloured' that included populations named as "Mixed", "Malay", "Griqua", "Bushmen", "Hottentot", "Chinese", "Indian", "Koranna", and "Namaqua" that included those from Mozambique[38]. Yet, 'coloured subject formation' is not really theorised nor historicised before the Population Registration Act of 1950, when the category is defined as 'absence': being neither white nor Black, and after apartheid, "either white or Black"[39].

In an effort to denaturalise coloured's relation to whiteness and understand it as captivity for Black subjecthood, *Coloured Black* does not refer to coloured as "mixed" or "mixed-race". This is a critical point of departure from the South African scholarship on 'coloured identity', which *Coloured Black* brings into dialogue with scholarship from the United States, which do not understand Blackness through an illusion of racial purity. Although there is an emerging field of "critical mixed-race studies" in the United States, Jared Sexton makes an important

[37] Ashforth, Adam. The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-century South Africa. Oxford Studies in African Affairs. Oxford [England] : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1990.
[38] Christopher, A. J. "'To Define the Indefinable': Population Classification and the Census in South Africa." Area 34, no. 4 (2002): 401-08.
[39] Bester, Rory, and Bernie Searle. 2003. *Bernie Searle*. Cape Town: Bell-Roberts Publishing (23).

critique of its "multiracial exceptionalism" that also reinforces "longstanding tenets of antiBlackness and the promotion of normative sexuality"[40]. Most importantly, understanding coloured as 'mixed' and not Black, not only masks 'coloured categorisation' as the apartheid absence, as apolitical or an anti-political space, but also reinscribes racial purity which in turn keeps the 'european' superior and the '"bantu"' primitive. Coloured therefore is bound up in 'apartheid thinking', the title of J.M. Coetzee's essay that deploys 'coloured' as a critique and repetition of 'racial purity'[41]. Insisting on the "in between" also lends itself to a 'coloured trope' that Coetzee parses as a monstrous contamination, a blood mixture, and an "excessive sexuality"[42] that plagued Geoffrey Cronjé, "a seminal contributor to the theory of apartheid"[43]. Coetzee writes,

> "There is something Cronje is haunted by. Let me call it simply C. C is the sign of the undifferentiated but also of indifference: indifference to the law, indifference to everything but the urgings of a devouring appetite. Whatever C devours comes out at the other end undifferentiated, that is, as more C. In the algebra of mixing, C+W=C, C+B=C, C+C=C, even B+W=C. Unless there is apartness (apartheid), asks Cronjé– whether direly or desperately, one is not sure–what can lie ahead but more and more mixing, more and more C?"

Coloured Black in part becomes entangled in the "problem-special"[44] legacy of "mixed race-Blackness"[45]. A legacy that Zimitri Erasmus made critical interventions into with three important texts: the anthology, *Coloured by History Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on*

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[40] Sexton, Jared., and Rowdy Yates. Amalgamation Schemes : AntiBlackness and the Critique of Multiracialism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008 (1).
[41] See Hortense Spillers' talks on Slavery, Touch, and Shadow Families: https://youtu.be/AvL4wUKIfpo; https://youtu.be/0r2s8kRYWDo; https://youtu.be/10haBLXN1r0; https://youtu.be/KPa7KhbuEJo
[42] Joseph, Ralina L. Transcending Blackness : From the New Millennium Mulatta to the Exceptional Multiracial. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013 (33).
[43] Coetzee, J. M. 'Apartheid Thinking' in Giving Offense : Essays on Censorship. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996 (164) Coetzee, J.M. 1991. "The mind of apartheid : Geoffrey Cronje". *Social Dynamics*. 17 (1): 1-35.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

Coloured Identities in Cape Town (2001); its predecessor, the essay 'Some Kind of White, Some Kind of Black: Living the Moments of Entanglement in South Africa and its Academy' in the anthology, *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, 'Transruptions'* (2000); and her most recent monograph, *Race Otherwise: Forging a New Humanism for South Africa* (2017)[46]. *Coloured by History* in particular sought to "challenge the erasure and the reification of coloured identities"[47], even if it focused on a Cape-based 'coloured archive'. Erasmus is clear in her introduction, "coloured identities are not about race mixture… They are cultural formations born of appropriation, dispossession and translation in the colonial encounter"[48]. Édouard Glissant's creolization theory helps Erasmus contemplate three tropes (which does not address the history of 'coloured stereotyping' or 'coloured debasement' as racial stereotype[49]) in relation to 'coloured identities' that include its associations with 'blood

[46] See also: Farred, Grant. Midfielder's Moment : coloured Literature and Culture in Contemporary South Africa. Cultural Studies Series. Boulder: Westview Press, 2000; or the work of Adhikari, Mohamed. Not White Enough, Not Black Enough : Racial Identity in the South African coloured Community. Research in International Studies. Africa Series ; No. 83. Athens : Cape Town: Ohio University Press ; Double Storey Books, 2006; and Vernie February: February, and February, V. A. From the Arsenal : The Teachers' League of South Africa : A Documentary Study of "coloured" Attitudes between 1913-1980. Research Reports (Rijksuniversiteit Te Leiden. Afrika-Studiecentrum) ; No. 83/18. Leiden, Netherlands: African Studies Centre, 1983; February, V. A. Mind Your Colour : The "coloured" Stereotype in South African Literature. Monographs from the African Studies Centre, Leiden. London ; Boston: Kegan Paul International, 1981.
And more recently: Johnson, Vernon D. "coloured South Africans: A Middleman Minority of Another Kind." Social Identities 23, no. 1 (2017): 4-28.

[47] See Sanders, Mark. Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid. Philosophy and Postcoloniality. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002. Then the ensuing debate opened by Grant Farred (2004) The Black intellectual's work is never done: a critique of the discourse of reconciliation in South Africa, Postcolonial Studies, 7:1, 113-123. Then Sanders' reply: Sanders, Mark. "Being Black, Being an Intellectual: A Reply to Grant Farred." Postcolonial Studies 7, no. 2 (2004): 245-49.

[48] Erasmus, Zimitri. 2001. coloured by history shaped by place: perspectives on coloured identities in the Cape. Roggebaai. (16) See also Adhikari, Mohamed. Burdened by Race: coloured Identities in Southern Africa. Cape Town: UCT, 2009. Print. (xi)

[49] See Adhikari, Mohamed. "'God Made the White Man, God Made the Black Man...' : Popular Racial Stereotyping of coloured People in Apartheid South Africa." 55 (2006): 142-64. Or the often cited, Millin, Sarah Gertrude. God's Stepchildren. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924; For a longer history of racial stereotyping of peoples classified as coloured see Viljoen, Russel. ""Alcohol and Art" : Charles Davidson Bell and His Cari-catured Images of Colonial Khoikhoi in Early Nineteenth Century Century South Africa." 23, no. 1 (2008): 190-202 and Merians, Linda Evi. 2001. Envisioning the worst: representations of "Hottentots" in early-modern England. Newark: University of Delaware Press. For coloured stereotyping in Afrikaans literature see: Gerwel, G.J. 1988. *Literatuur en*

mixture', with being residual or caught 'betwixt and between', and with not being understood as Black. On Coloured's Blackness, Erasmus spends time attending to its intermural difficulties that is later considered along with another South African scholar Pumla Gqola in *What is Slavery to Me? Postcolonial/ Slave Memory in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2010).

Theories of creolization and hybridity in South Africa have now been "de-colouredised"[50] and are now less a process of 'coloured subject formation' as Erasmus argued in *Coloured by History* and now a process of cultural production in South Africa through what Sarah Nuttall set out in *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-apartheid* (2009). Nuttall cites creolization theory's association with 'colouredness' as reasons for local theorists' discomfort with its deployment and argues for its applicability to the "South African cultural archive" as it "might offer a programme of possibility in relation to neglected questions, a point of interrogation directed towards a richly complex and extremely conflictual history"[51]. Nuttall proposes creolization theory's applicability to the South African cultural archive and plays less attention to the "difficulty" of what it may mean to have creolization theory operate on both the level of a biological and cultural construct made into a "political buffer" by the apartheid state– "a notion both racist and suspect" *and* have creolization theory operate on the level of "a programme of possibility"?

apartheid: konsepsies van "gekleurdes" in die Afrikaanse roman tot 1948. Bellville: Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland.

[50] Erasmus, Zimitri. Race Otherwise: Forging a New Humanism for South Africa. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2017. Erasmus makes

[51] Nuttall, Sarah. Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-apartheid. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009 (22).

Much work still needs to be done to understand what could be termed as a "coloured turn" in cultural theory post-apartheid[52], where difficult historical legacies of "mixedness" and entanglements are rendered absent in the present stasis of hybridity and the South African subject. Admittedly, there are crucial distinctions and nuances between creolization theory and notions of hybridity in South African cultural studies. It is not clear to what extent this practice departs from photographer Cedric Nunn's own naming of 'coloured' subjects in our interview, who he referred to not as 'coloureds', but as "hybridized people". Either way, May Joseph and Jennifer Fink's critique of hybridity in the anthology, *Performing Hybridity* (1999) remains important:

> "Although the interstitial, multiple condition of hybridity is often valorized by cultural theorists, this collection demonstrates how the situation of hybridity is often one that is compelled rather than chosen…. In the process of hybridization, cultural histories, origins, and fictions are too often erased and homogenized, the force of their specificity abstracted into new nationalistic formations. Hybridity can become simply another tool to dissolve difference, celebrate homogeneity, erase history. The task, then, may be not to celebrate hybridity as such, but rather to tease out the precise contours, lost languages, buried histories from which hybridity emerges… the most generative, hybrid act might be to reclaim and remember and invent specific cultural histories, rather than simply celebrate a hybrid, inchoate identity shorn of all but a nationalist rendering of its history…. The hybrid truth of cultural experience may lie not in a comfortable middle ground between two cultural experiences, but in the irreconcilable distance between."

Using coloured as a medium affects the way in which Blackness appears. In *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness* (2011), Nicole Fleetwood asks '[h]ow does Blackness become visually knowable', which also questions the Coloured mediation that visually and verbally manifest as Black vulnerabilities of natal alienation and political

[52] De Kock, L. "Introduction: South Africa in the Global Imaginary" in De Kock, Bethlehem, Laden, Bethlehem, Louise, and Laden, Sonja. South Africa in the Global Imaginary. Imagined South Africa. Pretoria: Leiden: University of South Africa Press; Koninklijke Brill NV, 2004.

betrayal produced by conditions of colonialism and apartheid, which is to say, produced by coloured itself. Fleetwood reminds us that "the visible Black body is always already troubling to the dominant visual field". The visual field she refers to is one structured by 'european' fantasies and fears in the American context, which 'coloured' as a kind of Blackness troubles in a doubled sense. A theatrical analogy: 'european' supremacy in this visual scheme, would be the stage and the field against which coloured becomes knowable and a "'bantu"' field of visuality, would be a backdrop to the stage against which the performance is made visible.

Amos Morris-Reich's notion of *racial imagination* in *Race and Photography: Racial Photography as Scientific Evidence, 1876-1980* (2016), calls this imagination "a number of joined but to a certain degree separated elements: imagination as a racial *characteristic* and as a *unifier* of the social fabric"[53]. It should be stated that racial imagination is a unifying gesture, under the guise of the science of race which unified in the enterprise of division, classification, and categorization. In this understanding, Morris-Reich explains how photography,

> "[a]s an instrument of the imagination, it liberates the exclusively factual from its contingent status and grants facts the status of a potential ideal. Imagination can complete a photograph by the addition of what is absent from it or add non reality to the photographed subject…. The profound dualism in photography's status in this cultural corpus can already be felt"[54].

Morris-Reich's argument that "photography was designed to serve an "imaginary" clarification: the rediscovery and enhancement of racial imagination"[55], is useful to

[53] Morris-Reich, Amos. Race and Photography: Racial Photography as Scientific Evidence, 1876-1980. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2016 (21).
[54] Ibid (27).
[55] Morris-Reich, Amos. Race and Photography: Racial Photography as Scientific Evidence, 1876-1980. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2016 (21).

historicizing the stakes involved in figuring Coloured as medium or a "symbolic-imaginary, verbal-visual complex"[56] that brings to the fore the matter of 'coloured's' "nonreality" and what it brings to bear on the Black body and its visual relations to other Black bodies classified as '"bantu"'. In figuring Coloured as a medium through which to consider intermural antagonisms[57] as visual relation within photographic exposure.

Coloured Black situates Coloured during the apartheid period, also because it is the central historical era against which Ernest and Cedric worked as photographers. Ernest was born almost a decade before apartheid. He produced his photography for *House of Bondage* and left the country, never to return by 1966, yet his images circulate in anti-apartheid material as late as the 1980s, when Cedric first discovers photography and begins his visual activism and family documentary. He continues documenting family more than a decade after apartheid officially ended. Bringing Ernest and Cedric into dialogue also indirectly revisits the apartheid period as a time of 'coloured'-'"bantu"' entanglement that underwent multiple points of difficulty in both political and social terms. By 1967, the Population Registration Act attempted to lock apartheid subjects into racial categories by enacting what Keith Breckenridge calls, "administrative descent"[58], which privileged the classification of parentage over the previous reliance on "communal acceptance and appearance". During this era, Ernest's generation of South Africans were of the first to be assigned a racial category according to the 1950 Act, an era with more room to officially "pass" for 'european' or coloured.

[56] Mitchell, W. J. T. Seeing through Race. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012 (20).
[57] Wilderson, Frank B., and Ebrary, Inc. Red, White & Black : Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms. E-Duke Books Scholarly Collection. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
[58] Breckenridge, Keith. "The Book of Life: The South African Population Register and the Invention of Racial Descent, 1950–1980." Kronos, no. 40 (2014): 225-40.

Ernest deployed 'coloured' as photographic tactic. How did race classification touch Ernest as a black photographer? How did Cedric photograph his 'coloured' family as visual activism? As bound up in what it meant to be classified 'coloured' as Black self-identifying subjects. Both photographers present a visual critique of apartheid. Ernest as a 'coloured' photographer who used the possibilities of his racial status for the benefit of mobility and economic opportunity in the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Cedric as a coloured photographer who resisted his racial status and photographed his 'coloured family' as social critique. Both photographers do not simply represent Black subjects under conditions of apartheid, but as biographical subjects, Cedric and Ernest reembodies Blackness, as classified coloureds. In order to make such a claim, it is necessary to understand apartheid as a visual regime, asking not only, 'how is apartheid seen', but also how does seeing and being seen operate under conditions of apartheid?[59]. How was race then a visual practice, rather than just a visual appearance?

David Morgan's *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling* (2012) offers a generative approach to thinking of visual practice as "social embodiment"[60] even if the book does not address race, but rather, religion as visual culture to "reestablish the embodiment and sociality of vision"[61]. Morgan's formulation of seeing as being "not

[59] For foundational studies of 'apartheid' see the work of Dubow, Saul. "New Approaches to High Apartheid and Anti-Apartheid." South African Historical Journal 69, no. 2 (2017): 304-29. Dubow, Saul and University of the Witwatersrand. African Studies Institute. Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid, and the Conceptualisation of "race". African Studies Seminar Paper (Johannesburg, South Africa) ; No. 301. Johannesburg, South Africa]: University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute, 1991. Dubow, Saul. Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-36. St. Antony's/Macmillan Series. Basingstoke: Macmillan, in Association with St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1989. Beinart, William., and Saul. DuBow. Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth Century South Africa. Rewriting Histories. New York: Routledge, 1995. Dubow, Saul. Apartheid, 1948-1994. 1st ed. Oxford Histories. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
[60] Morgan, David. The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling. Ber keley: University of California Press, 2012. (6)
[61] Ibid (22)

disembodied or immaterial"[62] echoes the ongoing work of visual cultural studies that resists the separation between, what Hal Foster calls, vision: "sight as a physical operation" and visuality: "sight as a social fact". To thus ask, 'how do we see apartheid'? or 'how is apartheid made visible'? Apartheid visuality also involves the body and the psyche in envisioning apartheid, in making apartheid visible, and being visualised by apartheid itself. However, Foster writes "the difference between the terms [vision and visuality] signals a difference within the visual…. –a difference, many differences, among how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing or the unseen therein"[63].

The Embodied Eye posits the notion of "reembodiment" that couples seeing and being seen to conjoin what Morgan calls "bodies of vision–the somatic and the social". He uses the term 'look' to describe the reciprocal action of vision that happens between persons. "Whatever the look" he writes,

> "I feel my objecthood, in the touch of their look on my flesh. Variously apprehended, I am able to imagine myself from the outside, to intuit or envision myself from beyond, as if my eyes separated from my body, joined another, and turned from that distance to behold me. This is a kind of reembodiment, where my objectification results in an altered sense of embodiment"[64].

Erasmus in *Race Otherwise: Forging a New Humanism for South Africa* (2017) offers a contemporary critique of 'the look' and its role in racial reasoning, which she argues also becomes a "weapon with which to police thought and ways of being in the world". She draws attention to how 'the look' after apartheid not only shapes subjectivity, but can also police

[62] Ibid (xvii-xvii)
[63] Foster, Hal., and Dia Art Foundation. Vision and Visuality. Discussions in Contemporary Culture; No. 2. Seattle: Bay Press, 1988 (ix).
[64] Morgan, David. The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. (10)

'sticking to one's kind' in relationships and ways of thinking. Echoing Mitchell, Erasmus writes that "intersubjective relation… is less about looking *at*, looking *through* and looking *away from*, and more about looking *with*". She helps rearticulate Morgan's idea of reembodiment in racial terms to see Ernest's Black re-embodiment, not through a 'coloured' appearance but as a vision of apartheid seen through the position of 'coloured' within its visual regime. This is how *Coloured Black* argues that Ernest looked *with* the apartheid regime in order to look against it.

CHAPTER 2: THE PASSING OF ERNEST KOLE[65]

2.1 Coloured Exposures: Hiding in Visibility

Ernest had himself classified as coloured and it's often made out to appear exceptional. His choice to have himself racially reassigned is remembered as a testament to his fearlessness and to the extent to which he would go for his photography. As Leylveld writes, "For Ernest Cole, who never bothered to break a law unless he thought he saw a way to get some better pictures, the problem wasn't one of respectability but [one of] purpose"[66]. While this is not untrue, what goes amiss in the retelling of Ernest's passing is the lack of contextualization of the extent to which 'passing for coloured' was in fact commonplace during apartheid both officially and unofficially[67]. Although few South African studies address it sociologically, historically, 'passing for coloured' Allyson Hobbs's *A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing in American Life* (2014) writes of the phenomenon of passing as encompassing "multiple disguises and forms of dissemblance"[68], which for the Black photographer under conditions of apartheid poses critical questions about visibility and concealment in photographic practice as "[a] study of passing uncovers a phenomenon that, by definition, was intended to be clandestine and hidden, to leave no trace."[69]

It bears repeating that Ernest himself, never describes having passed for coloured nor are there any records of him discussing the fact that he underwent racial reclassification. The

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[65] The title for this chapter is reworked from Jacobs' essay title, 'The Passing of Ernest Cole'. It presents 'Ernest Cole' as the man who passed, either as coloured or into corporal death. What becomes of 'Ernest Kole'? My title intends to not mistake the pseudonym for the person.
[66] Cole, Ernest. 1967. *House of Bondage*. Ridge Press. Random House Publishing. New York City (19).
[67] Peter Magubane at a talk at the Market Photo Workshop explained how he used to play, "Peter McBain" when travelling or staying in hotels in which "'bantu"'s were not permitted. (2015)
[68] Hobbs, Allyson Vanessa. *A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing in American Life*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014: (19)
[69] Ibid 6.

story of his passing is recorded through the version that Ernest must have told Lelyveld and Robertson, who become imaginations through which Ernest's passing unfolds. His sister Catherine, relays a more ambiguous suggestion of him changing his appearance to appear 'coloured' but fails to mention that Ernest was not the only Kole of the family to have passed for coloured. Two of Ernest's siblings, both now passed on, also had themselves 'classified as coloured' and after apartheid had themelves reclassified as 'Black African'. 'The Appearance of Being Ernest' reimagines the story of how Ernest manages to convince the state official that he is 'coloured'. It is a critical scene of his 'passing'.

The phenomenon of "passing" is an understudied practice of racial subject formation in South African scholarship. Perhaps because, as Zoë Wicomb, a foundational scholar on "the coloured subject"[70] who has included characters and storylines that address passing in her fiction, writes: "'[i]t's an odd phenomenon, the 'play-whites' … We don't even know how many of them there are. There's no discourse, nothing in the library, because officially they don't exist"[71]. Wicomb refers to "play-whites" in the apartheid vernacular to refer to people who lived or worked in a racial category they were not *supposed* to have been in. Ernest would have been known as a "play-coloured", an apartheid category of person of which less is known. "Play-whites" are more referenced[72], which again reiterates the insistence of 'european' relationality in the conceptualisation of 'colouredness'[73]. Although studies about passing are rare, narratives about racial reclassifications, passing, and children born from two

[70] Read Wicomb, Zoe (1987) David's Story.
[71] Cited in Jacobs, Sean. 'The Passing of Ernest Cole': https://africasacountry.com/2012/05/the-passing-of-ernest-cole/ from http://www.intermix.org.uk/features/FEA_13_zoe_wicomb.asp
[72] See Watson, Graham. Passing for White: A Study of Racial Assimilation in a South African School. London, New York: Tavistock Publications, 1970. Print. Also: Bowker, Geoffrey C., and Susan Leigh Star. *Sorting Things out: Classification and Its Consequences. Inside Technology*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999.
[73] See also February, V. A. Mind Your Colour : The "coloured" Stereotype in South African Literature. Monographs from the African Studies Centre, Leiden. London ; Boston: Kegan Paul International, 1981.

parents differently classified do emerge[74] and stories about "play-races" surface commonly in historic popular publications like Drum Magazine[75]. First person narratives by former "play-coloureds" or Black people caught in the difference between "'bantu"' and coloured are more rare[76].

E.K.M Dido's, *'n Stringetjie blou krale* (2000) is one of the few, albeit fictional, accounts of the racialisation of 'coloured identity'. The story is of a woman called, Nomsa Hlabati who had forgotten that she had become Nancy Karelse as a child during apartheid. Nomsa/ Nancy's marriage to a racist 'coloured man' and 'coloured life' in Cape Town fell apart after she told him about her identity. She had sought help from a sangoma after no longer being able to withstand her dreams. Her Xhosa ancestors had called her home, which sends Nancy/ Nomsa on a journey into her childhood in the Eastern Cape and her memories of her family in the village of eZibeleni, and her assimilation into the 'coloured community' of Tsomo after she is sent there for formal education. *'n Stringetjie blou krale* is a complex account of becoming coloured, of the nature of its appearance as both desired and strange, as well as the shame that undergirds the practice of having to appear as a 'coloured person' as a disavowal of blackness. It also describes the origin moment for a state sanctioned "play coloured"[77] who comes into being under the gaze of the 'european' bureaucrat.

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[74] Hobbs cites Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*, in which "Mandela represented a man who was colored but had been mistakenly classified as African. When the man appeared in court, a white magistrate examined him and concluded that he was in fact colored because he had a physique that was stereotypically associated with coloreds. The giveaway was his sharply sloped shoulders." (21) See also the story of Sandra Lange by: Stone, Judith. When She Was White : The True Story of a Family Divided by Race. 1st ed. New York: Miramax Books/Hyperion, 2007.

[75] See Nakasa, Nat., and Essop. Patel. The World of Nat Nakasa. 3rd Ed.]. ed. Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2005. See also the uncredited account exhibited at the Apartheid Museum which reads: "A Story of How Someone was reinvented as a 'Native'.

[76] An exception: Wardle, Brenda. *Odyssey of a Woman: coloured Diaries: "experiences of an Eastern Cape 'mixed-breed'"*. First ed. Johannesburg: Wardle College of Law, 2017.

[77] Or undergo the process of 'uGuqul'ibhatyi' as explored by Kemang Wa Lehurele. See A conversation between Gabi Ngcobo and Kemang Wa Lehurele. '*Unearthing Skeletons in History's Shallow Graves*'(p. 10) Centre for Historical Reenactments (undated) *Passages:References and*

Deborah Posel's work on apartheid race classification writes of how races were classified through arbitrary processes, subject to more localised racial sentiments than a "unified, centralized record of how racial classifications were made[78]. She writes, "[t]he terms of the Population Registration Act exempted the enterprise of official racial classification from any pretence at evidentiary rigour, giving full juridical authority to the weight of social prejudice or 'common sense'"[79]. Thus, she claims "[it] was perfectly consistent… with the logic of the law to entrust its implementation to 'quite ordinary and untrained persons' … 'ordinary people subject to their prejudices and their particular political points of view"[80]. The National Party had used these vacancies as "a strategy of political patronage… particularly in constituencies where anxieties about racial 'impurity' ran high"[81]. Studies on race and reclassification during apartheid such as those by Posel, Breckenridge, Gowker and Star[82] tend to rely on coloured as the site of description for the contingencies of race, or the classification through which race is passed.

Thus the moment at the municipal office in *'n Stringetjie blou krale* is a critical scene of another kind of crime, which Dido makes appear through a child's eyes. When Nomsa became Nancy, she had already innocently undergone a process of being 'turned coloured' and being withheld from black family through racial guilt by being compelled to sever ties

Footnotes. A curatorial project by The Centre for Historical Enactments in collaboration with the Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism.

[78] Ibid (58)

[79] Ibid (57)

[80] Ibid

[81] Ibid

[82] Bowker, Geoffrey C., Susan Leigh Star, and NetLibrary, Inc. Sorting Things out : Classification and Its Consequences. Inside Technology. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999. For a detailed study on Race and reclassification read: Erasmus, Yvonne. 2007. *Racial (Re)classification During Apartheid South Africa: Regulations, Experiences, and the Meaning(s) of 'Race'*. Unpublished Dissertation. St. George's, University of London.

with her '"bantu"' life and remaking her physical appearance. The moment at the municipal office describes a silent child who watches her new ‘coloured mother’, ‘Auntie Siena’, stage a biographical deception, and through Nomsa’s child eyes, we see her being taken aback by Auntie Siena’s own ‘coloured performance’ for the 'european' magistrate. Here Dido reveals through an interplay of gazes both innocent and suspicious, how race *is* performance. Auntie Siena herself needed to pass for coloured under the white gaze, through which she becomes unfamiliar through Nomsa’s child eyes. The bureaucrat watches as she becomes Nancy through how Auntie Siena makes herself appear believable as a coloured woman’, even if Auntie Siena was born ‘a coloured’.


RNFONTEIN

One of Ernest's most iconic exposures of apartheid, which appears as the opening image for *House of Bondage* is known as, "the finest visual expression of Apartheid I have ever seen", according to photographer Struan Robertson , who thought that the image, "shows the reality of apartheid without the need for any words"[83]. Within the architecture of the book, however, the exposure does appear with words.

> "This is one of those rare books that can change the way we think by revealing a truth of which we were unaware. The House of Bondage is the dwelling place of the Black people of South Africa, whose bitter life is one of the tragedies of the century. Ernest Cole lived the tragedy as an inmate of the House for most of his 27 years. A remarkably gifted photographer and an eloquent spokesman, he has recently exiled himself to expose the harsh realities of his homeland today. From his unique vantage point, Cole sees every aspect of South Africa's degradation with a searching eye and a passionate heart.[84]"

When the cover of *House of Bondage* is laid open, this blurb is presented next to the image of the apartheid train station. The text fortuitously echoes the story of Nelson Mandela almost two decades before he is released from prison, but most importantly, embodies the complicated biographical gestures that *House of Bondage* makes, conflating South Africa with Johannesburg and Ernest's life with apartheid. The flap itself, when left unopened, conceals part of the image, cutting from view the sign that identifies the station's location. When the flap is opened, the name of the station 'Doornfontein' is revealed, which materially embodies *House of Bondage*'s elision of the specificity of place and its mechanism of turning people into signs. The image of the train station is treated almost identically in a 1977 Swedish geography textbook that used it as the illustration for the entry on 'South Africa' and the sign for Doornfontein station was cut from the original image[85].

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[83] http://light-writing.co.uk/land/2017/08/05/exercise-1-9-visual-research-analysis-social-contrasts/
[84] Cole, Ernest. 1967. *House of bondage.* Ridge Press. Random House Publishing. New York City
[85] Thank you to Hasselblad Foundation Librarian, Elsa Moutin for showing me this image that she remembered from her childhood and the geography textbook that she used.

Ernest's exposure of the Doornfontein station appears both full and almost empty: empty on the side for 'european's-only, with a few scattered, waiting for the train to arrive, and full on the other side of an imaginary divide, policed by a Black officer dressed in white. The other side of the station is filled to the brim by Black bodies that wait, amassed like a swarm that winds along the length of the platform. They wait for that struggle to pour every person into the reduced number of train carriages available for non-'european's. This is how apartheid is seen. But how did Ernest see this apartheid? *House of Bondage* names it his, "unique vantage point"[86], but few scholars have considered its difference. Sally Gaule calls him "an "invisible" Black insider". But where is he 'on the inside' as a Black photographer at Doornfontein station? Ernest made this exposure from the 'european'-side, where 'coloureds' could be seen to appear, which he used as a vantage from which to see through and enact an altered sense of Blackness. Yet, Ernest was not just a classified coloured, he also was an undocumented '"bantu"' and thus caught within this Black intramural, Ernest managed to not escape race, but occupied a structural position that could be both inside and outside of '"bantu"' captivity, offering the possibility to look at it from both the inside out and the outside in.

This is how Ernest Cole photographs expose the truth of apartheid. Not just by exposing 'european' domination, but by using its 'looks' to create images that appear to speak for themselves. Ernest Cole's photographs tell the truth and give evidence. They do not wait to be known. Ernest Cole, 'the truthful witness' and *House of Bondage* as a "humanist" enterprise has been given much scholarly attention. Matters of concealment, deception, fabrication and ventriloquy that I argue were important to the ways in which Ernest exposed

[86] *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967).

apartheid are under theorized[87]. Ernest outed this about himself in one of the only authored pieces he wrote for Ebony Magazine in 1968, writing:

> "…The whole system, [of apartheid] based on white supremacy, taught me to hate, to steal, and to lie… I learned to hate and distrust the white man. I felt that I could kill, that I could be as inhuman as the white man seemed to think I was[88]".

Contemplating murder is not what we imagine runs through the mind of Ernest Cole, the truth-teller. Ernest's rage is also what gave his images their clarity. Testimony such as this from Ernest Cole, the celebrated photographer, and Ernest Kole, the vanished man throws the knowability of Ernest as a biographical subject into question. He cannot ever be fully known. Even in death, Ernest refuses legibility, classification, even to have his story be told. All that is certain is that Ernest can disappear. He typifies what Hartman calls, "precarious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance"[89].

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[87] Newbury, D. 'An Unalterable Blackness': Ernest Cole's *House of Bondage*' in Defiant Images: Photography and Apartheid South Africa. Pretoria, South Africa: Unisa Press, 2009.
Jayawardane, N. 'Friend of the family' :maids, madams, and domestic cartographies of power in South African art in Walsh, Shannon, and Jon Soske. Ties That Bind: Race and the Politics of Friendship in South Africa. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016.
Gaule, Sally. "Ernest Cole: The Perspective of Time." Safundi 18, no. 4 (2017): 380-99.
"Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library.
Ulrich Baer's 'Ernest Cole's *House of Bondage*: The Photography of Witnessing' in *Grey Gazette* 15, no.1 (Fall 2014), 4-7
Sekula, Allan. "The Body and the Archive." October 39 (1986): 3.
Firstenberg, L. (2002). Representing the Body Archivally in South African Photography. Art Journal, 61(1), pp.58-67.
Garb, Tamar. "Rethinking Sekula from the Global South: Humanist Photography Revisited." Grey Room, no. 55 (2014): 34-57.
Richards, C. 'Retouching Apartheid: Intimacy, Interiority, and Photography' in Enwezor, Okwui, Bester, Rory, and International Center of Photography, Issuing Body. Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life. New York, NY: Munich, Germany; London, U.K.; New York;: International Center of Photography ; DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2013 (234-245).
[88] Ebony Magazine, Feb 1969. Hasselblad Foundation Library
[89] Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in Two Acts." Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism 26 (2008): 12.

2.2 The Passing of Ernest Kole: An Overview

Hartrman asks, "[w]hat are the kinds of stories to be told by those and about those who live in such an intimate relationship with death?"[90] *Coloured Black* attempts to conjure a biographical passage for Ernest that begins with the story of his passing. Not the story of his actual death, but his re-embodiment into a 'Coloured subject'. The chapter speculates on Ernest's photographic practice as a classified coloured and an undocumented '"bantu"', raises the matter of his identity as a Black photographer within the visual life of the anti-apartheid struggle, before marking his passing into corporeal death. The Passing of Ernest Kole therefore begins and ends in death.

'The Appearance of Being Ernest' and 'Outseeing Apartheid' meditates on Ernest 'playing dead' as he passes for coloured as a kind of social death and explores how he may have 'played race' in a deadly game of apartheid appearance as his photographic practice. 'Resistant Images' contemplates his vanishing as another death that Ernest underwent from the life of his own photographs. He was often not credited for his images that were widely reproduced in anti-apartheid literature such as posters, campaigns, t-shirts, films, pamphlets and newsletters as late as 1983[91]. It deploys Sean Jacobs' method of questioning, to pose questions of what happened to the photographs of Ernest Cole within the anti-apartheid movement. Death of a Photojournalist' ends with Ernest at the height of his iconicity and at his deathbed. *Coloured Black* narrates a touching scene in which Ernest sees his mother, Martha Kole and sister, Catherine Hlatswayo very soon before he died in a New York City

[90] Hartman, Saidiya V. "Venus in Two Acts." Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism 26 (2008): 4.
[91] Meer, Y. S., and M. D. Mlaba. Apartheid, Our Picture. Durban: Institute for Black Research, 1982. Print (156).

Hospital in 1990. Their encounter is imagined, along with Martha's journey back on an airplane with a copy of *House of Bondage* and Ernest's remains that she brought back to South Africa in a cardboard box[92]. Ernest's ashes were put inside a coffin and buried as if he were a corpse.

The Ernest that *Coloured Black* makes appear is figured from testimonies about him, gathered from the film, *Ernest Cole* made while Martha was alive, and while his sister, Catherine was much younger[93]. Interviews by Gunilla Knape in *Notes on the Life of Ernest Cole 1940-1990*, published on SA History Online[94] was also invaluable as was the Hasselblad Foundation Library which holds an unpublished biography by Struan Robertson entitled, *Ernest Cole in The House of Bondage*. The biography contains a number of interviews from people who remembered Ernest while he lived in South Africa as well as during his time in exile such as Geoff Mphakati, Rashid Lombard, Omar Badsha, Keorapetse Kgositsile, Aggrey Klaaste, and Alf Kumalo[95]. Robertson and Ernest were especially close. The two shared darkroom space on Smal Street in Johannesburg's inner city and Robertson helped

[92] Knape, Gunilla. 'Notes on the Life of Ernest Cole' (Undated) https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/ERNEST%20COLE-gunilla.pdf
Published in Cole, Ernest, Gunilla. Knape, Struan. Robertson, and Ivor. Powell. Ernest Cole: Photographer. Götteborg: Hasselblad Foundation: Steidl, 2010.

[93] Catherine Hlatswayo, who is still alive, is an important voice in the retelling of her brother's life. Catherine was also present at Ernest's death having travelled with her mother to New York City. Her recollections have a unique power to shape an idea of Ernest's life in South Africa, and its impact on the life of his family. Catherine's recollections noted in Gunilla Knape's notes require further inquiry.

[94] Knape, Gunilla. 'Notes on the Life of Ernest Cole' (Undated) https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/ERNEST%20COLE-gunilla.pdf

[95] Robertson's biography is dated 2003, although the dates of when he would have conducted these interviews were much earlier. Both Badsha and Lombard remember Robertson, who was still living in South Africa at the time interviewing them after they had returned from New York, which was between the late 1980s and mid-1990s. Some recollections in the manuscript do not read as if they would be speaking to Struan. I imagine there is an untold backstory behind this manuscript, which I took at face value, which is not advised when reading on Ernest Cole. Fictions, speculation, rumour, and diverging accounts circulate as truth and new details continue to surface with the "discovery of his archive".

send Ernest a number of his prints after he left in 1966[96]. Ernest dedicated *House of Bondage* to Robertson along with his father and "my brethren in bondage"[97].

Each section of The Passing of Ernest Kole stages a passing with a photographic exposure. As it begins and ends in death, the first exposure is a family photograph of Ernest as a young boy, which could have been made around the time in which he passed for 'coloured'. The exposure was not made by a photographer, but by Ernest himself. It is a self-portrait of a photographer in the making. Images of Ernest are significant because they offer another means through which his likeness appears. These photographs colours the image of him that appears in the recollections of others, and how his vision of apartheid appears . The argument that Ernest hid within visibility also comes from having studied a number of photographs taken of him over the course of his public life as a photographer. His self-portrait is one of the earliest images of him and serves as a critical intervention into visualizing the ways in which Ernest commanded his own image. The Passing of Ernest Kole ends with a different commanding of Ernest's self-image. In this exposure, he commanded his immortality through the lens of South African photographer, Rashid Lombard, who made the last known image of Ernest as a photographic idol in 1986, four years before Ernest's death.

Between these commanding immortalizations of Ernest's self-image are two photographic exposures that immortalizes his photographic vision of apartheid. The first is Ernest's exposure of the semi-naked mining recruits, his most famous image. It has been widely appropriated since its first showing as part of a ten-page spread in the UK Sunday Times in

[96] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library.
[97] Cole, Ernest. 1967. *House of Bondage*. Ridge Press. Random House Publishing. New York.

1966, before *House of Bondage* was published[98]. The image also touched South African photographers and other visual artists. More than a decade later in 1978, Peter Magubane made his version of the same scene[99]. Painter, Lena Svedberg from Sweden in 'Painting 7' in 1970 repainted the image twice on a single canvas[100]. More recently, American artist, Hank Willis Thomas appropriated that image as a sculpture entitled, 'Raise Up' which now stands at the Memorial for Peace and Justice in Alabama. Ernest Cole images also been used by artists like Gavin Jantjies' *A South African Colouring Book* (1978) and later after apartheid, by Sam Nhlengethwa in 'Sharpeville Massacre' (2007) and 'Stop it Verwoerd' (2003).

The iconic image of the mining recruits was also used in the African National Congress newsletter, *Sechaba* in 1969[101]. Not the entire image. It was cut close to the count of nine men. 'Home Away from Home' was the title of an accompanying review by Alex La Guma of the South African Foreign Ministry's publication, *Prison Administration in South Africa*. La Guma had written for *Sechaba* as a member of the Communist Party and a writer, who also spent time incarcerated for his activism that inspired his novel about prison, called *The Stone Country* published the same year as *House of Bondage* in 1967. Ernest's image of mine recruits being medically examined may not have been taken inside a South Africa prison. Yet, it appeared to criminalize Black men, which served the political usage of the image.

[98] Even in the most recent media coverage about the "discovery" of Ernest's lost archive, unseen exposures from the mining recruitment centre were chosen. 'The Mines' is an iconic series from the book and that image could be described as a signature work, having been given prominence in *House of* Bondage as a full-bleed, double page spread.
[99] This photograph was exhibited at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg as 'Common Ground: David Goldblatt & Peter Magubane' curated by Paul Weinberg (28 July-25 August 2018).
[100] http://emp-web-34.zetcom.ch/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultDetailView/result.inline.list.t1.collection_list.$TspTitleImageLink.link&sp=13&sp=Sartist&sp=SfieldValue&sp=0&sp=0&sp=3&sp=SdetailView&sp=0&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=T&sp=0&sp=SdetailList&sp=0&sp=F&sp=Scollection&sp=l9500
[101] Sechaba. Nov 1969. Vol III. No.11. Mayibuye Archives at the University of the Western Cape, Bellville, Cape Town.

Ernest is almost never credited for the use of his images by the anti-apartheid movement, which affected him. Neither were most South African photographers during the anti-apartheid struggle. This is an understudied aspect of its visual history, the matter of photographic creditiation within the resistance movement. Ernest's *House of Bondage* was published during the late 1960s, whidch was a formative time for anti-apartheid propaganda. How could he have anticipated its influence on the visual life of the struggle? The politics of this photographic complex is surfaced in one campaign poster of the Polaroid Revolutionary Workers Movement (PRWM), which was started in 1970 by Ken Williams and Caroline Hunter, two African-Americans employees who had learnt that the apartheid government had been purchasing Polaroid's photographic technology for its identification cards. Although the membership of the PRWM was small, they mounted a successful campaign that resulted in Polaroid, by 1977, becoming the first major American corporation to announce its divestment from South Africa.

Ernest wanted control over his work, but his photographs were free. Organisations like the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) and the ANC or locally, organisations like Grassroots Community Newspaper in Cape Town did not need permission to use Ernest Cole photographs. The book was banned but copies of *House of Bondage* made its way into the country through clandestine networks and images were simply re-photographed from the book[102]. Through this photographic appropriation, the memory of Ernest Cole stayed alive and influenced a generation of photographers in South Africa. If *House of Bondage* imagery was not circulated in the way in which it was, could Ernest have been forgotten? He may have not

[102] Rashid Lombard interviewed by Candice Jansen (16 February 2017). Lombard remembers that poet, Jimi Mathews owned a copy of *House of Bondage* which could not be bought in South Africa at the time.

seen it that way at the time. Two letters he wrote to his London agent, John Hilleson in 1967[103] attest to this. Ernest had ended one by writing, "please don't forget what I said about those political organizations in South Africa. No pictures for them at all". How could he have felt this way? Did he produce *House of Bondage* for fame? What were his reservations against the cause? In the second letter, he ended by writing again, "There's something I meant to tell you earlier but I forgot. London is filled with organizations supposedly working for the liberation of South Africans. Please don't sell them a single one of my photographs no matter how much they offer to pay".

Ernest's refusal for his photographs to be used by the anti-apartheid struggle appeared a matter of principle that artist Lefifi Tladi reveals:

> "I told Ernest that once, when Oliver Tambo was at the local ANC offices, he had called all of us exiles in, irrespective of political affiliations, and I had talked about how Ernest was having problems. I wondered why the ANC was not helping him; was he being ignored because he was not a member? I said this was very surprising because I thought the ANC was the people's party and yet Ernest is left on his own. How did they explain this? They were using his pictures in their publication Sechaba and in all their other magazines. How come, if he's not a member, were these pictures used? They said: 'Well, we'll discuss this another time', which was typical! And, when I told Ernest this, he said to me: 'They call themselves a liberation movement and yet they're not conscious of the importance of their arts in the context of the struggle"[104].

The use of Ernest's photography within the anti apartheid struggle draws neccessary attention to the photographic nature of resistance. The notion of 'resistant images' situates the photography complex within black political struggle. It exposes how photographs were

[103] Courtesy of the Library of the Johannesburg Art Gallery.
[104] Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (39).
For a similar critique of the ANC's stance towards the arts and culture see: Mangcu, Xolela. Biko: A Biography. 1st ed. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012. Keoraptese Kgositsile's 'Culture as a Site of Struggle' in Staffrider Vol. 10 No.4 1992.

deployed to resist oppressive perceptions and how that visual struggle may have impacted black photographers at the time. Calling the use of Ernest's photographs within the anti-aparthied literature, 'a passing' is to notice how his images dissolved into an illustration of apartheid. Calling this practice, 'a passing', also is to call out an erasure of his identity, which was antithetical to South Africa's freedom struggle.



2.3 The Appearance of Being Ernest

Ernest appears as a boy in a crisp white school shirt. He soon would come of apartheid age. The days of "[w]earing short pants and carrying school papers' and not having "to worry about police checks" would soon be over. Eventually the time would come for Ernest to wear "long pants"[105] and get "a pass and a job"[106]. But not here in one of the earliest family photographs left of him . Ernest still imagines himself as a photographer. Did he make the image? Or did someone else hold the camera? His left arm appears outstretched. His body cuts another frame. Ernest poses with an intent to personify a command of his own image. He makes an expression much like his name, looking beyond the camera and facing what is to come. Ernest may be twelve or fourteen in this portrait. Either way, he had already decided that the camera would be his instrument.

Ernest writes of having been transfixed by cameras in a drugstore window around this age. He helped his mother complete her domestic work by delivering "the laundry to whites in the city"[107]. Before Ernest would catch the train back to Mamelodi, he made sure to pass by that window display and stare "for over an hour at a time"[108] at cameras. The "Baldafix folding type"[109] had caught his attention. He thought it "looked quite modern compared to the box cameras that Africans carried around in my township"[110].Ernest writes, "the camera thing haunted me"[111]. He "yearned to own one"[112] but knew his parents could not afford to buy him a

[105] Joseph Lelyveld, "One of the Least Known Countries in the World", in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 18.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Cole, Ernest, Gunilla. Knape, Struan. Robertson, and Ivor. Powell. Ernest Cole: Photographer. (Göteborg: Hasselblad Foundation: Steidl, 2010).
[108] Ibid
[109] Ibid
[110] Ibid
[111] Ibid
[112] Ibid

camera. He tried broaching the subject with Martha, who would hear nothing of it[113]. A friend of hers suggested that Ernest borrow their camera, which had been gathering dust on the shelf at home. When that suggestion fell, Ernest remembers running to fetch it. "It was one of those early Voigtlanders, a 120 twin lens reflex with 2f stops and 3 shutter speeds –nothing near the Baldafix in that drugstore window but still I was very glad"[114]. Ernest carried that camera with him wherever he went–even to school. Catherine thought that the Catholic Priest, Father Webber, who Ernest had been close with, gave him his first camera[115]. He may also have acquired an old "Yashika twin-lens reflex camera"[116], as an assistant to a local Chinese studio photographer during his youth.

However Ernest may have received his first camera, the machine made not only an impression on him. The hold that photography had on Ernest worried Martha. As a school boy, he had already started making a business of his hobby, going around Mamelodi charging people ten pence for their photograph, which he would get developed and printed at a chemist in the city[117]. Martha "felt I was too young to have a taste for money–thinking that it would take my mind off more important things"[118], he writes. But Ernest had already decided. He was going to be a photographer.

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[113] Ernest writes that after asking her "She knew just what I meant and gave me a snap answer saying "and I would like to buy some food for tonight and don't know how." (Ibid, 2)
[114] Ibid
[115] Cole, Ernest. *Ernest Cole 1940 – 1990*. Directed by Jurgen and Claudia Schadeberg. Journeyman Pictures. [Place of Publication Not Identified]: Schadeberg Movie Company, 1999.
[116] Cole, Ernest, Gunilla. Knape, Struan. Robertson, and Ivor. Powell. Ernest Cole: Photographer. (Göteborg: Hasselblad Foundation: Steidl, 2010).
[117] "He grew up loving photography. He had a box camera but I do not know who bought it for him. During weekends and school holidays he was always taking photographs around the township. He used to charge people about ten pence for a photo. At that time, he was not yet a professional photographer, so after he had exposed the film he would take it to a chemist in the city to be developed." Julian Bahula quoted in "Notes on the life of Ernest Cole 1940 – 1990 by Gunilla Knape", p 3. South African History Online. Accessed on 11 Nov. 16. https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/notes-life-ernest-cole-1940%26ndash%3B1990
[118] Cole, Ernest, Gunilla. Knape, Struan. Robertson, and Ivor. Powell. Ernest Cole: Photographer. (Göteborg: Hasselblad Foundation: Steidl, 2010).

He also was going to become ‘coloured’. Ernest had already understood what that meant; what ‘coloured’ could offer a '"bantu"'. Eersterust, where he grew up, had been declared an area for ‘coloureds-only’, when Ernest was a much younger child under new group areas law. '"bantu"'s had to leave for Mamelodi, but ‘coloureds’ could stay in Eersterust. “I don’t want this pass. I want to be a coloured”[119]. So said Catherine in almost a whisper into the camera, outside her house in Mamelodi, where she discloses how Ernest passed for ‘coloured’ in the film, *Ernest Cole*. Martha had become worried because at first Catherine said, “he did not want to tell the truth”[120]. But they had noticed, Ernest “did a funny thing”[121]. He started “stretching his hair”[122]. Ernest’s hair looks straightened in his self-portrait. His nephew, Leslie Matlaisane did not think so. He believed that Ernest may have only started straightening his hair by his twenties[123]. Yet, that does not add up. Ernest writes that by 1956, he had already refused '"bantu"' education and found the right correspondence course in photography. Two years later at the age of eighteen, Ernest had enrolled with the New York Institute of Photography and began work at Zonk! Magazine, before starting at Drum Magazine that year. The year before his father dies.

Did Ernest’s colleagues at Drum know that he had passed for ‘coloured’? Was this was part of the reason he was seen as somewhat apart from the other Black journalists? Ernest also was a devout Catholic and did not “associate with the Drum tradition of hard drinking, hard

[119] Cole, Ernest. *Ernest Cole 1940 – 1990*. Directed by Jurgen and Claudia Schadeberg. Journeyman Pictures. [Place of Publication Not Identified]: Schadeberg Movie Company, 1999.
[120] Ibid
[121] Ibid
[122] Ibid
[123] Leslie Matlaisane, Personal Communication (11 November 2018).

smoking and hard living"[124]. He was more of a "loner"[125] or as writer, Keorapetse Kgositsile mentions, a "bit of a recluse, but he did make contact"[126]. Aggrey Klaaste, who ran with the Golden City Post and Drum circles as a young journalist recalls, "we considered him a bit of a snob… Also the other problem with him was that he came from Pretoria, which was not considered hip by us guys."[127] In Klaaste's view, Ernest,

> "fell into the group of Nat Nakasa and Lewis Nkosi, in a strange way. They, Nat and Lewis, did not stay in the townships, they stayed in the white suburbs somewhere and they went to 'mixed' parties … and they read books from Wits University, that kind of thing. So they were considered 'uppity' people by us. When they went to shebeens they didn't drink in the back rooms, they drank in the front room with the Shebeen Queens. They were, I suppose, middle-class kind of Blacks for those days and Ernest somehow fell into that class"[128].

Ernest was close with photographer Alf Kumalo, ten years older and an important influence on his photography. Kumalo remembers the then darkroom assistant Philip Sithole took him aside one day. Angry with Ernest, Sithole who also was from Pretoria and travelled into the city via train with Ernest told Kumalo, "[t]his boy is deceiving you. That's not his surname. This boy: his surname is Kole man!'[129]

What did Ernest's passing for 'coloured' have to do with his black experience? Perhaps not much. From Robertson and Leylveld's recollections, it would appear that Ernest's 'coloured status' did little to insulate him from the vulnerability of having to appear as a Black photographer around the city. Under apartheid's visual regime, Lelyveld writes, "[a]nything

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[124] "Notes on the life of Ernest Cole 1940 – 1990 by Gunilla Knape" (7). South African History Online. Accessed on 11 Nov. 16. https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/notes-life-ernest-cole-1940%26ndash%3B1990
[125] Ibid (2)
[126] Ibid
[127] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (8)
[128] Ibid
[129] Ibid (5)

that sets a Black man off from the mass of menial workers increases his vulnerability. In a pass raid, when the police start checking reference books, the well-dressed African attracts the most suspicion"[130]. Ernest appeared as that kind of African. "[A] snappy dresser"[131], Robertson remembers:

> "…always dapper in a sports jacket and slacks, and this alone singled him out in the routine pass inspections which plagued Black life in the city. To add to the police curiosity about him, he always had a huge gadget bag full of his cameras and lenses dangling off one shoulder plus, often, a reel-to-reel tape recorder hanging off the other shoulder.[132]"

It was simply just how Ernest appeared, rather than what he did, which gave him "endless troubles with the police"[133]. He is said to have carried with him, receipts for his photographic equipment to prove himself as the owner, which was an aspect of Ernest's life that stood out for Robertson, as a 'european', who was spared that indignity. "Even if I was questioned or detained for "illegally" photographing the police, or for being in an area, such as Soweto, for which I had no permit," he remembers, "the ownership of my cameras was never called into question"[134].

Despite his visual vulnerability, Ernest refused to appear as apartheid had figured him. Even when he and Robertson kept up the fiction that Ernest was his servant. The two had started sharing a darkroom-studio space in Smal Street, Johannesburg around 1964. Ernest had been unhappily renting darkroom space in a commercial photographer's penthouse studio on

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[130] Lelyveld, Joseph. "One of the Least Known Countries in the World" in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 14.
[131] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (12).
[132] Ibid
[133] Joseph Lelyveld, "One of the Least Known Countries in the World" in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 16.
[134] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (12).

Rissik Street. “He wants me to make tea and sweep out the place” Ernest would complain. “I stopped that kind of job years ago. And he still wants me to pay him rent!” Having to appear as a servant was better than being one. Yet, Ernest still did not play the part. Robertson recalls the Afrikaner caretaker of the building taking him aside “to complain about “your boy” being so “cheeky”. Ernest had refused to call him, “my Bass, my Kroon " and did not follow the rules of the building, which required him to vacate by six o’ clock in the evening.

How did Ernest then make this visual regime believe that he was coloured, not '"bantu"'? How did he play race for apartheid? How did he know how he needed to appear? According to Robertson, Ernest had relished in the performance and took a certain pride in telling the story of how he had himself classified as coloured. He is said to have told Robertson, “those bastards are so arrogant they really believe their own bullshit that a 'european' is always smarter than an African. None of them can imagine that a Black man could ever outsmart them.”[135] In *House of Bondage*, Lelyveld describes Ernest’s plan. He was prepared. Already fluent in Afrikaans, and knowing what to expect from the process from others like him, who had been there before.

At the local coloured office of the Labour Bureau where he had come to apply for employment he was “eyed suspiciously”[136]. Ernest did not have the required birth certificate that verified his racial status. He knew that he was not listed there, but went off to the Registrar of Births to request a copy with a ‘coloured friend’ to corroborate the lie that he was a ‘coloured orphan’. At the Late Registration of Births Office, Ernest was referred to where he wanted to be: the Classification Board of the Bureau of Census and Statistics.

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[135] Ibid

[136] Lelyveld, Joseph . “One of the Least Known Countries in the World” in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 18.

According to Robertson, those who had undergone the passage before Ernest had told him about a particular official who believed his own powers of observation. Proud of his reputation for being able to tell a coloured from a '"bantu"' every time. He would ask unsuspecting Blacks questions to which he thought only 'coloureds' knew the answer. He was not a fool and would make sure to ask the same question in different ways to see if the same answer was given. Therefore, going in for his interview, Ernest understood how to play the masquerade.

Ernest is said to have had a 'coloured friend' teach him how to speak Afrikaans with a 'coloured accent' so as to help the official see him with more clarity. Robertson recounts that Ernest "got very good at giving it a real Kaapie twang"[137]. As the simple questions were asked, he made sure to answer them very slowly, so as to appear not very bright and intent to please the official by giving his questions the necessary thought. Ernest lulled the official into a false certainty so as to make him see what apartheid had him believe. He played the 'coloured part' and anticipated the moment when the official asked his decisive question: "How tall were you when you were eight years old?''[138]. Ernest knew his performance rested on how he appeared to answer this question. He had made sure to take especially long to reply, to appear as if he did not want his memory to fail him. He gave it some more thought. He scratched his head, building the suspense into which he had drawn the official, now looking eagerly. "I could see him thinking"[139], Ernest is said to have thought, "now I've got this little bastard"[140]. Then, Ernest rose slowly enough from his chair to seem uncertain about his childhood height,

[137] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (12)
[138] Ibid
[139] Ibid
[140] Ibid

and gave the official what he needed to see. He made the ‘coloured gesture’. Ernest held out his arm, palm faced down.

The gesture performed a coloured conception for a 'european' gaze: a conception of idiocy, childishness, and absurdity; and a gaze of pity and pathology. The gesture performed Coloured as a comical tragedy argued by Jakes Gerwel in *Literatuur en apartheid: konsepsies van "gekleurdes" in die Afrikaanse roman tot 1948* (1988). Gerwel’s Coloured tragicomedy thematics such as the figure of “Jollie Hotnot”, the coloured origin story: “Ek het saam met die Baas Gekom” and kinderlikheid conditions a “dubbelslagtigheid” or a double mindedness that among other registers of representation, reads comically. The gesture that Ernest made under the observation of the apartheid state official was meant to perform racial classification. Given Ernest’s deliberate intent to have himself be read as ‘coloured’, to what extent was he complicit in his own passing?



2.4. Outseeing Apartheid

Thirteen men face a wall as black as the floor. The wall is not Black from the floor to the ceiling. It is painted Black just below the reach of these outstretched men's open hands that are held in the air as if they had committed a crime. Each man is lined up next to one another, barefoot–heels touching–on a white line painted on the floor. The men appear undressed to the naked eye. Some are tribally dressed. One wears his pants and belt. The room appears empty. There is an air vent near the ceiling. A white basin is nailed against the wall. In front of each man is a single white paper bent from being touched. The papers make a staggered line of short white shadows thrown against the Black floor. The white paper shadows on the Black floor contrast the black flesh shadows of hand gestures that are thrown on the white portion of the wall, above each man's head. Flesh and paper shadows augment each man's presence as bare buttocks that stand in for the individuality of their hidden faces. These are mine recruits being medically examined. Ernest and his camera are in the room. He holds this primal scene of apartheid: sharp and exposing, made as it were to be seen; made as if Ernest belonged there to officiate. His view stands in for the gaze of the 'european' doctor[141], who is a presence left outside the frame. This image represents a decisive moment, a muscular critique against apartheid, the one that Ernest had been waiting for, wating as if he had known that it was coming; *a coming of a felt revelation*.

According to Robertson, Ernest did know that this image would appear. He had been to that mining recruitment centre before. Although the first time that he had gone, Ernest "couldn't

[141] Thanks to Yale Doctoral Candidate, Efeoghene Igor for this observation, which she has written on as part of her dissertation research.

get a camera in"[142]. This may not be true. In *House of Bondage*, Ernest writes about how he came to photograph the essay, 'The Mines', which was by accident. He was still twenty years old, and an aspiring photojournalist, working at Drum as a layout assistant. He writes of the contradiction of Drum Magazine as being about Black life and "the injustices of apartheid", yet its owners also owned mines. The editor had taken on a Chamber of Mines advertorial and assigned a reporter and photographer to create the "success story based on an individual miner". One day the assigned photographer could not accompany the reporter and Ernest was chosen to fill in. Thus, he first entered a mining recruitment centre as an official photographer, but he was still overlooked. "The official conversed easily with the white reporter and ignored me", Ernest writes. "To him I was just another "bloody Kaffir" with a menial job to do and he carried on as if I were not there"[143]. There Ernest witnessed "a telling scene of naked mine recruits being examined as if they were slaves or cattle on auction"[144]. Ernest had already decided. He would,

> "learn more about the mines and in the years that followed I made my way to ten or more big mine compounds in the Rand. Sometimes I made friends with an African guard at the gate who would let me in. Sometimes I showed up so often the guards assumed I worked there. Once in I was rarely interfered with. To the white guards, as to the mine official, I was just another Kaffir and they paid no attention to me. As a result I had considerable freedom to see what I wanted to see"[145].

Ernest's passing was not just an event but a photographic practice. Being mistaken for "a bantu" or "a coloured" appears to have been essential to how Ernest gained access, was able to be ignored, and could escape race laws by playing against and with the ways in which black bodies were read by the '\'european' gaze.' Being recognised for a

[142] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (12).
[143] Cole, Ernest. 1967. *House of Bondage*. Ridge Press. Random House Publishing. New York City (22)
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid (23).

black photographer may have been an identity that would be detrimental to have passed for. One of Ernest's iconic exposures begins to open the questions of passing as photographic practice. He never described how he made the exposure of the mining recruits being medically examined. According to Robertson, photographing that scene required a disguise for his camera and clarity about the image that Ernest had already pre-visualised. Robertson arrived one day at their studio and discovered Ernest, "[p]utting his reflex camera into a brown paper bag…".

> "He could have sneaked the picture with a wide-angle but his visualization of the image required a medium telephoto lens to prevent too steep perspective on the line of men. The problem was that a medium-tele, plus the reflex camera on which he would have to use it, were too bulky to be hidden under a jacket. Reflex cameras of those days had no built-in electronics, so you could remove the pentaprism finder and shoot from waist level, framing the picture on the exposed ground glass. Accordingly, Ernest put the camera, minus prism, with the tele-lens fitted, in the bottom of the bag. Focus and exposure were pre-set from the light and distance he had observed on his previous visit. Carefully he tore open the end of the bag and next the lens, leaving the paper as a flap, then taped a cable-release up the opposite inside corner. On top of the camera he put a paper napkin, sandwiches and an apple. Carrying the bag into the mine as his lunch, he got himself into position, pushed the "lunch" aside far enough to see the screen and opened the flap. Framing the shot on the ground glass, all he had to do was wait for the decisive moment and press the cable release[146]".

Could Ernest have exposed this scene, in this manner? How viable was the contraption Robertson describes him making and how successfully could an image be made with it? Does it even matter? The iconic power that this image wields lies not in the plausibility of its creation, but in the reality of what it appears to expose. We can never know how Ernest made his exposures. Most of them remain images without origin. Robertson's creation story about the mining recruitment image is a rare explanation of an Ernest Cole image. Yet, there is only

[146] Ibid.

one exposure of this view. In the contact sheets for this series, this image is alone in the surviving sequence of exposures. Ernest had made other images of mine recruits in that room, but none like this one.

There are other stories about how his images were made that figure unintentional ways in which subjects pictured in *House of Bondage* came into being. Such as the 'Hospital Care' essay, which came out of Ernest having suffered a serious injury in 1963. He had been on his Vespa scooter, out on assignment for *The World* newspaper. Around midday, he collided with a vehicle that had jumped a red light, near Ellis Park in Johannesburg. At the scene of the accident, Ernest was left waiting for two and a half hours before an ambulance arrived. "Both my legs seemed to be broken and I could do no more than pull myself to the sidewalk and sit there. Police came to investigate"[147]. When the ambulance finally arrived, it did not take Ernest to the hospital immediately. The ambulance picked him up, then fetched another person before both were brought to Johannesburg General hospital. To what extent did Ernest's coloured classification matter in this instance?[148] Was he treated as 'a coloured' or a '"bantu"'? Did he insist on being recognised as 'coloured'? Were 'coloureds' even admitted to Baragwanath Hospital? Ernest did not say. He did write,

> "This hospital has two sections, for Black and for white, and at that time was used mostly for emergency cases. A doctor there declared that both my knees were shattered and I would have to be admitted to a hospital. But not that one. I was left on a stretcher to "wait for transport," as they say, until another ambulance came for me. This one took me to Baragwanath."[149]

[147] Ernest Cole, "Hospital Care" in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 112.
[148] Gunilla Knape Interviewed by Candice Jansen, 3 March 2017.
[149] Ernest Cole, "Hospital Care" in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 112.

After waiting in pain for the entire afternoon, Ernest eventually was examined by a specialist at 11pm, who put him into a cast from the waist down to stabilise his injury, which would need surgery. Ernest was operated on six days after admission and spent twenty-six days in the hospital, "long enough to educate me"[150]. He had already decided, "[t]he first day that I could walk again I walked out of Baragwanath"[151]. Ernest would walk into this story. "…I went back, many times, to that hospital and to others", he wrote.

> "Sometimes I just walked in during visiting hours with my camera concealed. Other times I slipped in after hours, dodging the guards who did not want stories published about the hospital and who would stop and search anyone they suspected. From such visits I came away with the pictures for this chapter"[152].

This accident did affect Ernest for the rest of his life. He developed a disability and "had a certain way of running"[153], Mphakati remarked. "…[W]e couldn't even call [it] running, those of us who knew him. He had a certain way of walking, very upright. It was like somewhere his joints refused to coordinate with the rest of his body"[154]. Ernest made his images in spite of his disability. Even when he knew that he may not be able to outrun whatever may have chased him. Was this in part why he would take a younger Mphakati with him on his photographic missions? He explained what Ernest would tell him,

> "Before we went I was given instructions. After his scooter accident he couldn't run so he said to me: Look, should anything happen, I want you to take the film. Don't bother about what is going to happen to me. Let it not even cross your mind. Just get away. Don't worry, if I get taken that's no problem as long as you make sure that you get away with the film"[155].

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[150] Ibid
[151] Ibid
[152] Ibid
[153] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (6).
[154] "Ibid
[155] Ibid (17).

Did Ernest ever get afraid? Or maybe Ernest was never really worried that he could not get himself out of any situation that may have confronted him. In addition to his Christian faith, did his coloured help give him such confidence? For there were times that Ernest would also intentionally put himself in danger for a photograph. For another much-reproduced image from *House of Bondage* of pensive Black youth behind bars, who were "caught trespassing in a white area."[156], Ernest "got himself arrested of course"[157], Mphakati recalled. Ernest had thought to have himself detained overnight and made those exposures in secret by hiding "a camera on himself and [making] good use of his hours of forced incarceration"[158]. Was this an instance in which being mistaken for "a bantu" could have gotten him arrested and his 'coloured papers' could have set him free? Under these conditions, Ernest's camera would be hidden and when his camera would be visible, appearing as a Black photographer, his appearance may have put him in a different kind of risk, which Lelyveld suggests in *House of Bondage*.

> "Not only was he constantly being stopped and forced to explain how he ever managed to come into possession of such expensive photographic equipment, but now he was also coming under pressure, he said, to act as an informer. He told me of his determination not to say yes and the danger of saying no"[159].

Refusing to become an informer while also being in danger if saying no, put Ernest in a predicament. His refusal not only threatened him, it threatened his family and his photography as the 1960s went on along with the growth of his book project, it must have even endangered some of his closest relationships. Lelyveld admits to having first found

[156] Ernest Cole, "Police and Passes" in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 51.
[157] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (16).
[158] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library, 16.
[159] Joseph Lelyveld, "One of the Least Known Countries in the World" in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 16.

Ernest's disclosure that he was being pressured to become an informer, suspicious. He writes of having doubted why Ernest had told him about being approached to become an informer. Perhaps to "dull any suspicions"[160] that Ernest was not who he presented himself to be; that he was an informer, disguised as Black photographer. Yet, he admits,

> "Against this doubt I could always set the eloquent testimony of his work. That should have been enough, but the doubt lingered. Indeed, in vacant moments, I sometimes imagined that his determination to complete his work could lead him to compromise himself with the authorities in order to stay on their good side, that maybe he was trying to do as little damage as possible by informing on a foreign journalist who had nothing whatsoever to hide and who, in any case, was virtually immune to the pressures the authorities could place on South African citizens, white as well as Black"[161].

Lelyveld describes once leaving for the Congo, and Ernest asking him when he was planning to leave because Ernest wanted him to post a letter best sent from outside South Africa. In the end, Ernest never made it to Lelyveld's home or office to drop it off, and instead called to tell him that he would bring it to the airport. "What if the letter were a plant and what if I were searched by the customs authorities?[162]", Lelyveld discloses. "Feeling petty and mean"[163] , he decided that he would take Ernest's letter, but not take it outside the country. But Ernest never made it to the airport on time. "[S]o I never acted out my suspicion." Lelyveld admits. "Before long it disappeared entirely, leaving behind only an eerie sense of how close I had come to doing a serious injustice to a friend who all along had been placing enormous confidence in me"[164].

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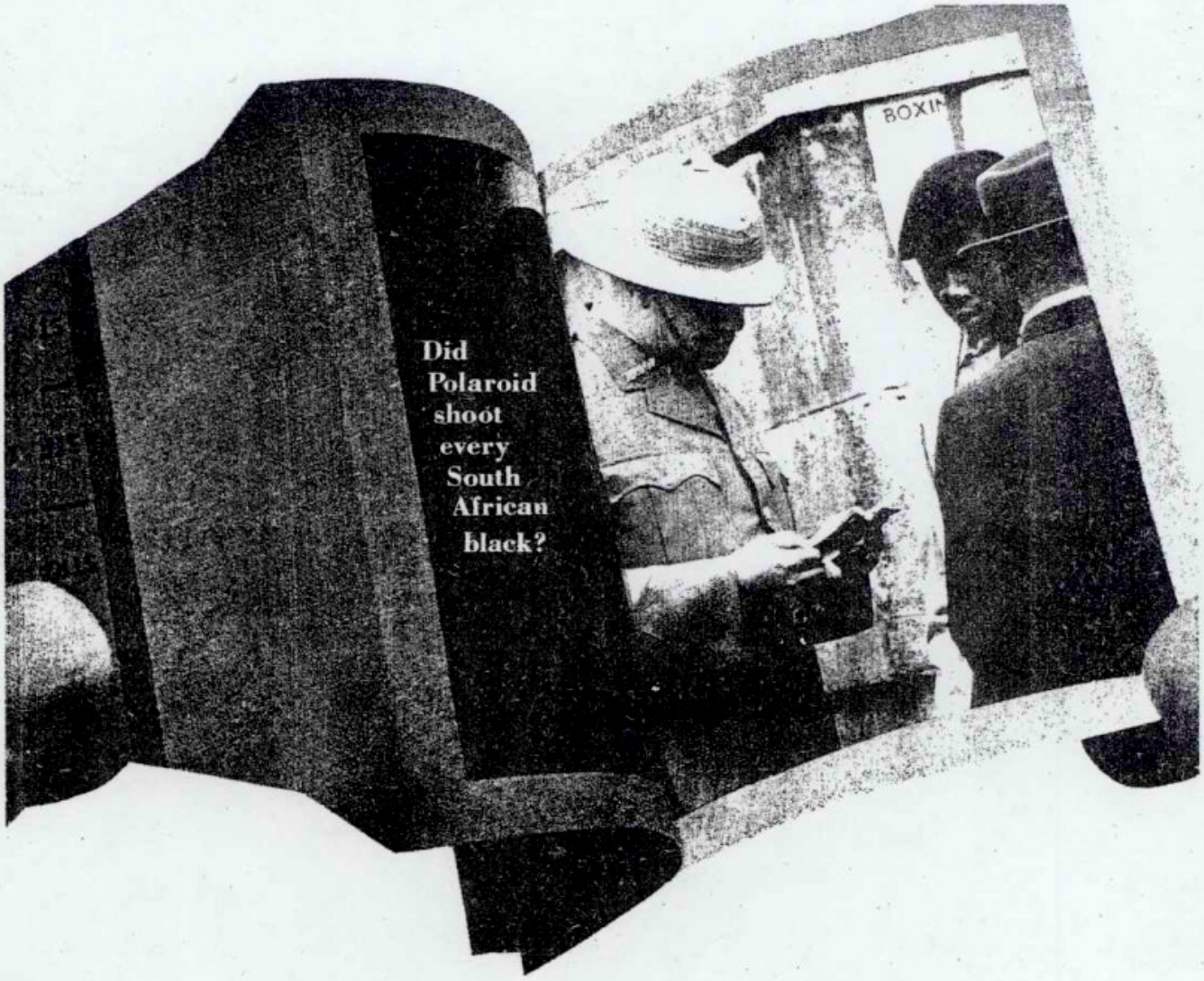
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid
[162] Ibid (17).
[163] Ibid
[164] Joseph Lelyveld, "One of the Least Known Countries in the World" in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 16.

To what extent was his coloured categorisation under these conditions its own kind of vulnerability? It would have made him invulnerable under conditions of having been mistaken for a "'bantu"', but could it have put him at risk for being identified as a possible spy for the apartheid police? Kumalo remembers, "[a]ctually that's what got him in trouble, changing his surname. The police, the Special Branch, moved in on him and reminded him that his real surname was Kole, why is it "Cole" now? So they threatened him, then they wanted him to spy, to work for them, and he was not interested in that. It's one of the reasons he left."[165]

[165] Knape, Gunilla. 'Notes on the Life of Ernest Cole' (Undated) https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/ERNEST%20COLE-gunilla.pdf (6) and "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library, (6).

POLAROID and SOUTH AFRICA



Boycott

Support the black revolutionary workers at Polaroid.



Polaroid

Until all sales to South Africa are discontinued.

2.5 Resistant Images

A white policeman checks the passes of two Black men. One man in a beret, looks at his pass book. The other's head under a fedora hat is turned to look outside the frame. Above this arresting exposure, made visible by two pale fingers that pull apart the scene as a polaroid revelation, is printed: "POLAROID and SOUTH AFRICA" in bold. The iconic PRWM's Boycott Polaroid campaign wrote, 'Did Polaroid shoot every South African Black?' A call to "Boycott Polaroid. Support the Black revolutionary workers at Polaroid until all sales to South Africa are discontinued". Ernest Cole is the photographer of the image and a number of other images used in the PRWM's promotional materials to illustrate what apartheid looked like at the time. The post-revolution irony of this poster that uses the '"bantu"' 'dompass', a symbol of identity theft, misrecognition, and Black erasure, as the object of culpability against Polaroid apartheid complicity, simultaneously, withholds the identity of one of the most important Black South African photographers at the time. By the 1970s, Ernest Cole and *House of Bondage* had been known in the United States as being synonymous with photographic resistance against apartheid. How could the PRWM use Ernest Cole photographs to critique what Polaroid did for Black life under apartheid and keep the Black photographer who created the image invisible?

The PRWM also cut and refigured his images for the purposes of their campaigns. That man in the fedora hat, looking outside the frame, is in fact looking at another policeman. That policeman who is checking his pass is not white, but Black. Why was the Black policeman cut out from Ernest Cole's original image, as it appears in his contact sheets and as it was

published in *House of Bondage*[166]? For pragmatic reasons? Was the space too square for the rectangular frame? Did the PRWM not want to reduce the original image in size? Would what was happening in the image, not have been legible otherwise? Was there just not enough available space for another policeman? Was this lack of space or these concerns for legibility just visual or were they also political? Did PRWM's cut help concentrate the meaning of the image? Did it make the revelation of apartheid more potent? Was Ernest's double-edged composition of Black youth held in opposing directions between two policemen, one Black, the other white, too full a view on apartheid? Did his view of more than one side to the regime pose more complicated questions to the operations of the state against Black people? Did PRWM not need two sides to apartheid policing or the pass system? Did apartheid just need to be cut down to size?

The figure of the Black policeman is a critical figure in Ernest's South African photographs. *House of Bondage* visualises him as a touching figure. As the hands of the apartheid state that reached into Black life. The Black policeman is therefore a touching subject in *House of Bondage* whose reach into Black life–touching passes or apprehending '"bantu"' suspects–made Blacks into also collaborators not just resistors or victims. The Black policeman in *House of Bondage* was also a touching figure because of the complicated feelings he stirred through the visual relationship Ernest pictured between him and his white colleagues, with whom he shared a uniform, but not an equivalent power[167]. He is Black, but looks like apartheid. He is a policeman but he also carried a '"bantu"' pass. Although Ernest figures his own apartheid stereotype of the black policemen, he wrote:

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[166] Image courtesy of the Ernest Cole Trust; Ernest Cole, "Police and Passes" in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 48.
[167] Mokoena, Hlonipha. "The Policeman, Reconsidered." *Interventions*18, no. 6 (2016): 801.

> "Most pass arrests are made by policemen who are themselves Black. These African cops are resented by urban Africans as much or more than the white ones. The police like to recruit Africans fresh from the rural areas, country boys. Naturally, such a man feels nervous and insecure in the city. But his uniform and the authority it gives him are his big chance to show he is some- body- not just a country lug. White superiors successfully brainwash Black cops into believing it is a sin not to carry a reference book. "I have *my* pass," the Black cop tells you righteously. "Why don't you have yours?"[168]

How could an Ernest Cole photograph have been used in the PRWM's campaign in the first place? Although not verified with Hunter who is still alive and an activist in the United States, Williams is said to have designed the PRWM's materials[169]. Were images sourced from the UN Centre against Apartheid or IDAF, who had a US Committee based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, not far from Boston where PRWM was active? Or could Ernest Cole images have been sourced through the ANC and its representative, Chris Nteta who advised the PRWM and spoke at their events?[170] In a 1971 newsletter[171], the PRWM reports on its international support and mentions having been invited by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement to speak at the AAM's annual Freedom Day conference.

Did the PRWM know that Ernest Cole, the photographer whose images they used in their campaign did not share the politics of the ANC? Did the ANC know? Newbury believes that Ernest Cole was not a political activist. *House of Bondage* "certainly contained no

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[168] Ernest Cole, "Police and Passes" in *House of Bondage*, Ernest Cole with Thomas Flaherty (New York: Random House, Inc, 1967), 42.
[169] Email correspondence with Jessica Williams, Art History Doctoral Candidate at Harvard University. 8 August 2018.
[170] Morgan, Eric J. "The World Is Watching: Polaroid and South Africa." Enterprise & Society 7, no. 3 (2006), 539.
[171] Dated August 20, 1971. From African Activist Archive: http://africanactivist.msu.edu/browse_results.php?category=organization&field=organizations&member=Polaroid_Revolutionary_Workers_Movement; http://africanactivist.msu.edu/document_metadata.php?objectid=32-130-1F8; http://africanactivist.msu.edu/document_metadata.php?objectid=32-130-362

programme for action"[172], he claims. Yet, Ernest did create *House of Bondage* for a political purpose. In his only known film interview, Ernest briefly explains discovering the United Nations' Afro-Asian Bloc as a young photographer and deciding to help their critique of apartheid at the time "by photographing the conditions in South Africa–the everyday life"[173]. After *House of Bondage* was published, Ernest made efforts to bring the book to the attention of a host of world bodies. Surviving letters show that he had sent a copy to the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church in New York, the UN Special Committee on Apartheid, the United States Senate, the Board of Christian Education of the United Presbyterian Church of America, the Permanent Mission to Jamaica, and the State of New York Executive Chamber who all wrote to thank him.

If Ernest was not a party-political activist, how would the political intent of *House of Bondage* be characterized? He appeared clear about his political beliefs and about his intent for his photography. Mphakati tells of Ernest once giving him advice saying: '[l]ook we've discussed this together and I respect your views. My advice to you is never join an organization because in joining, it actually limits what you may be able to do on your own'[174]. Fomer IDAF head of information, Barry Feinberg admitted similarly, "[s]upport for the liberation movement placed a lot of strictures on people. On their ideas and behaviour systems. It's very difficult to play around with it"[175].

[172] Newbury, Darren. *Defiant Images: Photography and Apartheid South Africa*. Pretoria, South Africa: Unisa Press, 2009, 173.
[173] Forsell, Birgitta and Hassner, Rune. *Photography as a Social Weapon: Lewis Hine and Ernest Cole*. 1969. Hasselblad Library and the Ernest Cole Trust.
[174] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library, 20.
[175] Interview with Barry Feinberg, 26 August 2018.

Mbalula describes a short stint in which Ernest had come to live with him in London after Mbalula was struck by Ernest's condition after the two met in NYC, at the YMCA, where Ernest had been staying. "He wasn't well; he didn't look well"[176], Mbalula remembered. The following day he went to see Johnny Makatini, the chief representative of the ANC in its NYC office, near the United Nations. "Comrade Ernest Cole doesn't look well. Why don't you guys do something?"[177] Mbalula asked. Makatini said that they had tried to contact Ernest, sent people with messages asking him to come to the office to meet with him, but Ernest never turned up. How did Mbalula eventually convince Ernest to visit him in London? He had told Ernest that since "they've been using your photos, you know, for the struggle"[178], Mbalula had called Feinberg who is said to have been excited to meet him. His recollection would suggest that Ernest and him had never met before 1978 despite Ernest's photographs appearing in Sechaba as early as 1967[179]. Ernest is said to have returned home that night intent on wanting to travel to Sweden to look for whatever he had "left there in a locker at the airport or the station[180]". Feinberg had apparently given him "some money"[181].

Aubrey Nkomo, who shared an apartment with Ernest for much of the 1970s, remembered that "he was also upset by the fact that there were organisations where people used his work when promoting their events or whatever they were doing without his permission and without recognition. That upset him a lot. He would even tell me: 'Look even your organisation, the

[176] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library, 20.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] When asked about this meeting, Feinberg could not recall having met Ernest although he had thought that such a meeting could not be unlikely. Sechaba: Women's Day Special Issue, August 1967/6. University of Western Cape Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Cape Town, South Africa.
[180] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library, 32.
[181] Ibid.

ANC, uses my work. I don't mind, but hey man, they ought to give me recognition.' That upset him[182]!" Geoff Mphakati felt strongly that,

> "Ernest was totally and completely ripped off. Everything he owned was gone; even his material – if ever there was a photographer whose work was abused left right and centre I think it was Ernest Cole. The ANC used his work again and again and I don't think they paid him a penny. His pictures were used in all sorts of pamphlets and brochures and, as far as I know, he received nothing for it[183]."

Further research is needed to understand Ernest's view of political organizations and the ANC in particular. What was Ernest's relationship to the exiled ANC community in both Sweden and the United States? Why did he not appear to have made stronger efforts to associate with the ANC in NYC? What was the ANC's relationship there with Ernest? Why did they allow the use of his photographs without seeking his permission? If they did ignore Ernest's condition during the difficult years of his life as Tladi, Mphakhati, and Mbalula suggests, why celebrate his legacy posthumously?

[182] Knape, Gunilla. 'Notes on the Life of Ernest Cole' (Undated) https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/ERNEST%20COLE-gunilla.pdf (6) and "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (7-8).
[183] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (34).



2.6 Death of a Photojournalist

In four years Ernest would be dead. That was 1986, the year Lelyveld published his Pulitzer prize-winning book on apartheid and South Africa, '*Move your Shadow'*. There Lelyveld describes the last ten years of Ernest's life as "a deliberate retreat into himself [that] led gradually to a kind of mysticism and a life in the canyons of Manhattan that might have compared him to that of a sadhu, a wandering Hindu ascetic in the foothills of the Himalayas"[184]. 1986 is also the year that the last known photograph of Ernest is made on a night time street. Near the Chelsea Hotel, South African photographer, Rashid Lombard made a portrait of Ernest. 1986 was a dream realised for Rashid, who spent a day with his idol, Ernest Cole. Rashid was a young visual activist himself, who came of age in the height of *House of Bondage's* influence on the anti-apartheid struggle. To him, Ernest Cole was a legend who had by then already passed into myth. Both him and the book had been banned for almost twenty years. By 1986, Ernest had stopped calling home. By then, most South Africans did not even really know what he come to look like[185].

That night, Ernest and Rashid took a walk together and Rashid made his portrait. Lombard pictured him as a photographic icon: "very small but monumentally high"[186]. Lombard immortalised him. The short depth of field traced Ernest out from the world of the living and brought him to the fore in a world without end. A blurred constellation of lights behind him. The empty street became his theatre. A thick, dark shadow is thrown by Ernest's magnitude. He appears to enjoy the idolatry and seduce Lombard, who fell for the romance. Lombard's

[184] Lelyveld, Joseph. Move Your Shadow: South Africa, Black and White. 1st ed. New York: Times Books, 1985 (16).
[185] Rashid Lombard interviewed by Candice Jansen, 16 February 2017.
[186] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (36).

portrait is romantic, however the romance is contrasted with the exposure of Ernest's vulnerable life. He is as thin as the overstretched jersey, he wears. His hair is long; neat but could do with a comb. His beard is overgrown. The folds of his forehead, his gaunt cheeks, and darkened skin tells of a life lived in exposure to the elements. Ernest looks tired. Did he imagine that this would be the last time anyone would ever photograph him? What did it mean to him to know that South Africa had not forgotten him? That *House of Bondage* had made an impact? That he was a hero? By the means of his open stance and playful look away from the camera, Ernest looks like how he wanted to be remembered.

Ernest also photographed Rashid. They had spent the day together. Rashid recalls that he extended his three-month trip because of Ernest. He just photographed him once, as Ernest wears the same striped jersey in most of the images. Ernest was then living at the YMCA. "He came over to my apartment [and] [h]e started looking at my equipment"[187]. Ernest's handling of the camera, struck him: "just the way he touched it: he just caressed it. And then he asked if he could take one picture." Of course, Rashid agreed. Did Ernest place him against the mirror? He only made only one blurred frame. Rashid is looking down. He did not look Ernest in the eye. Did he want to drop his gaze? He looks excited while keeping serious with a charged innocence. Ernest's portrait of him is a doubled image. Rashid wanted Ernest to photograph him again. "I'm being photographed by Ernest Cole; The Ernest Cole!". But Ernest refused and said "only one!", which became Rashid's "gem"[188]. Apparently, Ernest admitted that he had not touched a camera for almost eight years[189].

[187] "Ernest Cole in the House of Bondage" by Struan Robertson (2003). Unpublished manuscript. Hasselblad Foundation Library (41).
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.

Lombard may be the last South African photographer to have made Ernest Cole's portrait, but Badsha was the last photographer to see Ernest alive. He describes a sickly image of an already small man whose body had shrunk to all but a face. Badsha was struck by how much Ernest had thinned from the terminal pancreatic cancer, which had spread to the rest of his body. His bed sheets appeared like a "shroud". Yet, Badsha recognized that his eyes were "absolutely alive". Ernest had the kind of eyes which stood out as a feature of his face,they had a life of their own. At that visit, near the end, Ernest had seen Badsha's camera bag and asked him what kind of camera he had used. Badsha was using a Leica and Ernest asked if he could have a look. Badsha remembers, "I pulled it out and he took these thin, gaunt hands out from under the sheet–you could see there was nothing–no flesh at all–and he held it and he looked at me with huge questions in his eyes."[190] Badsha thought that Ernest appeared as if he were longing to go out and use his camera, but instead "he didn't put it to his eye; he just caressed it [with his hands] and gave it back to me".

American journalist, Douglas Martin wrote a moving tribute to Ernest soon after his funeral, which appeared in the New York Times and the San Francisco Chronicle on the 18th of March 1990. Martin sketched three touching moments of loss and love shared between Ernest and family, a marked absence not only in what is known about his life but also in what remains of his surviving archive. Martin called them "images" and they pictured how Martha first said goodbye to Ernest before he left South Africa for exile as a twenty-six year old, how he lived to see Nelson Mandela walk out of prison a free man from his death-bed, and how he and Martha were reunited in a hospital room after more than twenty-five years apart. She was 81-years old and arrived with Catherine at the hospital. When Martha saw Ernest's condition, she made her own diagnosis. She had come to his bed as he was resting, and touched the back

[190] Ibid (43).

of his neck[191]. She then knew, Ernest would soon die and he did, shortly after Martha and Catherine arrived. Ernest had waited to see her before he did. Martin writes of that first time Martha and Ernest laid eyes on one another. She had walked into his hospital room, and when she saw her son, Martha had started to cry. Ernest reached out to her for comfort and said to Martha, 'Ou sis, moenie huil nie'.[192]

[191] Joseph Leylveld interviewed by Candice Jansen, 24 November 2018.
[192] Martin writes that Ernest first saw his mother and said this to her in Afrikaans and writes in English, 'Mammy don't cry'. I had learnt that Ernest and his family, called Martha, "Ou sis". 'Ou sis moenie huil nie' is an imagined reconstruction of what Ernest could have said to her in Afrikaans. In Schadeberg's film, Martha also recounts the story of seeing him in New York before he died and tells Robertson in English that 'he told me not to cry'.

CHAPTER 3:THE QUIET OF CEDRIC NUNN

3.1 Coloured as Photography: Betraying Family

"Coloured identities are encounters with difficulty"[193], writes Erasmus who positions 'coloured identities' as loci of the South African intramural that generates particular difficulties of relation to and between 'bantu' and 'european' classification. *Coloured Black* is concerned with the stakes of 'coloured', its privilege and its difficulty. 'Coloured' poses certain difficulties within the field of African studies according to Christopher Lee's, *Unreasonable Histories: Nativism, Multiracial Lives, and the Genealogical Imagination in British Africa*. He writes that colonial multiracial histories are "marginalized by scholars"[194] in part due to the limits of race during the colonial-era and "the historiographical turn that decolonization ultimately initiated"[195]. Lee claims that the field of African studies has been shaped by a "colonial order of knowledge" that gave rise to what he calls "Africanism" or "colonial nativism". He argues, this "enduring episteme" has led to "the exclusion of non-native and interstitial forms of historical experience"[196]. Lee believes:

> "This condition of exclusion has been enhanced by the racially "transgressive" origins of multiracial people that defied the conventional logics of colonial taxonomy. Multiracial communities have inhabited the shadows of this enduring structure of knowledge, occupying a space beyond native questions, policies and histories. They have been treated as "*people without history*" in both senses of the expression–being beyond history as conventionally defined, and thus having no history."[emphasis added][197]

[193]Zimitri Erasmus, *coloured by History, Shaped by Place : Perspectives on coloured Identities in the Cape. Social Identities* South Africa Series. Cape Town: Maroelana: Kwela ; SA History Online, 2001 (24).
[194]Christopher J Lee,*Unreasonable Histories: Nativism, Multiracial Lives, and the Genealogical Imagination in British Africa*. Radical Perspectives. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014 (8).
[195]Ibid
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid (12).

Erasmus would also mark this exclusion as part of the "legacy of positioning" in the hierarchy of race. 'Coloured identities' are historically negotiated here that engender what the essays in *Coloured by History* would call 'fragility'[198]. The legacy of this positioning is susceptible to ambiguous histories that appear one way and look another. The racist sentiment held towards Black Africans, Erasmus acknowledges [199]that "this discourse of racial hierarchy and its association of Blackness with inferiority is mobilized by 'coloureds' against 'coloureds' as much as against Black Africans"[200]. Living with these "excluding relations" and "internal contradictions" she writes "is part of the pain of being 'coloured'"[201].

Gqola rightly restates that drawing difference between the 'coloured' and the '"bantu"' runs the danger of assuming that 'non-coloured' identities were uncontested zones of Blackness and importantly raises the issue of African identification in relation to the construction of the Afrikaner[202]. Reading Erasmus, Gqola makes a claim for a tolerance of ambivalence, which is important to state here in full because it clears a path to attend to the kinds of difficulty that her and Lee's indictment reframes for an engagement with Cedric's photographic practice of self-exposure as a photographer, classified as 'coloured' and his staging of family as political critique. Gqola writes,

> "'[i]n order to attain a state where it is possible to live comfortably with these tensions and 'be tolerant of ambivalence', wounds need to be reopened and attended to. The processes by which the sores are focused on require penetrating honesty and initiative. For Erasmus, they begin with an insistence on claiming coloured, African and Black identities *simultaneously* and participating in what those categories describe. In this

[198] See Sean Field's essay, 'Fragile Identities: Memory, Emotion and coloured Residents of Windermere' and Heidi Grunebaum and Steven Robins' essay, 'Crossing the Colour(ed) Line: Mediating the Ambiguities of Belonging and Identity'.
[199] Erasmus, Zimitri. 2001. *coloured by history shaped by place: perspectives on coloured identities in the Cape*. Roggebaai (16).
[200] Ibid (24).
[201] Ibid.
[202] Gqola Pumla Dineo, *What Is Slavery to Me? : Postcolonial/slave Memory in Post-apartheid South Africa*.

> manner she challenges other Blacks/Africans, and specifically Blacks, to go to that dangerous place where it is no longer possible to, through self-censure, disown what *else* they are. There are parallel processes of difficultly in identifying along ethnic lines for all Black subjectivities"[203].

One intermural difficulty that *Coloured Black* argues characterises Cedric's photographic practice in relation to his multi-media project, *Blood Relatives* is familial and political betrayal[204]. The project debuted as an exhibition and documentary film in 2005, more than twenty years after Cedric started photographing family during the 1980s. During this period he discovered photography and he used his family as a training ground for both his photography and his critique of 'coloured identity' as a Black-identifying activist. Along with photographing family, Cedric also photographed 'coloured group areas' in Durban and Johannesburg. *Blood Relatives* may have pictured family, but Cedric presented his photographic exhibition specifically as a critique of South African racism.

Coloured Black argues that *Blood Relatives* is weighted with betrayal. The betrayal of 'coloured children' orphaned by their 'european' and Zulu or '"bantu"' families in the making of 'coloured genealogy' in KwaZulu-Natal. The betrayal, understood to have followed the memory of John Dunn against the Zulu kingdom, who is a family member not mentioned in his exhibition statement, but is a historical figure of the documentary. John's "betrayal" is not mentioned in the film . There also is the betrayal of Cedric's 'coloured family' holding racial sentiment against '"bantu"'s alongside, Cedric's own double betrayal against family: perhaps his Black political family by identifying himself with 'colouredness' in *Blood Relatives* and

[203] Gqola, Pumla Dineo. What Is Slavery to Me? : Postcolonial/slave Memory in Post-apartheid South Africa. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2010 (42).
[204] These questions resurface in my reading of Cedric's 2005 exhibition statement for *Blood Relatives*, the photographic exhibition. They also seep into my reading of *Blood Relatives* the film, which is not the focus of my analysis of Cedric's photography. Arguably a limitation of my approach, which focuses on Cedric's framing of his photographic exhibition and does not account for the use of his family photographs in the film and for the ways in which the film and the exhibition are in dialogue with one another. I refer to the film as it relates to my argument.

thus with the racism it critiques. Cedric also in one sense, betrayed his relatives, by having their images bare that critique as both family and 'coloured South Africans'.

Steffen Jensen in the chapter, 'Treason and Contested Moralities in a Coloured Township, Cape Town' (2010) raised the matter of intramural and familial betrayal within 'coloured community'. Jensen provides context to his ethnography by writing that 'coloureds':

> "have historically been ambiguous, racially and politically, as their allegiances to either of the dominant groups (whites and Africans respectively) have been questioned. On the one hand, coloureds occupied a position—although marginal—within white South Africa, and they received more state attention (for better or for worse) and had better options than Africans (Goldin 1989). On the other hand, coloureds were incorporated into the struggle through the generic terms "Black" and "oppressed" (Norval 1996). However, neither side was absolutely certain of where coloured loyalties lay…. coloureds, through their structural position in South African society, arguably were and are always already in danger of being accused of betrayal.[205]"

Jensen overlooks how, 'coloureds' are also in danger of being betrayed. The vulnerability of political allegiance is not unique to 'coloured identities' during or after apartheid. Yet, Jensen frames his relation of betrayal between 'coloureds' and 'non-coloureds', again framing 'coloured' as betwixt and between the 'european' and the '"bantu"'. *Coloured Black*, through Cedric's family photographs, considers a Black intermural vulnerability within 'coloured family' and 'coloured community' that complicates the attention of 'coloured' as the position of "a privileged Black", who bears what Catriona Mackenzie, Wendy Rogers, and Susan Dodds call "pathogenic vulnerabilities". They argue that pathogenic vulnerabilities "may

[205] Jensen, Steffen. ''Treason and Contested Moralities in a coloured Township, Cape Town' Thiranagama, Sharika., and Tobias. Kelly. Traitors : Suspicion, Intimacy, and the Ethics of State-building. He cites Goldin, Ian. Making Race : The Politics and Economics of coloured Identity in South Africa. Cape Town : Johannesburg: Maskew Miller Longman ; Thorold's Africana Books, 1987. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010 and Norval, Aletta J. Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse. New York: Verso, 1996. (153).

result when social policy interventions aimed at ameliorating… vulnerability have the contradictory effect of increasing vulnerability"[206]. 'The coloured' during apartheid were a social ground for political betrayals that haunt coloured-'"bantu"' intermurality[207]. *Coloured Black* suggests the Black intramural vulnerability that Cedric's *Blood Relatives* surfaces is between 'the coloured community or the coloured familial' and a Black anti-apartheid politics.

These difficulties have a long history, most recently touched on by Courtney Jung's *Then I was Black: South African Political Identities in Transition* (2000). Jung begins the book with a quote by former 'coloured activist', Eugene Paramoer who said:

> "We were disgusted with the label coloured and we would say, in disgust–as a way of saying this is not how it is supposed to be–we would say "so-called coloured people". "So-called" meaning we didn't call ourselves coloured people. It was others calling us that. It was the name given to us by our oppressors, the colonialists, and the Afrikaner nationalists. And people didn't see themselves. I didn't see myself, as coloured. Then

[206]Catriona Mackenzie, Vulnerability: New Essays in Ethics and Feminist Philosophy. Studies in Feminist Philosophy. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014 (9).

[207] Courtney Jung's *Then I was Black: South African Political Identities in Transition* (2000) provides a more multi-racial and ethnic exposition of the shifting allegiances of race, ethnicity and political cultures into the early 1990s. The politics of Zulu identity is useful to think about it's distinction from the identity of 'Black' as also a cleavage between Inkatha and UDF affiliation during apartheid. Jung's chapters on 'coloured identities' is also useful because it offers a more complicated take on the Western Cape election of 1994, which is understood as a betrayal of 'the coloured vote' against not only the ANC but democratic change in South Africa, even though it was not the only province to not have won an ANC majority. Jung's research into polling data at the time reveals a multiplicity in coloured political sentiment that goes against the collaboration-resistance binaries to which Black political cultures in South Africa often can be reduced. Why Jung omits the coloured People's Organisation from her genealogy of 'coloured political history' is unclear.
On coloured-'"bantu"' betrayal see also Heidi Grunebaum and Steve Robins' essay, 'Crossing the colour(ed) line: Mediating the ambiguities of belonging and identity' in *coloured by History, Shaped by Place*. Grunebaum and Robins discuss the TRC testimony of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) combatant, Zahrah Narkadien who discloses that she was blamed for a fight that broke out between her two '"bantu"' comrades, who "strategized amongst themselves that, 'Let's blame it on the coloured woman'". This betrayal felt by Narkedien resulted in her spending seven additional months in isolation. She confessed that "it hurt to be tortured by your own comrades" (167). See also: "Abebe Zegeye on Then I Was Black: South African Political Identities in Transition by Courtney Jung." Social Identities 7, no. 1 (2001): 147-50.
(https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/statement-dissolution-south-african-coloured-peoples-congress-barney-desai-and-cardiff-marne)

> I was Black. I saw myself as a Black person fighting for the interests of the Black people….[Now] I would say I'm a coloured. I would say I'm a coloured. And I wouldn't have said that ten years ago."

Also, in 1965, an intermural rupture emerged within the Congress Alliance, which appears to remain overlooked in foundational histories of black politics in South Africa, most notably from the seminal *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (1983). This is the matter of the breakaway of the South African coloured People's Organization (SACPO) from the Alliance. The era of the Congress Alliance (1950-1970) was comprised of a confederation of racial organizations, made up of "the African National Congress (a mass organization of black Africans); the South African Indian Congress (the movement of Africans of Indian descent); the South African coloured People's Congress established in 1953 (for "coloured Africans"); the Congress of Democrats (representing the white Africans) and the non-racial South African Congress of Trade Unions."

The split within the SACPO was between 'coloureds' who chose to stay as a separate racial body within the alliance, and politically serve as 'coloureds and their counterparts, Black-identifying 'coloureds' who broke away to the Pan African Congress to serve the struggle as Africans. The statement of the dissolution of the SACPO by Barney Desai and Marney Cardiff reads like a "monumental betrayal of the best interests of the enslaved masses". The statement is damning of the ANC and the Congress Alliance, which it called a "noteworthy experiment" that had failed because "it multiplied racialism and entrenched it in the sectional organizations". The SACPO believed the ANC and the Congress Alliance had festered African disunity. It explained the work of the SACPO as seeking to "develop the political consciousness of the 1.7 million people of so-called mixed race, to combat racialism amongst them and to link their struggle with the general movement for democracy of the oppressed as a whole." The SACPO had apparently met with ANC leaders to propose an amalgamation

and was informed “that [the ANC] alone as black Africans, can take decisions on behalf of the African people”. Desai and Cardiff responded,

> “This is nothing less than inverted Verwoerdian reasoning. As if the Khoi-Khoi (Hottentots) and the Batwa ("Bushmen") tribes as the forebears of the Cape coloured people were not Africans who were virtually exterminated in the first battles against the 'european' invaders of South Africa 300 years ago”.

A “decisive break from the past” was made and SACPO members were called on to join the PAC “as Africans and equals”. Desai and Cardiff write, “we will nevertheless warmly cherish our comradeship with the rank and file of the African National Congress who, we are sure, will discover and deal with the treachery of their leadership who are now champions of multi-racialism and reformism”.



The language of *Blood Relatives* performs a critical slippage between family and 'coloured identity'. Cedric's family members appear as both relatives and 'coloured subjects' who are related to him through biology and through a particular cultural experience in KwaZulu-Natal. For instance, in 1993, Cedric made a portrait of a woman called Rosie Strydom inside her home. She was seated sidelong at a thick wooden table. A bowled plate, a metal jug, and a tea tray of cup and saucers, a milk jug and a small sugar canister have been laid out on the table for a visit. Rosie is photographed surrounded by the things of her life. Behind her is a wall of family frames, hung in jagged symmetry above a mantle of anonymous objects that catch light that pours in from an unseen opening. It is a close portrait, but Cedric gives Rosie room. The wall she is pictured against ends at a door frame that opens into another dimension of her house, which lets us into view of two more door frames, designed perpendicular to another that suggests the extent of her domesticity.

This domestic depth rendered as backdrop to Rosie's portrait is key both to her life as a photographic subject and to Cedric's photographic practice. *Coloured Black* suggests that Cedric stages family as political critique. Rosie married into the Nunn family and was a distant relative of Cedric's. Rosie is also related to Cedric through coloured and its cultural experience in apartheid-era, Zululand. When Cedric made her portrait, Rosie was of the last coloured families who still remained in the area? Anthropologst, Fileve Palmer's doctoral study, *Through a coloured Lens: Post-Apartheid Identity Formation Amongst coloureds in KZN* (2015) makes a similar slippage in her study, in which she includes a mention of her family history, along with other families[208] who constitute in large part 'the coloured

[208] These families born from multiracial unions in the nineteenth century between 'european's, Zulus, indians and are named as the Dunns, the Fynns, the Africas, the Mariass, the Koks, the Strydoms, the Uyss, the Ogles, the Nunns, the Biggers, and the Banfords, the Pillays, the Padaychees, the Sakers and the Joshuas. In Fileve Palmer, Tlaloc.Through a coloured lens: post-apartheid identity formation amongst coloureds in KZN. Dissertation 2015

community' of the area. Many of these families thus share a genealogy and because of apartheid, married amongst one another. Palmer calls these processes of 'coloured identity formation' in KZN, "family traditions"[209]. Palmer herself is related to Cedric. Rosie, one of Cedric's photographed subjects, is her great grandmother but she also is related to Cedric because Rosie's son, married a daughter of John Dunn and a wife of the Cele clan. *Through a Coloured Lens* also uses some of Cedric's family photographs and suggests a familial impact that *Blood Relatives* had on this community. Palmer describes watching the film with her "youngest uncle's living room". The family became excited when Rosie's image appeared on the television screen[210].

Unreasonable Histories is helpful to begin understanding why a discourse of family recurs in the racial affiliation of community in KZN. In Lee's account of the heterogeneous multi-racial predicaments for being 'Anglo-African' in the colonial era, he identifies as "a deeply felt, yet instrumental, intersection of relationships–familial, racial, and political in scope[211]". Notions of family, kinship, and genealogy recur as "constitutive practices"[212] which "presented structures of feeling that defined political and intellectual agency"[213]. These feelings and assertions of group statuses appeared to have engendered vulnerabilities of recognition, shaped by multiracial politics during the colonial era that is reflected in their displacement after colonialism. These communities had become a problem for the colonial administration who were interested in dealing with the 'native question', while multiracial Africans problematically advocated for civil rights on the basis of having 'european' ancestry. Since

[209] Ibid (114).
[210] Ibid (115).
[211] Lee, Christopher J. *Unreasonable Histories: Nativism, Multiracial Lives, and the Genealogical Imagination in British Africa.* Radical Perspectives. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014: (8).
[212] Ibid (5).
[213] Ibid (17).

these identities have for the most part fallen from political use in what is understood today as Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, where these histories today largely are kept in "family memory"[214] rather than national history.

Having the opportunity to speak with Cedric about his work has been invaluable, yet also a challenge. His interests in identity, history and the photographic form are still evolving with his life experience and creative pursuits. His language on 'coloured identity' has also changed tack since *Blood Relatives* first showed. Questions to Cedric about this work, now almost twenty years old since he first began showing his family photographs, often rubbed up against his feelings about the project now, about what he would change about its framing and execution as well as his own ideas about 'coloured identity', which has both stayed the same and shifted over time. *Coloured Black* thus is not a contemporary reflection of Cedric's ideas about *Blood Relatives*, but rather an attempt to consolidate its history.

Cedric's family photographs first appeared in an exhibition in 1996. Malika Ndlovu approached him to display his photographs of 'coloured community' at her inaugural showing of the play, *A coloured Place* at the Durban Playhouse Theater. Thereafter, Cedric presents *Madhlawu* (about his maternal grandmother, Amy Louw) at the 1997 Macufe Festival in Bloemfontein, eight years before *Blood Relatives* is first shown at Constitutional Hill in Johannesburg. The exhibition did not travel thereafter either locally or abroad. Between *Madhlawu* and *Blood Relatives*, two group exhibition projects led by international curators in collaboration with local peers, included Cedric's family photographs in what became *Group Portrait South Africa: Nine Family Histories* (2003) and *Democracy's Images: Photography and Visual Art after Apartheid* (1998). In *Group Portrait,* Cedric was

[214] Ibid (3)

first approached to serve as one of the commissioned photographers, but after the curator, Paul Faber learnt about Cedric's family history, and that he had already been photographing his own family, Cedric instead was included as one of the project's subjects.

Curated by Katarina Pierre and artist interviews conducted by Rory Bester, *Democracy's Images* marks an important moment after apartheid in which *Blood Relatives* becomes framed as visual art and asserts its identity within the complexities of art practice in South Africa. *Democracy's Images* and *Group Portrait*, while differently deploying art practices, share an interest in South African heterogeneity that constitutes an idea of a national identity both inherited and contested. Cedric's photographs of family and his *Blood Relatives* images in post-apartheid curatorial practice appear to move between the relational scales of family, race, and nation, presenting more as emblematic of 'coloured identity' than critical of racialized families.

Cedric's interview in *Democracy's Images* is accompanied by other visual artists' interviews presented in both Swedish and English. Cedric's response to *Blood Relatives* then insisted on race and 'coloured identity', not family[215]. Bester, the interviewer, comments to Cedric, "It's quite unusual to be so preoccupied with 'race' in a post-election South Africa…"[216] Cedric responds:

> "In South Africa it is slightly problematic to be looking at something like 'coloured' identity in that people think racism is a thing of the past. When one raises the issue of

[215] Cedric was not the only participating artist whose work related to 'coloured identity'. Photographer Jodi Bieber's *Kom Blom met Ons (Come Hang out with us)* is a difficult series on 'coloured community' in Westbury, Johannesburg. She speaks of "coloured kids' and 'coloured families' with no ambivalence. Artist Tracey Rose's *Ongetiteld (Untitled)* 1996 is a video installation work about the body its 'coloured recollections', does not address the politics of 'coloured identity' as a national question but genders racial experience in confessional modes.
[216] Ibid (59).

> ‘coloured’ identity, people say, “Why don’t you just see yourself as South African”? The problem with this view is that I’m a South African who doesn’t have a culture. ‘Blood Relatives’ speaks about people of mixed descent, of how they are related by blood, but how they are nonetheless apart…”[217].

Cedric’s quarrel with the view that conflates concern for ‘coloured identity’ with perpetuating racism appears paradoxical. He may disagree with the view that ‘coloured identities’ are antithetical to a national identity, yet reinforces an apartheid view of Coloured by claiming it as being without culture. Cedric makes a critique of “culture” and goes on to say, “I’m looking at a damaged community of people cut loose from cultures, forced to try and find their own culture, grabbing little bits of culture along the way”[218]. He ends his reply by claiming, “[i]t’s a hang-up from a sick past and we need to get rid of it”[219]. What exactly is the hang up to which Cedric refers? Is it the hang up of understanding a South African identity as incompatible with its ethnic and racial divisions? Is Cedric referring to the hang up of needing a ‘culture’ to be South African? Or does the hang up refer to the historical shame of being classified as ‘coloured’? Yet, why say that he has no culture? Why coach his critique of race in a language that reinforces a fiction of racial purity?

This is one of the earliest public statements that Cedric made on *Blood Relatives*, which was formative to his exhibition statement in 2005. It remains the statement to which Cedric returns when asked about this project six years later[220]. For *Blood Relatives’* first showing, Cedric’s statement does address more than one view on ‘coloured identity’, yet this “view” is

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[217] Ibid.
[218] Lundström, Jan-Erik., Katarina. Pierre, Umeå Universitet. Bildmuseet, Uppsala Konstmuseum, and Borås Konstmuseum. Demokratins Bilder : Fotografi Och Bildkonst Efter Apartheid = Democracy's Images : Photography and Visual Art after Apartheid. Umeå: BildMuseet, 1998. Print. (59).
[219] Ibid.
[220] See Jacobs, Sean, and Cedric Nunn. "Sean Jacobs in Conversation with Cedric Nunn." Social Dynamics 37.2 (2011): 286-287. In this interview, Cedric quotes almost verbatim his 2005 statement after Jacobs asks him about ‘coloured identity’ in his work. Cedric begins his response by stating: “I have written about this before…”

important because it identifies a political position on 'coloured identity' in the early post-apartheid period that Cedric frames *Blood Relatives* against. This view is rooted in an anti-apartheid conception of nonracialism, left in the wake of "the coloured vote" for the National Party in South Africa's first election[221]. He also explains by way of two personal recollections of the natal alienation that he bore witness to as a child in Zululand. It is worth quoting here in full because it presents Cedric's deployment of famiy as metaphor that figures nation as family and apartheid family as a denial of relation that produces 'the coloured' as both a literal and a figurative orphan:

> "Etched in my memory is a scene when, aged about twelve, my dad parked his truck outside a kraal in the heart of Zululand, and an infant was brought, shrouded in blankets against the cold early morning air, and handed to me. I nestled it in my lap for the thirty or so kilometre journey to acceptance in the home of aunt May, a spinster and my Dad's cousin. Concerned elders had approached my father to adopt the child, which was identified as his 'nation'. Another two siblings arrived in quick succession, in the secrecy of night, to be discovered at the break of day by my aunt, clearly the blood relatives of the first, borne of the same Black mother and white father. Was their love thwarted by bigotry, was the situation exploited by any of them? Was the intolerance of both societies, white and Black, at fault? We pass judgment, if at all, with hindsight.
>
> We all know what happens to a child who is abandoned by both parents. Could the same happen to a people, abandoned by both societies, because their parents had dared to defy the social norms, boundaries and taboos of the time?"[222]

One difficulty with Cedric's familial summation is that Coloured could be conflated with the infantile, tacitly making 'coloureds', "soos kinders" as Jakes Gerwel argued as one of the enduring tropes of 'coloured representation' in the Afrikaans novel before apartheid[223]. Right

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[221] This view would have been debated in social research initiatives of the time, such as *Now that We are Free: coloured Communities in a Democratic South Africa* (1996) by researchers from the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) For example, see Ebrahim Rasool's essay, 'Unveiling the heart of fear' that asks questions such as "Is there a coloured community?", "Is there a coloured consciousness?", and "Is there a coloured disquiet?" (54-58).

[222] *Blood Relatives* Exhibition Statement. Cedric Nunn (2005)

[223] Translation: "like children" See Gerwel, G.J. 1988. *Literatuur en apartheid: konsepsies van "gekleurdes" in die Afrikaanse roman tot 1948*. Bellville: Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland.

after Cedric describes this recollection, he makes a tentative connection between this abandonment and 'the coloured vote':

> "Perhaps this would explain the much-debated issue of the pattern of voting in the Western Cape during the 1994 elections, when wooed by a particular political party, a people essentially interpreted this overture as an errant parent saying, all is forgiven, we love you, come back into the fold. A powerful emotional pull for anyone once abandoned to resist. My suspicion is that nationally people of a brown hue voted much the same way as did those of the Western Cape, but because they were in the minority in the other provinces, not with the same consequences"[224].

Cedric poses the question, "[h]ow do we see fellow South Africans, and how do they see us?" More than a decade after apartheid, he appears to forgo a Black consciousness and speak as a 'coloured' after acknowledging, "[c]oloured has always been a difficult and contentious term. During the struggle we pre-fixed it with 'so-called' so as to leave people in no doubt as to who had coined the name". It would appear that Cedric made a break with this practice, claiming, "[t]oday the struggle as we knew it then has past, and we all have the opportunity to reflect on our cultural origins, which "[f]or some of us" Cedric admits, "has begun a painful process of self-exploration". The pain of this exploration is expressed in a series of questions he poses:

> "Are we disparaging in our attitudes to each other because of past injustices, slights, mistakes, myths or plain circumstances? How long will we hold on to our past by refusing to engage with it? How long will we be silent about our feelings, harboring them like festering sores? When will we begin to talk, to heal ourselves? These questions are not the sole preserve of people of mixed descent, but rather are addressed to all South Africans."[225]

[224] *Blood Relatives* Exhibition Statement. Cedric Nunn (2005)
[225] *Blood Relatives* Exhibition Statement. Cedric Nunn (2005)

The relation between ‘coloured identity’ and ‘the nation’ strongly figures into Cedric’s critique of South African racism, which he calls irrational, as irrational as “the need to be accepted”. Yet, he insists:

> “'coloureds', brown people or people of mixed descent, need to be accepted as true South Africans, not some exotic aberration or genetic cocktail to be endured. There is a psyche that needs to heal; to begin to feel that it is truly one with this newly created democracy we call the new South Africa”.

Cedric evokes a language of denial that is unclear about what is being denied and by whom. It places its consequences not in the present, but somewhere in the future, with “new generations” who inherit “old animosities” that reinforce “divides where none are necessary”. The language of race and family is deployed in tropes of genealogy and nationhood, which haunt the kind of political critique that *Blood Relatives* reaches for. Is it because Cedric’s critique stems out of his genealogical imagination? Or his position as a biographical subject within that imaginary, who is bound by its intramural difficulties? To whom is Cedric speaking?

When he addresses ‘coloured people’ his critique of race gains clarity:

> “The whole country and all the people in it are having to re-examine their scripts, redefine who they are and exactly how they relate to the myriad other constantly evolving peoples they share the confines of these borders with. We 'coloureds' are no exception, and we ignore, delay or avoid this task at our own peril. The history of nature is full of blank spaces. Species that were unable or unwilling to adapt, died.”

When he speaks out from his own lived experience of apartheid as a classified ‘coloured’, he bares vulnerability writing, “[s]ubjected to years of isolation, in which we were shepherded in the direction of the trades or the shop counter, and mostly locked in ghetto's until we began to

recognize ourselves in the eyes of our fellow inmates". In these moments of confession,

Cedric speaks out against this family in the strongest terms, writing:

> "as I ventured into the community, I was at odds to understand how it was that people, who were suffering so much at the hands of the state, could themselves be the source of such virulent hate against people of a darker hue than themselves".

How does Cedric then see himself? He writes:

> "[i]n seeing myself and my world through my own eyes… I attempt in a highly mediated world, to comment on the effects of that great and notorious social experiment called apartheid. Once we were dictated to, told who we were and corralled into a 'colouredstan'. Told we were coloured, some exotic new breed of being. We seem largely to have bought the lie and the myth, and by default, by virtue of living cheek by jowl in our ghettoes, marrying each other, working at the same counters, attending the same schools, a culture of sorts has indeed come into being. The culture is a reality, though it is as flawed as the thinking that created the experiment that brought it into being."[226]

Where is the betrayal made visible? It appears quietly and very early on in the statement,

when Cedric bares his own unspoken vulnerability by saying:

> "I'd like to address the broader issue of people of mixed descent, or the many communities of 'coloureds' who people this land. I do it through what I know best, my community and family of origin. I hope that this will not be interpreted as a betrayal of family in any way. The roots of racism are as insidious as they are deep".

Cedric was asked about this sentence:

> *"What were you betraying? Or do you think you could* be seen *as betraying?*
>
> 'Coloured' people have a sense of vulnerability. And in this region with good reason. Any attack on the group, any perceived attack on the group is going to be not without consequence. I was alluding to betrayal in that sense.

[226] *Blood Relatives* Exhibition Statement. Cedric Nunn (2005)

You wrote, 'I hope that this will not be interpreted as a betrayal of family in anyway.

Yes. I was looking at using family to look at all these loaded issues.

You meant, there are some people who may have thought it a betrayal because you called them racist?

You know in the documentary, I call my mother, racist. I don't know if you picked that up?

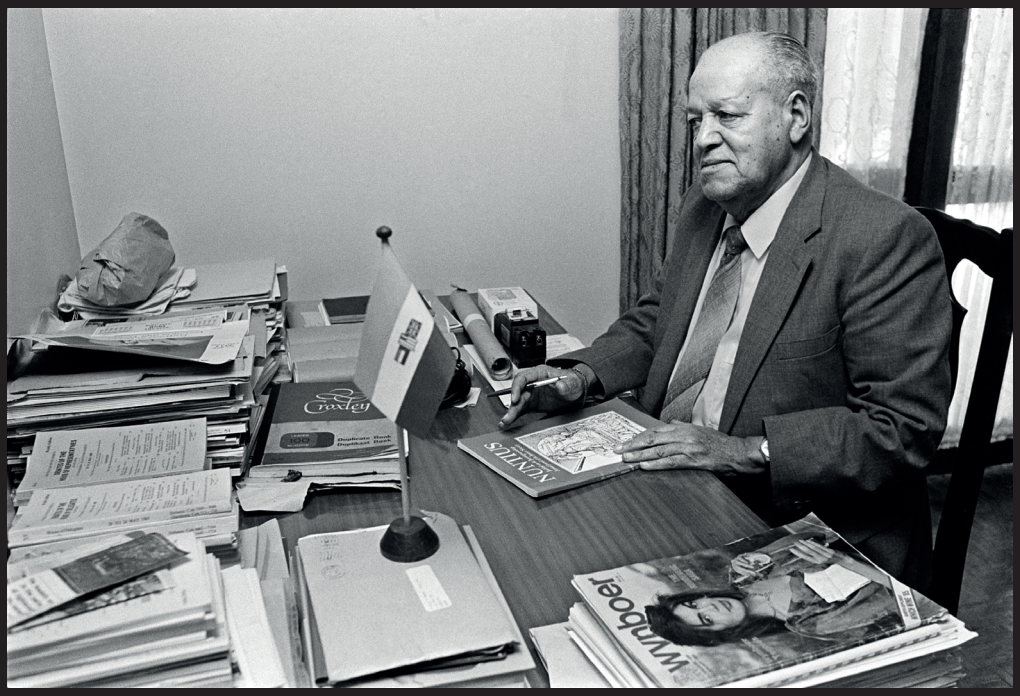
I come from a family, fortunately, that believed in brutal honesty. My mother, in particular was brutally honest, and she encouraged that in the family.

Were there people who've felt that as a betrayal?

Well not many people have expressed it.

Is this a way of you distancing yourself from betraying?

No. I'm just saying it's my sincere hope that people are able to see beyond it in a personal way and see it as an honest attempt to grapple with an issue. I'm not trying to demonize coloured people… the coloured people I'm talking about within the family and by this family, when you begin to see this family… is a unique family, it's a large family, so it has a lot of different connections throughout the province. And it has a deep history in the province. So, when I say that, I'm not just talking about an intimate little family of seven people or something, I'm talking about thousands of people.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Coloured Black considers betrayal as part of what constitutes Cedric's practice of photographing family as political critique. A portrait of Ernest Dunn, Cedric's father's first cousin and a former politician is telling. In A. J. Venter's sociological survey, *Coloured: A Profile of Two Million South Africans* (1974), 'coloured communities' are divided according to regions and the book contains a chapter on Natal and a chapter on 'The Dunns' who appear as both 'family' and 'coloured community'. This scale of relation becomes a critical means through which Dunn family as a Black familial formation, appears characterized by natal alienation. Venter writes,

> "When Ernest David Dunn stands up in the Coloured Representative Council", Venter wrote, "just about everyone takes note. For this man, the grandson of the legendary White Zulu warrior John Dunn, is a powerful, evocative voice for coloured grievances and aspirations"[227].

Ernest believed that he "…stood against Apartheid as it is implemented"[228]. He told Venter that he wanted to make a difference for "his people… [who] have suffered and my job is to highlight that suffering in the C.R.C [the Coloured Representative Council of the Tricameral Parliament for Natal] so that it may be alleviated."[229] Ernest was no fool. He knew that the C.R.C was a "rubber stamp body"[230] but he chose to work within the system and played the part that the C.R.C figured for him. However, Ernest also made sure to stand out from the 'coloured rule'. Venter noted, "Ernest Dunn speaks clear, concise English as they do in Natal"[231]. Yet, he was "not at all apologetic about the fact that he cannot and will not speak Afrikaans". Ernest had claimed, "I am fully bilingual. I speak English and I speak Zulu'".[232]

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[227] AL. J. Venter. *coloured: A Profile of Two Million South Africans* (1974), 280.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid
[232] Ibid.

Cedric photographed Ernest in 1986, at the height of Ernest's political career in an awkward frame: Cedric must have been seated at a right angle to Ernest who was not looking at the camera, but seated on a wooden chair at his large desk filled for the most part with piles of paper. The angle of the view feels contrived, perhaps because Cedric made sure to include two important details in the frame. The first, a paper file in the foreground, atop which was a copy of the Afrikaans lifestyle magazine, *Wynboer*[233] . The second detail, perched on the pile of papers next to the magazine, appearing as if it were placed there to be photographed, was a miniature apartheid South African flag.

Ernest was a complicated man. This was also a complicated image: for Ernest but also for Cedric, whose portrait cuts as a quiet protest image that does not depict defiance, but rather embodies it through Cedric, the 'coloured photographer' who makes this portrait as a self-exposing gesture that bares multiple Black vulnerabilities. It exposes Ernest's vulnerability as a "collaborator"[234] who is classified 'coloured', but it also bares Cedric's vulnerability as both a visual activist and a member of the Dunn family, who identifies as Black. Cedric both makes a photograph against apartheid, but also make an exposure against 'coloured family'. Cedric was not fully open to Ernest about what he was doing. He had chosen to exploit his familial relation for political purposes and kept his politics quiet: "I didn't articulate my politics to people like that"[235], Cedric explained. "I mean [Ernest] did discuss his politics, he shared that with me. And I wouldn't say it was a discussion because I just listened to him. I didn't see any point in engaging him in his politics. I couldn't see the point in doing that"[236].

[233] 'Wynboer' is Afrikaans for 'wine farmer'.
[234] Candice Jansen, Interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).
[235] Ibid
[236] Ibid

3.2 The Quiet of Cedric Nunn: An Overview

Cedric's photographic practice makes family visible and pictures a political critique of its racialisation. His practice therefore also enacts a betrayal of family. The disquiet of his political intentions is set against the quiet with which he frames his exposures that do not sear themselves into memory as an afterimage. Cedric's exposures can be easily overlooked, glanced over, and forgotten–even by Cedric[237] –whose exposures appear to present a photographic impulse to wait and watch, before acting upon what is seen. Which is part of the visuality of quiet exhibited in his family photography. Enwezor recognised this about Cedric's photography, saying that his practice has a "certain reticence towards very dramatic images"[238]. Enwezor's interview with Cedric, 'The Bright Light of the Maelstrom' appears in the catalogue for *Call and Response* (2011). He commented to Cedric that his photography "requires sustained engagement with the images to begin to come to terms with their power. They do not immediately jump out at you. This kind of withdrawal from a bravura style is very interesting in your work"[239]. At the book launch of *Call and Response,* Bronwyn Law-Viljoen also commented about this in her introduction to Cedric's conversation with Patricia Hayes:

> "And that has always been the thing that has stood out for me and I think probably for many of you who know Cedric's work is his desire to get off the beaten track and although he has been at some of the momentous events and has photographed some of the critical moments in South Africa history, he's also been to *the quiet places*, to the places where most of us don't go, to find the people that he's really interested in and to whom he feels, with whom he feels a deep affinity"[240] [emphasis added].

[237] I had asked Cedric about this image and he could not remember having made it. Candice Jansen, Interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, Aug, 2016.
[238] Nunn, Cedric. *Call and Response*, (Ostfildern: Hatje/Cantz, 2011), 21.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Book launch of Cedric Nunn*, Call and Response,* Conversation between Cedric Nunn and Patricia Hayes, introduced by Bronwyn Law-Viljoen. The Book Lounge, Cape Town 12 June 2012*,* Transcribed by Bianca van Laun.

Quiet is thus both an aesthetic and a photography practice for Cedric, whose quiet I argue also characterizes his position as a photographer in the history of South African photography. In much 1980s production of iconic photographic interventions, either Cedric's photography is absent or marginal[241], and after apartheid, Cedric's work is framed as "underexposed"[242]. The multiple registers of quiet to which Cedric's practice in photography and his family in his photographs comes into visibility, does not translate into 'visual knowability'. Even if Cedric's relatives may be seen in photographs, they are not identified as family and thus are known as related to him or as being biographical or genealogical subjects in their own right.

Coloured Black draws upon Kevin Quashie's *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture* (2012) to ground the intramural or Black interiority beyond "public expressiveness" or spectacular visuality, which is often the conventions of political photography. Quashie argues, "[t]he idea of quiet, then, can shift attention to what is interior"[243], which he also acknowledges "is hard to see"[244]. As an interior or a territory turned

[241] Hill, Iris Tilman., Alex. Harris, and Duke University. Center for Documentary Studies. Beyond the Barricades : Popular Resistance in South Africa. New York, NY: Aperture Foundation, 1989., cordoned heart, culture in another SA; Wilson, Francis, Omar. Badsha, and Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty Development in Southern Africa. South Africa : The Cordoned Heart. Cape Town : New York: Gallery Press ; W.W. Norton &, 1986.; Culture in Another South Africa Conference. Culture in Another South Africa. Amsterdam: [S.l.], 1987.; what's the other one; 'Images in Struggle: South African Photographers Speak', produced by IDAF (1990); Bunn, Taylor, Bunn, David, and Taylor, Jane. From South Africa : New Writing, Photographs and Art. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1987; Levie, Goldblatt, Levie, Victor, Goldblatt, David, and Culture in Another South Africa Conference Festival. De Verborgen Camera : Zuidafrikaanse Fotografie Aan De Censuur Ontkomen = The Hidden Camera : South African Photography Escaped from Censorship. Amsterdam: B. Bakker : Stichtung CASA, 1989.

[242] At the Rubenstein Library of Documentary Arts, Cedric's works are catalogued within the "Underexposed" collection of South African Documentary Photography (https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/safricanphoto/). In the UCT digital collection of South African photography, Cedric is also included in the "Underexposed" collection (https://digitalcollections.lib.uct.ac.za/islandora/object/islandora:18142)

[243] Quashie, Kevin Everod. The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2012 (8).

[244] Ibid (6)

inward, quiet as an aesthetic is "watcherless"[245]. Thus, understanding Cedric's family photography as 'quiet' would mean to recognize that the unarticulated relations or "the inexpressible expressiveness"[246] that structures not only his practice but the visuality of his family exposures does not exist to be seen, but rather to be felt.

Both Quashie and Campt[247] distinguish between 'quiet' and 'silence'. Quashie remarks that silence refers to that which is "suppressed or repressed, and is an interiority that is about withholding, absence, and stillness. Cedric's disquiet troubles quiet's potential benevolence even if he tended to silence his political views, or his Blackness from his 'coloured family'. For Cedric to keep quiet thus was also to guard against vulnerability–whether his own–or the vulnerability of his family. Silence came up more than once in conversations with Cedric. Once when asked about his family's response to *Blood Relatives*, he replied with a more recent anecdote about family:

> "I haven't really had much comment from my family. I think largely there's been expressed a sense of pride that I achieved this. Nobody really tried to, not with me anyway, to analyze it and to give feedback. I mean I come from a family where none of us have a university education. People generally need the tools to engage in a critical way. But in the extended family, I have had a sense of a cold shoulder. I've always been seen in the '80s as a communist, as an atheist, a deviant, and a dissident. I'm seen in that light. I'm misunderstood. Nobody really understands. At my book launch in Johannesburg recently, a cousin arrived and she brought her daughter along, who remarked to me after the event, 'Cedric talks'! She had, known me as normally silent, you see. So as not to aggravate people, I remain silent in the community largely because my position is usually so radically and diametrically opposed to most things they talk about. If I were to be honest, and having said that, I'm brutally honest within my intimate family, but not outside of that, but even in my intimate family I tend to rather be silent. I've realized that it's futile to try and engage people when they're not ready for it; to try and shift their opinions. A project like this would be my avenue of expression in my otherwise silent world"[248].

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[245] Quashie, Kevin Everod. The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 201. (22)
[246] Ibid
[247] Campt, Tina. Listening to Images. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017 (6)
[248] Candice Jansen, Interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).

The Quiet Of Cedric Nunn begins with a family photograph that exhibits registers of quiet, which expose particular vulnerabilities, reflective of Cedric's quiet origins in photography. These vulnerabilities bear upon his practice as a visual activist, photographing outside of family. Yet, they also touch upon more than Cedric's identity as photographer and an activist, but also his identity as a father, an uncle, and a fourth-generation descendant of John Dunn. Narratives about Cedric's biography and his photographic practice are pieced together from diverse sources that include: an autobiographical manuscript that Cedric had started early during the 1990s and which remains ongoing. This document helped to imagine the Zululand in which Cedric grew up, and provided insight into the shape of its 'rural coloured life' that led him into a photographic career.

During the mid 1980s, Cedric conducted an interview with American artists, Alex Harris and Margaret Sartor, key collaborators for Afrapix in the creation of *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart* (1986), which served as another critical source. It made audible, Cedric's ideas as he would have articulated them, then. The subject of family surfaced quietly. Cedric was very soft spoken, perhaps more nervous about being interviewed and having to talk about his practice and his future directions, sometimes tripping over his own words. Coloured had always been on his mind as he explained being interested to explore, "my community…[being] very concerned about coloured people" in KZN, especially who I thought, unlike coloureds in Cape Town were too politically apathetic and "wrong for accepting the system"[249].

[249] Alex Harris and Margaret Sartor interview, circa 1985-1986. Audio cassette. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Alex Harris photographs and papers, 1970-2015 and undated,

Coloured Black refers to Cedric as 'a family photographer', who as a photographic actor within the visual dynamics of the family photograph, often goes amiss in analysis of the idiom. Calling Cedric 'a family photographer' should not be read as a limiting identifier. Understanding his practices as both 'a family photographer' and 'a visual activist', *Coloured Black* contends, offers an intermural read on the politics of Black family in photography and the practices of visual critique in political photography. Cedric did not simply deploy the image of family as a critique of apartheid, he also deployed the practice of what Marianne Hirsch calls, *familial looking* or looking for family[250] in his visual activism. *Coloured Black* therefore argues that Cedric *domesticated struggle* as a photographic practice that also bled into his political representation of the Natal Wars, a significant subject, which he followed before it became front page news in the mainstream media by 1987.

Cedric photographed the aftermath of the conflict in places like Newton, Kosi Bay, Ingwavuma, Qhudeni, KwaMakhuta, KwaMashu, Tugela Ferry, Vulindela, Mpende, and Mpophomeni. He self-financed the work and undertook the mission at great risk because Cedric was not just a photojournalist, he also was an activist, affiliated with the United Democratic Front (UDF). His images of the Natal Wars are some of his most reproduced images[251], which stand out in the visual history of the conflict because Cedric appeared to have paid less attention to the act of violence and concentrated on making the aftermath felt within the homes of UDF-affiliated families. He was able to access these home and political spaces

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Project Files, 1970-2013 and undated, South Africa: The Cordoned Heart 1985-1986, Box 65, RL_10060_MC_08

[250] Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.

[251] The image was used in the Speak Magazine feature on the conflict, it appeared in Beyond the Barricades and Nunn's retrospective catalogue, Call and Response, and the academic study, *On Their Own: Women, Urbanization, and the Right to the City in South Africa* (2015) by Allison Goebel.

because he is fluent in isiZulu and was well travelled in the rural areas of KZN as both a native of the region and a comrade of the local labour movement. The private life of Black family, rather than the public life of Black political organization here comes into view. 'Domesticating Struggle' narrates this story through one portrait of a misnamed Black woman and a baby, who Cedric photographed inside a house devastated by Inkatha violence. It is one of Cedric's most reproduced images, used in *Beyond the Barricades* and in Speak Magazine[252], the national publication for Black, working-class women's issues, who dedicated a special issue to the conflict for their 1988-January-1989 edition, which used nine of Cedric's images in the five-page story[253].

The Quiet Of Cedric Nunn moves back and forward in time as Cedric leaves and returns to his family in Mangete and activism in Durban and Johannesburg during the 1980s, until the early 1990s after Afrapix disbands. 1987 is a year largely un-reflected in the chronology of his family photographs. As is 1982, the year that Cedric leaves South Africa for the first time missing the definitive moment for photography within the anti-apartheid movement, the Gaborone Festival hosted by the Medu Art Ensemble in Botswana. He did leave with a mandate to connect Afrapix with international networks and he journeyed through in England, France, Holland, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Denmark for just short of a year.

[252] Speak Magazine, Speak attributed its photographs, not only to the photographers but attribution would also include the organisation they were associated with. Speak was an influential women's collective, the precursor to feminist journal, Agenda that was formed by activists from the Durban Women's Group. Speak published a monthly magazine in both English and isiZulu and operated from 1982 until the end of 1994. It drove debates on women's issues that gave those affected the platform to voice matters relating to labour, land, sexual violence, mother and sisterhood, political leadership that included a rural focus.

[253] Nunn, Cedric (photographer). 'We are dying my child. Women from Pietermartizburg talk about the war'. Dec 1988-Jan 1989. No.22; Nunn, Cedric *Call and Response*, (Ostfildern: Hatje/Cantz, 2011).

Upon his return, mass mobilization was afoot across South Africa and Cedric became swept up into a 'heady time'[254] as Afrapix established itself and the UDF was on the rise.

He stayed in brief contact with Lefifi Tladi after returning and told Enwezor about an exchange of letters in which Lefifi cautioned Cedric: "beware of this intoxicating moment, it will distract you'[255]. Cedric regaled Lefifi with news about the struggle and responded, 'You don't understand, you're sitting in the dark world of Stockholm. I am in the bright light of the maelstrom'[256]. Lefifi then, echoed Cedric's sentiments expressed in 2011: of being disappointed that he did not follow his "original vision" for that maelstrom blinded as much as it illuminated. It had a price, Cedric suggests:

> "[W]e found ourselves beginning to straddle two worlds: the incredibly turbulent world that was emerging, of protest and resistance and organization–a march towards liberation; and the world that we lived in that we needed to make sense of simply through the images that we made… [t]o try occupy both worlds was incredibly exhausting and demanding, and one often got lost along the way"[257]

While Cedric was found as an anti-apartheid photographer, he was lost as a Black father during the latter half of the 1980s. His oldest daughter, Kathleen was born in 1984, in the midst of that maelstrom. 'Kathleen' tells the story of her birth under conditions of apartheid, as a child of a 'coloured' father and a 'european' mother. Cedric met Elizabeth Ebersohn as a young woman from Randburg, Johannesburg at Khotso House, where they both worked. Elizabeth's story remains untold in my retelling that makes use of Cedric's perspective from his manuscript and *Blood Relatives*, the film, which uses the testimony of Elizabeth's parents to describe how Kathleen was born and their experiences of having to help raise a

[254] Cedric Nunn, *Call and Response*, (Ostfildern: Hatje/Cantz, 2011), 23.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid

granddaughter, who was only 'european' on paper. Elizabeth was not interviewed for the film, although a number of early photographs of her and baby Kathleen appear. David Goldblatt made a family portrait of Cedric, Elizabeth and a teenage Kathleen, and her, friend Nikiwe Mpetsheni for *Group Portrait South Africa: Nine Family Histories* (2003) and it pictures a tense familial relation: Elizabeth stands behind and between Kathleen and Nikiwe, with her arms around their waists, with Cedric stands almost defiant on the outside of this arrangement, with his visible hand in his pocket, next to Kathleen, who appears unsmiling between her separated parents[258].

Kathleen and Cedric were estranged for much of her early childhood. Cedric and Elizabeth could not sustain their relationship. Kathleen's appearance and reappearance in Cedric's life, bares a vulnerability shared between a father and child, but it also marks definitive moments for his family photography. The brief period in which Cedric experienced fatherhood, he, Elizabeth and baby Kathleen moved to Mangete. This was also the time in which Cedric arrived home was struck by what life looked like for his mother, Lily, which he saw as a call to stay home and be with family and not his comrades. During this period, Cedric photographed family in concentrated ways. Then later in the 1990s, when the young, Kathleen and Cedric reunited, her racial experience in the new South Africa propelled Cedric to return to photographing family and create what became, *Blood Relatives*. Kathleen had changed Cedric's life and affected his photography

[258] Photograph can be seen: http://photography-now.com/exhibition/16142

Finally, ‘Tribal Predicaments of a Family Archive’ attempts to situate Cedric’s family photography within a longer visual history of Dunn family who became a twentieth century sociological curiosity, studied because of their “unique identity and ethnic consciousness”[259]. Dunn family history is also overwhelmed by its founding patriarch and his political legacy within the history of the Zulu kingdom (very little is made of his wives which is addressed in chapter 4: Feeling Coloured Zululand). Yet, as a 'european' man, John is not historically legible in the present. He is neither African, nor 'european'. He is a native, born from settlers; not a missionary, nor a colonialist. He was a Zulu chief, yet not a Zulu man. An arbiter of both tribal and colonial law and a transgressor of both. John was a servant and also a traitor; a man, yet also a myth. An exceptional figure who made history, and a political biography, forgotten by it. A powerful and cunning agent, who also was vulnerable to political change. To ask what John was, is really to ask, ‘what can be seen of him?’

‘Tribal Predicaments of a Family Archive’ revisits the figure of John Dunn as an origin of the Dunn family marked by the difficulty of political betrayal. It surfaces John’s life through the historical complicities that remain quiet in his marginality from KZN historiography because his life holds culpable both 'european' colonialism and the Zulu kingdom. What John was able to achieve stands as an unarticulated intermural difficulty of political power that characterizes his legacy and thus his descendants’ position in KZN. The section contemplates the historical complicity of the Dunn family, which was not the moment of John’s betrayal, but the era in which he finds himself firmly embedded within the Zulu kingdom, and married into more than twenty-three Nguni clans through forty-eight wives who bear him one hundred and twenty children. This was a moment in which John simultaneously worked for

[259] Ballard, Charles. John Dunn: The White Chief of Zululand. Craighall [South Africa]: Ad. Donker, 1985 (223).

the colonial administration, which builds into the moment when he no longer could serve both sides. John 'betrayed' King Cetswayo, (although he was not the only chief to have sided with the British), but it appears more complicated than that, compounded by the inevitable fate of his descendants, who a hundred years after he dies, would have to face apartheid classification.

The quiet of domesticating struggle as photographic practice. The quiet struggle of domesticity in the midst of domestic political movement. The quiet of political betrayal and classificatory regimes for the unclassifiable. *[Ongetitled]* begins the chapter with Cedric's quiet origins in Zululand as a 'coloured boy', tracing his trajectory into a 'coloured photographer' who identifies as Black. It attempts to show how family was there at the beginning, not just as a community of relatives into which Cedric was born, or moved across as a cultural geography in Zululand. But, family was there also at the beginning of his photography. Enwezor asked Cedric, which were the first images that he produced, which changed his outlook on his photography, and Cedric responded, "[p]robably the images I produced when I began to look at my own family"[260].

[260] Cedric Nunn, *Call and Response*, (Ostfildern: Hatje/Cantz, 2011).



3.3 [Ongetitled][261]

Cedric's mother, Lily lays an immaculate breakfast table. It appears as a table not laid for children, but six adults. Three places at the table are empty. Only two family members are seated. Cedric's younger brother, Preston, and his brother-in-law, Peter, sit across from one another. Cedric is at one end of the table. An empty chair is at the other end. Two more places are occupied, but not at the table. Cedric's young niece and nephew, Deborah and Robin, peer inside from the open door. They each lean in from the outside, against either side of the door frame, unconcerned with Cedric and his camera. They stare outside his frame in anticipation for when an adult gives permission for them to cross the threshold and enter the room. Preston and Peter also pay Cedric and his camera no attention. Each of them are engrossed in dishing breakfast onto their waiting plates. Peter has a silver fork in his right hand, aimed at the plate of fried eggs. Preston has dished a spoonful of baked bean and onion 'smoor'[262] with his left hand from a pumpkin decorated glass bowl. A wooden bowl of sliced brown bread is the table's centre piece. A homemade condiment and a store-bought ketchup bottle stand at attention on either side. Breakfast is laid in formation along ironed seams of a hand-sewn, chequered table cloth. The metal and glass on the table caught the morning light and Cedric's camera, which turned an ordinary domestic scene into a quiet family portrait.

What made Cedric raise his camera? Was it Lily's touch? Or was it the children and the way the light caught their innocence? Could it have been a premonition? A sense of what was to come for Cedric's family, gathered around the breakfast table? His quiet family portrait also

[261] See themes of upbringing and 'coluredness' in Tracey Rose's [Ongetitled] 1996.
[262] https://www.msn.com/en-za/foodanddrink/foodrecipes/two-smoortjie-recipes-to-take-you-back-to-your-childhood/ar-AABrsGC?li=BBqfP3n

was a portrait of a death foretold. Cedric composed father and daughter into proximity, closing the distance between Deborah standing ‘there’ at the door, and Peter seated ‘here’ at the table. Twenty-years from when Cedric made this exposure, he would make another of Deborah and Peter that closed a different distance between them: the distance of time, between life and death. Cedric could not have known that two decades later, Peter would have a sudden death from cancer at the age of fifty-five, a few months before Deborah’s wedding.

The ceremony almost never happened. The family did not know whether Peter would survive his diagnosis and walk Deborah down the aisle. Her father had passed but at her wedding, Deborah still wanted him close. After the ceremony, she and her bridal party left the church for the place where Peter was buried in Mangete. Cedric and his camera followed them. Deborah had asked that he photograph her wedding but that day, Deborah gave Cedric the gift. At Peter’s grave, Deborah broke down in her grooms’ embrace. His groomsmen were moved to tears. One looked away and had his hand on the shoulder of the other, whose head was bowed in the face of his sister’s grief at their father’s grave. Cedric captured this moment that became one of his most-known images of an ambiguous exposure that appears as both a wedding and a funeral. It was an exposure of collective grief. The quiet of Cedric’s own emotion was not caught in the frame, yet he understood Deborah’s grief. His own father, Herbert Nunn, died three years before. He too was buried someplace nearby.

Cedric’s family photographs are not only of the past. They expose a future present that when seen as the past becomes bound up in death. Most family members depicted in Cedric’s family photographs have passed on. The places that he made records of no longer exist. The children that Cedric photographed are now almost as old as he was when he made their

portraits. Yet, Cedric's relatives and the domestic spaces depicted in his family photographs also visualise family as an unfolding experience of time. Julia Hirsch in *Family Photographs: Content, Meaning, and Effect* (1981) explains,

> "family photographs themselves do not change, only the stories that we tell about them do…when we know that a particular photograph is that of a family member, we can easily fit it into whatever fabric of family experience time has already woven. It acts as a new thread in an old weave"[263].

The generational nature of Cedric's family photography enables the weaving of new threads into the fabric of family experience that he exposed over the course of twenty years. Cedric photographed generations of family. He exposed family generations within photographs, and thus makes these generations of family visible to future generations that will look back upon his photographs and the shifting relations of family over time. The slippage between 'family' and 'race' within Cedric's photography means that his family photographs also weave new threads into the fabric of racial experience that colonialism and apartheid had woven.

Cedric's childhood recollections are of his upbringing, but they also are of what it meant to grow up classified as 'coloured' in Zululand during the 1960s. Some of his earliest recollections of apartheid were also memories of childhood. In his 2005 *Blood Relatives* exhibition statement, Cedric recalls "the experience of a debate with about twenty hostel inmates in my exclusively 'coloured' school, when discussing ancestry, every single one of my fellow dorm mates had denied any Black ancestry"[264]. Schooling was an emotional and

[263] Hirsch, Julia. 1981. *Family photographs: content, meaning, and effect*. New York: Oxford University Press (9)
[264] *Blood Relatives* exhibition statement, 2005.

painful ordeal for Cedric[265]. He resented his parents for having "banished"[266] him from his childhood home in Hluhluwe to the Mangete Government 'Coloured' Primary School, almost 200 kilometres away. His parents had worked in a general dealership in Hluhluwe and Cedric's family were the only 'coloured family' in a village of Afrikaners. Cedric remembers befriending a local boy and then having that friend's parents end their friendship. Cedric could not understand why; why he also had to leave for school so far away when a school that his uncle had helped build a school within view from their home. This new school was for whites-only.

Getting admitted into Little Flower Junior High School in iXopo was not simple. Cedric's parents had not applied on time for enrolment and Herbert's cousin, Basil[267] knew a 'coloured family' living in the area. Basil found Cedric a place to stay with the Glovers, who lived about three kilometres away from school and Cedric would make the daily walk to and from school. He was a day-student, which was a category of students that were looked down upon by boarding students. Cedric remembers that day students, because of the long distances walked to school, would either be sweaty in the summer and during the winter, would smell of wood fires burnt inside their homes, which typically had no running water or electricity. The school had a strict regime for students who did manual labour and were given newspapers to use as toilet paper. Radio was permitted only for a few hours on Saturdays. Cedric had become part of an artistic group that among other things, tried to introduce guitars

[265] It also was for his mother, which meant that it was not his parent's fault. Cedric's parents too as children had to school far distances away. Lily went to a boarding school in Durban, which was the nearest school for coloured girls during the 1930s. Lily and her four sisters would stay at a local orphanage and travel there on a rickshaw knowing that they would not see home again for some time. Lily went to that school for eight years and remembered going home only three times. After her fourth time she left for good in Standard Six (see Faber, Van Der Merwe, and Faber, Paul. Group Portrait South Africa: Nine Family Histories. 1st ed. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2003. (56).
[266] [untitled], Cedric Nunn, Unpublished manuscript (circa 1990s-)
[267] Basil Nunn later plays a role in making possible a family photograph outside of John Dunn's home in Mangete. Pg. 258.

and music to the school church ceremonies. One night they had escaped from the school hostel to a local dance, ten kilometres away and ran into the school's English teacher. The school suspended Cedric and the others for the remaining three months of that year and he was told not to return.

Cedric's expulsion forced him to work at the Amatikulu Sugar Mill at the age of sixteen. Finding factory work helped his parents, who were supporting two children still living at home and growing a general dealership in Mangete, called the Endaweni Trading Store. He stayed at Amatikulu for eight years and throughout this time, struggled to reconcile his ambition for social change with his reality of pan-boiling factory work. At Amatikulu, Cedric passed for a Mauritian, who were recognised as honorary whites and granted labour preference at Natal sugar factories. Yet, Cedric was not a 'good Mauritian'. After the Wiehan Commission of 1979, the South African government extended the right of all workers to unionise and thereafter, Cedric became the Mauritian representative of its new union. His exposure to the lack of labour equality at Amatikulu had Cedric become the only non-'"bantu"' to strike in solidarity for the establishment of a pension scheme for these workers. It isolated him at work and Cedric decided to resign before management could fire him. He recalls his time as a factory worker as critical to his journey into activism:

> "I retrospect, I realise what a great impact those eight years spent in the sugar factory had on me. To this day, I identify with ordinary workers, with trade unions, with the issues that ordinary people face… I hadn't set out to work in a factory so when I found myself in one, I realized that I needed to get out quite quickly. But in a country with "job reservation", if you didn't have an education, your options were very limited"[268].

[268] Nunn, Seippel, Ralf-Peter, Galerie Seippel, MuseumAfrica, Bailey Seippel Gallery, Durban Art Gallery, and Africana Museum in Progress. Cedric Nunn: Call and Response. Ostfildern: Johannesburg: Hatje Cantz ; Fourthwall, 2012. (22)

Cedric's time at Amatikulu was also important to his journey to photography, which Herbert encouraged in his quiet way. "I remember a discussion with my father in which I vented my frustration at the state of the nation", Cedric explains. "His quiet response was, 'Do something about it'"[269]. Herbert was an important influence on Cedric's political outlook before he started work. "I grew up on a steady diet of discussions, debates and complaints by my father and extended family, regarding the effects of apartheid"[270]. Herbert made sure to keep respectful relations with the local Zulu chiefs, which he exposed Cedric to, along with a resistant disposition towards apartheid, "fighting the system" or being "a troublemaker". Cedric writes of Herbert refusing to use the non-white entrance at the local post office, applying for own his own firearm and being "unafraid to speak his mind[271].

These family members, childhood experiences, and institutional politics shaped not only Cedric's outlook on 'coloured identity' and the necessity of political action. These fabrics of experience wove Cedric's "vision of using images to show the brotherhood"[272]. Yet, when Cedric explained his vision to one of his earliest teachers, the late photographer, Peter Mckenzie, who replied, "Don't you think photography can do more than that?"[273] Mckenzie had introduced Cedric to an artistic activist community in Durban, which during the 1980s, emerged as a critical node of the cultural movement of the anti-apartheid struggle, essential to the development of Afrapix. Cedric's actor cousin introduced him to Mckenzie, who was

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[269] Nunn, Seippel, Ralf-Peter, Galerie Seippel, MuseuMAfricA, Bailey Seippel Gallery, Durban Art Gallery, and Africana Museum in Progress. Cedric Nunn: Call and Response. Ostfildern: Johannesburg: Hatje Cantz ; Fourthwall, 2012. Foreword
[270] Ibid
[271] Alex Harris and Margaret Sartor interview, circa 1985-1986. Audio cassette. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Alex Harris photographs and papers, 1970-2015 and undated, Project Files, 1970-2013 and undated, South Africa: The Cordoned Heart 1985-1986, Box 65, RL_10060_MC_08
[272] Ibid.
[273] Ibid.

then in his final year of photographic study at Technikon Natal (now the Durban University of Technology). Mckenzie's student portfolio, Cedric remembers, "had a huge impact on me"[274].

> "I knew that I could learn to do this. But I had very little confidence in my images in the first few years. I looked at those images and thought, 'I have a long way to go to be able to call myself a photographer'. I didn't have faith in my own work, but I had an overriding faith in the medium"[275].

Cedric became McKenzie's "unofficial student"[276]. He shared McKenzie's school materials and McKenzie also helped Cedric decide on his first camera in June 1981. The pair went on photographic trips together and Cedric also made unofficial use of the Technikon's darkroom. Through McKenzie, Cedric also met Badsha, who became a mentor. "If I think back"[277] Cedric recalled, "I might not have been a photographer today if it had not been for the solidarity of this experience"[278]. Cedric found family in the struggle during the 1980s, after "[t]rying to find people who spoke my language was like looking for a needle in a haystack… I didn't live in the big centres but worked in a factory in the sugar fields of KwaZulu-Natal, with occasional forays into the city of Durban. I started in that void, and I was lucky to make the right connections"[279].

Family as biological, racial and political relation may have been Cedric's photographic training ground, but family as a subject and practice in Cedric's relation to the medium itself was his teacher. In the forward to *Call and Response*, he writes, "[h]aving little formal

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[274] Ibid.
[275] Nunn, Seippel, Ralf-Peter, Galerie Seippel, MuseuMAfricA, Bailey Seippel Gallery, Durban Art Gallery, and Africana Museum in Progress. Cedric Nunn: Call and Response. Ostfildern: Johannesburg: Hatje Cantz ; Fourthwall, 2012. (21)
[276] Ibid.
[277] Candice Jansen, Interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016)
[278] Ibid
[279] Nunn, Seippel, Ralf-Peter, Galerie Seippel, MuseuMAfricA, Bailey Seippel Gallery, Durban Art Gallery, and Africana Museum in Progress. Cedric Nunn: Call and Response. Ostfildern: Johannesburg: Hatje Cantz ; Fourthwall, 2012. (20)

education, my choices were narrow, and I was fortunate indeed to find photography. The medium has allowed me to experience and engage with the world in more ways than I anticipated it would". He emphasizes, "above all", it was photography's "ability to facilitate introspection". Introspection becomes a means through which quiet surfaces in Cedric's family photography as the subject and practice of domestication; of the visualisation of domestic interior as symbolic of domesticating struggle as visual practice.



3.4 Domesticating Struggle

Who are you? Gertrude Mvubo[280]? Or Gladys Sangweni[281]? Why do we not know your name? You hold a baby at your side. The two of you are a catastrophic sign. Inside the four walls of your own devastation, you both face the camera. Was that once your bedroom? Is this the morning after it happened? Perpetrators came looking for your son. They never found him and instead left this in the wake of their search. Where is your son? Is he still alive? Or had he gone underground, buried in your grief. You lost a son to struggle. You also lost a husband. They murdered him. Three days before, you had both lost a daughter to a violent outbreak at a taxi rank[282]. Is this baby hers? Or did the child also lose a sister? What remains of your family is exposed here in domestic ruin. Why did Cedric photograph you there? Did he tell you how to stand? How did he come to know of what had happened to your family? Did you know that he was coming? Was he prepared for your grief? He could not have told you how to feel for the camera, but he knew how to make us feel the loss of your family.

Your eyes are thick from crying. Your jaw is clenched against the anger. Did you ask yourself why? Why me? Why this? Why am I posing my tragedy to a stranger with a camera? But what will you tell the baby when it becomes old enough to ask, 'how did we survive'? Why were our lives spared? Your face questions our image of this 'people's war'. You look as devastated as the room. Light is let in through shattered windows whose glass is strewn across the room where ashes of burnt matter lie blackened over the floor. Did a bomb explode? Or was the place ransacked and destroyed piece by piece? Your dresser is the only

[280] Cedric Nunn, *Call and Response*, (Ostfildern: Hatje/Cantz, 2011).
[281] Hill, Iris Tilman., Alex. Harris, and Duke University. Center for Documentary Studies. *Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa.* New York, NY: Aperture Foundation, 1989.
[282] Hill, Iris Tilman., Alex. Harris, and Duke University. Center for Documentary Studies. *Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa.* New York, NY: Aperture Foundation, 1989.

surviving piece of furniture that you lean against. Your forearm is rested on top of it, careful not to weigh on the surface of broken wood and glass. The room is destroyed of any warmth. There is no feeling of home. Instead the room appears charged with the power to injure. The baby seems like a shield against its danger. Its baptismal gown offers physical comfort to the touch and resistance against the hopelessness. The baby is a presence not of that room, but of a future vision for surviving family who were victims of an apartheid war between two Black sides. Your son and husband were on one, your daughter was caught in the middle, you are left behind pictured in an image of domestic violence.

Cedric knew on which side he stood when taking your photograph. He was of Afrapix's "taking sides generation"[283]. He appeared to have only photographed UDF-related victims of the conflict that threatened Black life in Natal. Did Cedric also photograph UDF-perpetrated violence? Or Inkatha family affected by the conflict? Cedric did work briefly for *Clarion Call*, the Inkatha-affiliated newsletter, who had approached Afrapix to photograph their events. After deliberation, Afrapix deployed Cedric to use the commission as a means for access to Inkatha activities such as their youth camps, the KwaZulu legislature events, and Inkatha rallies. But after an attack on the University of Zululand students during the 1980s, Cedric was no longer permitted access and Afrapix was threatened with having no protection at Inkatha events[284].

As a founding member of Afrapix, Cedric's politics were visible in his photographs and in the ways that he made his images. He also tended to wear his politics on the outside as the political tensions in Natal were brewing. At times, he also had to learn to make his support

[283] Hill, Iris Tilman., Alex. Harris, and Duke University. Center for Documentary Studies. *Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa.* New York, NY: Aperture Foundation, 1989.
[284] Cedric Nunn Interview with Candice Jansen, 17 January 2019

for the UDF less visible, especially in the rural contexts in which he moved. An older man in a village that Cedric was photographing in once took him aside to caution him against wearing a United Democratic Front (UDF) t-shirt whilst photographing[285]. Cedric took the advice. Other times, he wanted his politics to be seen, to appear deliberately as an activist, not just a photographer. He once became a target of the apartheid media when he wore a UDF t-shirt at a Johannesburg press conference. Later that evening, Cedric saw himself on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) news. The alleged-spy and SABC journalist, Cliff Saunders reported on the political bias of the left-leaning press and used footage of Cedric at the press conference as illustration.

Cedric withdrew from photographing 'the Natal Wars' by the end of 1987, when the media coverage of the conflict had spread into the mainstream press. The increase in photographic attention had also escalated with the conflict and Cedric had become conflicted by its visibility that was being fuelled by an increase in demand for images of unrest. Cedric had reflected deeply on his own complicity in reproducing this image of conflict. He struggled to reconcile his initial intentions to photograph what was happening in remote locations and to document the conflict for the purposes of safeguarding its memory from oblivion. He had not set out to become a war photographer[286]. By the late 1980s, Afrapix had also started to change. Its access to activist spaces had begun to offer South African photographers an ideal vehicle to further their career ambitions not necessarily their political beliefs[287].

Cedric's political beliefs often rubbed up against his photographic ambition. The desire to be the best photographer he could, and the desire to further Black struggle simultaneously,

[285] Cedric Nunn Interview with Candice Jansen, Durban, South Africa, 01 Aug, 2016.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Candice Jansen, Interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, 01 Aug, 2016.

diverged at times and at other times, they would meet in unexpected ways. Cedric had been learning to follow the direction of his own feelings and to differentiate between what was good for him, and what was good for the struggle, which was not always the same solution. He often suffered in the decision, pulled between family and activism, and between love and struggle. Then there were times when his family was struggling, and he would have to remove himself from activism, which he did for a period before he immersed himself in documenting the Natal Wars. In 1984, Cedric and fellow Afrapix photographer, Gille de Vlieg, collaborated on a photography project to coincide with the end of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976 – 1985). Cedric decided to photograph women from rural Natal communities that he was familiar with in areas like Mandini, Sundumbili and Tugela. He would also photograph in Mangete but when he arrived home, faced a 'grim picture'[288] of his mother and the conditions under which she lived.

Cedric realised that his mother personified the story of women he had set out to photograph. Lily had taken up the responsibility of keeping the family business and home life afloat after Herbert drank heavily and suffered illness after an accident. Every day, Lily would work in the family store for eight hours, after which her work at home would begin. The family home, Cedric remembers as a 'shell'[168] without running water or electricity. The walls and the floor were bare concrete. The house had no ceiling, only a roof. Lily's struggle brought Cedric home to Mangete for eighteen months to help run the family store, make it profitable, and renovate both the store and the house. Cedric believed that there was no other choice:

> "It was totally unacceptable for me to be running around the country championing the cause of women nationally when my own mother lived in these disgraceful circumstances… I realised that I didn't have the financial resources to bring about

[288] [untitled], Cedric Nunn, Unpublished manuscript (circa 1990s-)

> change at home, and that the best I could do was to return and give of my labour, to give of myself"[289].

Giving of himself is essential to Cedric's practice in family photography. Spending time with family in Mangete to support his parents required Cedric to step away from the media activist world of urban centres of Johannesburg and Durban. Giving of himself in these ways meant that Cedric spent more time being a son, an uncle and father and less time being a comrade. Family became its own struggle, domesticating Cedric's visual activism, which did not look to photograph the struggle of others, but instead looked to become part of the struggle of his own family and to address his own struggle with family.

[289] Ibid.



3.5 Kathleen

Kathleen may have been a baby, but she appears wise beyond her year of life in Cedric's portrait. She looks at him as if he had just called out her name. As if when she heard his call, Kathleen turned around to respond to his voice and Cedric exposed her recognition of him as her father. Softness surrounds her. The light from an opening in the room pours onto her round face and goldens her hair. A dim shadow is cast behind her. She sits upright in white baby underclothes and her fingers appear absorbed in feeling the blanket folds of the unmade bed. Its delicate creases mimic the soft curves of her baby bulges. Cedric's tender look at Kathleen as a baby is also a vulnerable exposure of his own fatherhood at the time and of his impending separation from Kathleen that year. Father and daughter would not really see one another again for almost six years. Did he make this portrait knowing that he would be estranged from Kathleen's early childhood? His baby portrait also felt like a goodbye or a memento for Cedric who would not be part of Kathleen's early life.

It was not the first time that Cedric and Elizabeth had parted ways. The first time was soon after their brief love affair and they had done so on good terms. A month later, Elizabeth told Cedric that she was pregnant and that he was the father, but she wanted to be a single parent. Unbeknownst to Cedric, Elizabeth had chosen him to father her child. She did not expect anything more from him. Cedric could choose to never see his child. He was angry at first, but in time warmed to the idea, and to Elizabeth, with whom he started a new relationship. Cedric moved in with Elizabeth and her parents in Johannesburg until Kathleen was born. Her pregnancy from a 'coloured man' as a white woman was difficult for Elizabeth's parents who were advised by their paediatrician to convince their daughter to have Kathleen adopted

into a "nice coloured family"[290] so that they would not have to "be burdened by bringing up a coloured child"[291].

Elizabeth's parents were supportive even if they were worried for their daughter as they were led to believe 'coloured men' were notorious for being "wife beaters"[292]. In the end, apartheid did make Cedric into an absent father, who could not be present at Kathleen's birth. He could not register himself as Kathleen's father because she would have been sent to an orphanage for illegitimate 'coloured children'[293]. When the time came to register Kathleen, her grandparents had a plan. Elizabeth's mother, Miriam, had worked for the Department of the Interior and knew that Kathleen would be physically inspected for "suspect blood"[294], since Elizabeth was an unmarried white woman. They had Elizabeth's father, Wessel, dress in formal attire that day, "because they knew that would impress"[295] and have him accompany her to stand in as the paternal figure. The plan worked. Kathleen was registered as white. Yet, her extended white family could not accept her official classification. Miriam's mother once called and asked that Miriam not bring Kathleen the next time she visited. Thereafter, Elizabeth's parents cut contact with Miriam's mother for six years because they also would not "hold her or cuddle" Kathleen like they did her other great grandchildren.

Almost a year after Kathleen was born, Cedric had moved to Mangete to pursue his project on women and decided to stay to help his mother. Elizabeth and Kathleen moved there to join him. Cedric and Elizabeth's relationship was also an adjustment for Herbert and Lily who

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[290] *Blood Relatives* Documentary Film (2005)
[291] Ibid
[292] Ibid
[293] [untitled], Cedric Nunn, Unpublished manuscript (circa 1990s-)
[294] *Blood Relatives* Documentary Film (2005)
[295] Ibid

could not understand why a white woman would want to "live in a rural coloured village… with a coloured boy?"[296] Lily was also scared of running into the law, since Cedric was not registered as Kathleen's father. But as the unfamiliarity settled and Kathleen got to know her paternal family, Cedric and Elizabeth's relationship deteriorated. Cedric was still trying to find himself, and had difficulty with romantic relationships. He admits, "I treated Liz badly… I am not very proud of this time… I think I neglected her"[297] and within a year, Elizabeth left for Johannesburg and took Kathleen with her. Cedric cried that morning they left [298]. He cried for Kathleen, for losing a daughter, and for becoming a childless father.

During the early 1990s, as South Africa was changing, after Afrapix had dissolved with Cedric as its undertaker[299], and burn-out had set in, Cedric wanted to "live in a very dark mud hut, alone"[300]. He returned home to "the bosom of family"[301] in Mangete, and also entered a new phase in his relationship with Elizabeth and Kathleen. After Elizabeth's marriage had ended and he realised that Kathleen needed a stable father figure. Cedric writes of coming back to South Africa from a trip to the United Kingdom around this time, and going to see Kathleen, bearing gifts. He describes a touching moment of being reunited with Kathleen without the two of them being able to touch one another at first. Elizabeth had been living with her brother, Harry who had by accident taken both sets of keys to the apartment with him when he left that morning. When Cedric arrived, Kathleen and Elizabeth were locked inside and he had to wait outside for some time with Kathleen peering at him for the entire time through a bathroom window.

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[296] [untitled], Cedric Nunn, Unpublished manuscript (circa 1990s-)
[297] Ibid
[298] Ibid
[299] Thank you to Patricia Hayes for this remark.
[300] [untitled], Cedric Nunn, Unpublished manuscript (circa 1990s-)
[301] Ibid

Cedric thought that Kathleen had returned to his life "as though she had never been away"[302]. During that time, he had moved to Johannesburg, while still going back and forth to Mangete and had become part of Kathleen's life, collecting her from school, walking her home in the afternoon and seeing her whenever he wished. One day when Kathleen returned from school, troubled by her classmate, she asked Cedric a question that had set his intention to produce *Blood Relatives* and open a conversation about race and racism. Kathleen inspired him because on the one hand, her life was affected by apartheid race laws and familial racism. Yet, on the other hand, the reality of her life was unaffected by it. Her mother was white. Her father was classified 'coloured' and as a child, Kathleen was exposed to both sides of her family. Her mother had married an Indian man and she and Elizabeth lived in an Indian community. In Johannesburg, Kathleen attended a predominantly black school, where she met most of her friends who started questioning her genealogy. "Daddy", she said to Cedric that day, "the kids at school are asking me, 'what am I?'"[303].

[302] [untitled], Cedric Nunn, Unpublished manuscript (circa 1990s-)
[303] *Blood Relatives* Documentary Film (2005)





3.6 Tribal Predicaments of a Family Archive

What was John Dunn? Two portraits figure him as a Zulu chief in the presence of his izinduna[304]. Yet, neither in the way that John had held his body for the photographer, nor in the way that he was dressed, did he show signs of cultural authority. The first surviving portrait exposes him in casual terms. Leant against a wooden fence with one arm, and with his other arm held behind his back, John is posed in front of an open wagon. Two rows of three izinduna pose with the necessary gravity. The three in the front row were kneeling. Each man had his left knee on the ground and rested his hat on the right. The three men behind them, next to John, each held their hat in hand. The second surviving portrait was made indoors. John is photographed slouching on a wooden chair with his legs spread and his izinduna are knelt around him. They both appear like one another, John and his iziduna, but they also appear different. In both portraits, both are dressed like 'european's, but John's iziduna commanded their masculinity like Zulus. Each wore the isichoco, which would have been concealed underneath their hats if they had been photographed wearing them. They were Zulu men and the head-ring dressed their manhood as married men, who did not simply perform John's authority, but also offered their own.

John's izinduna performed both their own and his cultural authority. John's difference from his izinduna is made in a sartorial sense, but also comes into visibility in space. Outside in front of the wagon, he could be standing alongside his men, but inside, within the confines of an unspecified enclosure, John was seated on a chair[305]. His men were crouched on their

[304] Zulu term for 'chiefs'.
[305] Later a similar dynamic of racial difference, Zulu culture, and domestic space in analyzed in Cedric's family photographs of his grandmother, Amy and her neighbor, 'MaKhumalo' in iVuna. Page reference?

haunches, arms rested against their knees, close to the ground in a cultural stance that did not animate their bodies as mere tribal surfaces, but staged their bodies in a Zulu formation that served to elevate John's authority. His children chose this image for his grave stele, erected in 1920 at the place of his death in eShowe. Etched in marble and made smooth to the touch, John sits with his isinduna as a photograph, monumentalized. The figures of the stele were not carved in the likeness of the men's individual features, but in the blunt likeness of their cultural authority. John in his hat, slouched on a chair and his izinduna on their haunches, wearing the isichoco.

These portraits are said to be made in 1873, a significant year for the Zulu kingdom. It was the year of the crowning of its new King, Cetshwayo kaMpande. Cetshwayo had defeated his brother, the Prince Umbulazi, a rival to the throne, which was occupied by their father, King Mpande. John became entangled in the rivalry as an "interpreter"[306] for the Natal Captain, Walmsley, who had sent him to "negotiate terms of peace between the belligerent parties"[307]. John's efforts failed and he thereafter decided to join the Battle of Ndondakusuka and fight on the losing side of Umbulazi and thereafter, recover a significant head of cattle that Cetshwayo had seized. John's performance in the battle is said to have made an impression on the ascendant king, Cetshwayo, who invited him to stay in Zululand and serve him with an offer of land and wives[308].

[306] Hurwitz, N. "The Life Of John Dunn, The White Zulu Chief." Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory, no. 1 (1947): 58-64.
[307] Ibid
[308] Ibid. See also Dunn, Moodie, and Moodie, D. C. F. John Dunn, Cetshwayo and the Three Generals. Pietermaritzburg: Printed by the Natal Printing and Pub., 1886; Ballard, Charles. John Dunn : The White Chief of Zululand. Craighall [South Africa]: Ad. Donker, 1985; and Ballard, Charles. "John Dunn and Cetshwayo: The Material Foundations of Political Power in the Zulu Kingdom, 1857–1878." The Journal of African History 21, no. 1 (1980): 75-91.

1873 was the year of King Cetshwayo's coronation and John had designed him a crown for the occasion[309]. John's touch was felt in a host of ways in the history of Zululand. By the outbreak of the Anglo-Zulu War, Dunnsland had a reported population of between twenty-five and thirty thousand people[310] who paid John taxes. His chiefdom stood out as a "heterogeneous conglomeration of people with conflicting loyalties and divergent aspirations"[311], a mixture of "Zulu, Tsonga, coloureds, and Natal Nguni"[312]. During the time of King Cetshwayo's reign, Dunnsland had also become a haven for Zululand refugees, who the King thought best to send there than to the jurisdiction of his rival chiefs[313]. Dunnsland also was a place of refuge for the persecuted, like the abathakathi[314] to whom John gave sanctuary and a place of banishment, where those tried by Zulu authority were sent to from other districts[315]. John may have deviated from white social norms'[316] by becoming a Zulu chief, but he is said to have ruled Dunnsland according to "northern Nguni custom"[317], yet, "Dunn's family, his wives and 'european's were immune to their jurisdiction"[318].

John had married into at least twenty-three different northern Nguni clans, which served as testament to his "widespread influence and prestige throughout much of Zululand"[319]. Most of John's forty-eight Zulu wives originated from the southern and central coastal regions. Five came from the Mzimela clan, four from the Dube and Nzuza clans, and three, each from

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[309] See an image of the crown in Ballard, Charles. John Dunn : The White Chief of Zululand. Craighall [South Africa]: Ad. Donker, 1985 (144-145).
[310] Ibid (222).
[311] Ballard, Charles. John Dunn: The White Chief of Zululand. Craighall [South Africa]: Ad. Donker, 1985; (222).
[312] Ibid.
[313] Ibid (74).
[314] Zulu term for those believed to use magic for evil purposes.
[315] Ballard, Charles. John Dunn: The White Chief of Zululand. Craighall [South Africa]: Ad. Donker, 1985; (205).
[316] Ibid (165).
[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid (227).
[319] Ibid (66).

Mthethwa, Shandu and Mdhletshe clans[320]. If John's wives were reduced to a map of Zululand, they would reveal "a definite geo-political pattern in … marital alliances"[321] that served his work both for the King and the colonialists. Cetshwayo had presented John with two wives from his own isigodlo, as a gift of appreciation for having received firearms. "Cetshwayo considered rifles a suitable substitute for cattle"[322]. By then, guns were introduced as a new item in the ilobolo system. "Many others [wives] were given by fathers who were needing cattle; others giving their daughters for the sake of uplifting themselves in position, and others paying tribute…"[323]. According to his biographer, John kept quiet about his polygamy, which was a topic for the colonial press and the settler elite, like Harriette and Frances Colenso or Theophilus Shepstone[324] who criticised him for adopting Nguni customs. John "…usually refused to discuss or defend publicly his reasons for entering into polygamous unions with African women–Dunn thought it no-one's business but his own"[325].

John was a marked man. Before the Anglo-Zulu war broke out in 1879, his first wife, Catherine had feared for the impending war. Word of it had spread and rumour had swept both Zululand and Natal about John's intentions[326]. Three kraals of his people had already fled to Natal as refugees, two months before war broke out, and Catherine had not heard from him in four weeks. She had sent for him "to hear how matters stand"[327], afraid to stay in Zululand but feeling that leaving would sign his "death warrant"[328]. John's biographer claims, Cetshwayo offered John neutrality, and vowed that if he "sit still close to the border … the

[320] Ibid.
[321] Ibid (67).
[322] Ibid (66).
[323] Ballard, Charles. John Dunn: The White Chief of Zululand. Craighall [South Africa]: Ad. Donker, 1985; 224.
[324] Ibid (11; 50).
[325] Ibid (64; 164).
[326] Ibid (132-133).
[327] Ibid (133).
[328] Ibid.

Zulu's should not harm him"[329]. The British on the other hand, did not offer John neutrality. Lord Chelmsford, commander of the invading army let him know in no uncertain terms that a post-war Zululand would not be kind to him or Dunnsland[330]. John's fate was sealed. Both the British and the Zulu expected his loyalty. He had always loyally served them both, which served him during times of peace. John had to choose between betraying the Zulu king or betraying his large family and chiefdom.

John chose to fight on the side of the British. The Zulu did not leave him untouched. His home in Mangete was destroyed, "sacked and burnt by Zulu troops"[331]. In the end, the Zulu kingdom lost its independence and the colonial authorities reinvented it into thirteen chieftainships. Rewarded by the British, Dunnsland grew twice in size after the war, compared to its original size that was allotted to him incrementally over the twenty-one years that John served the now defeated King. The British patrol had captured and banished Cetshwayo to the Cape as a prisoner after the war. Dunn may not have been the only Zulu chief to have fought on the side of the British. Yet, his betrayal was different. When Cetshwayo was captured, he is said to have asked, 'where is John Dunn?'[332], who did not see Cetshwayo before he was banished for three years in exile. "I loved this white man as a brother"[333]Cetswayo wrote from captivity in 1880. John did not share the sentiment. He agreed to his new deed of chieftainship upon receipt of written promise from the British that 'under no circumstances should Cetshwayo be ever allowed to return to Zululand'[334].

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[329] Ibid (132).
[330] Ibid (133).
[331] Ballard, Charles. John Dunn: The White Chief of Zululand. Craighall [South Africa]: Ad. Donker, 1985 (226).
[332] Ibid (152).
[333] Ibid (50).
[334] Ibid (153) The relationship between John Dunn and Cetswayo is more complicated than them once being friends and then enemies. They corresponded with one another while Cetswayo was in exile. John's actions were ruthless and Cetswayo appeared to have blamed him for everything (p.211) See also Ballard's article: Ballard, Charles. "John Dunn and Cetshwayo: The Material Foundations of

"A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably"

Ludwig Wittgenstein[335]

Political Power in the Zulu Kingdom, 1857–1878." The Journal of African History 21, no. 1 (1980): 75-91.

[335] Wittgenstein, Ludwig., P. M. S. Hacker, and Joachim. Schulte. Philosophical Investigations. 4th ed. Hoboken: Wiley, 2010.

PART II: HAPTIC VISUALITY

Chapter 4: Prologue II

4.1. Touching Photography

Seeing as Coloured, with Coloured, and through Coloured calls upon a haptic visuality. In apartheid terms, Coloured is bound up in touch as a contamination of purity and as the product of 'miscegenation'; but also as a social body practiced through political attachment to power and protest; as the place where racial difficulties in South Africa collide. Coloured touches and is touched upon and as a visual relation, Coloured is marked by contact. *Coloured Black* reads the haptic as a *close-touching* read on the contact sheets of Ernest's series on domestic workers in 1960s Johannesburg and on the twenty-year lifespan of Cedric's family photography that he began in the 1980s. What is meant by 'touch'? The visualization of hands held and gestured; racialized bodies and photographic exposures in physical proximities; and textured surfaces appear in my *close-touching* read. But touch and contact is not simply visible, it also is felt. Thus touch is meant also as sentiment, as a feeling for and against, as an emotional capacity to be moved and to wound. Touch also references the immaterial and the unseen–a mnemonic sensibility–with which I argue Cedric and Ernest attend to the domestic in their photographic critique of apartheid.

Coloured Black proposes the haptic visuality of touch as a critical register through which the gesture of reading against apartheid in photography can be made. It is understood that racism itself "is a regime of power that thinks with its eyes"[336]. Thus apartheid, as the name suggests,

[336] Richards, C. 'Retouching Apartheid: Intimacy, Interiority, and Photography' in Enwezor, Okwui, Bester, Rory, and International Center of Photography, Issuing Body. Rise and Fall of Apartheid:

was intent on prohibiting touch, to which Coloured has a paradoxical relationship. As 'the pathological mixed' category, without claim to land, history, and sovereignty, Coloured helped reinforce the illusion of racial purity, while simultaneously unsettling its stability[337]. Thus, Ernest and Cedric's *close-touching* read amounts to a staging of critical intermural difficulties, visualised by making Coloured visible as the Black touch of the white house and the touch of whiteness in a '"bantu"' world. A theory of haptic visuality is drawn from Laura Marks' *Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses* (2002), specifically her chapter, 'The Memory of Touching', which makes a key distinction between haptic and optical visuality to understand how cinema may evoke a sense of touch. Marks writes,

> "[i]n haptic *visuality,* the eyes themselves function like organs of touch. … Haptic visuality is distinguished from optical visuality, which sees things from enough distance to perceive them as distinct forms in deep space: in other words, how we usually conceive of vision. Optical visuality depends on a separation between the viewing subject and the object. Haptic looking tends to move over the surface of its object rather than to plunge into illusionistic depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture. It is more inclined to move than to focus, more inclined to graze than to gaze"[338].

The distinction between what it may mean to touch with the eyes, rather than to look with them, *Coloured Black* exposes a necessary unsettling of the certainties with which Coloured can be known at face value. Additionally, the necessity with which haptic visuality requires a closeness, instead of distance "to discern texture"–not essence–becomes important because as a form of anti-black, white supremist 'grazing', Coloured can be read off the surface of the

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Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life. New York, NY: Munich, Germany; London, U.K; New York: International Center of Photography; DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2013 (235).

[337] See Hortense Spillers' talks on Slavery, Touch, and Shadow Families. She argues that 'shadow families' of the slave master, works as both slavery's repetition and its critique https://youtu.be/AvL4wUKIfpo; https://youtu.be/0r2s8kRYWDo; https://youtu.be/10haBLXN1r0; https://youtu.be/KPa7KhbuEJo

[338] Marks, Laura U. The Skin of the Film Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses. E-Duke Books Scholarly Collection. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000 (162).

body. The *close-touching* read performed as narration of Cedric's family photographs and Ernest's contact sheets, works thus on two levels, in reading with Coloured as surface and a depth to make critical Black intermural difficulties appear.

The visuality of Black intermural appearance surfaces three critical registers of the haptic, namely, contact, touch, and feeling that constitute ways of seeing, but also material photographic meanings. *Coloured Black* attempts to show that the family photograph and the contact sheet, as photographic forms of exposure, articulate Coloured in both temporal and visual terms. These photographic forms may appear unrelated. Yet, what the contact sheet and the family photograph share is a genealogical capacity that offers material, historical, technical and aesthetic complexities through which photographic meaning can be reconstituted. Contact, touch and feeling becomes critical to a *close-touching* read as interpretation, but also as a more conceptual practice of rendering the photographic exposure as material reality in urgent ways. As Marks argues:

> "[h]aptic visuality requires the viewer to work to constitute the image, to bring it forth from latency. … By interacting up close with an image, close enough that figure and ground commingle, the viewer relinquishes her own sense of separateness from the image–not to know it, but to give herself up to her desire for it"[339].

Coloured Black makes sense of apartheid as a visual and domestic regime. Its *close-touching* read could be said to labour the domestic: the domestic as home and prison-house; the domestic as an inscrutable interior; the domestic as a servant figure who belabours apartheid memory and the regimes of racial capital in the present[340]. The kind of domestic work

[339] Marks, Laura U. *The Skin of the Film Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. E-Duke Books Scholarly Collection. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. (181)
[340] See Shireen Ally's work on status of domestic worker rights in South Africa:
-- *From Servants to Workers: South African Domestic Workers and the Democratic State*. Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press, 2009.

performed here seeks not reconciliation or empathy, but a disfigurement; a disfigurement of a Black apartheid into a Black intermurality. The figure or biographical subject who performs this disfigurement is the Black woman. In Ernest's case, it is his mother, Martha. Her domestic service was in fact how Ernest had his first exposure to photography, along with the appearance of what Shireen Ally calls, the "intimate labour" of woman servants that he photographs, and one domestic worker, who he interviews. In Cedric's case, it is his maternal grandmother, Amy Louw, who appears as the vanishing trace of The Zulu Mother within the 'coloured genealogical imagination'. These Black women perform their disfigurement through embodying multiple relations: as both genealogical and biographical subjects, and in particular appearing as women and maternal figures who speak for a collective and gendered experience of Blackness.

Coloured Black is thus 'touched by the mother' whose Blackness struggles to appear and goes unseen in the visibility of her 'colouredness'. Joy James may call these women, "captive maternals" who she argues, "can be either biological females or those feminized into caretaking and consumption"[341]. These captive maternals remain contested terrains of blood, nation and political critique in South Africa. *Coloured Black* is uneasily positioned within South Africa's current "multiracial" claim on African mothers, historically disavowed as figures like "the coloured mother", which Samuelson and Distiller define as the "slave, Khoikhoi, 'coloured' and 'Black woman'. Their essay, 'Denying the coloured Mother:

-- 'Maid' with Rights: The Contradictory Citizenship of Domestic Workers in Post -apartheid South Africa, 2006, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.
--"Domestic Worker Unionisation in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Demobilisation and Depoliticisation by the Democratic State." Politikon 35, no. 1 (2008): 1-21.
-- Ally, Shireen. "Caring about Care Workers: Organizing in the Female Shadow of Globalization." Labour, Capital and Society / Travail, Capital Et Société 38, no. 1/2 (2005): 184-207.

[341] James, Joy. "The Womb of Western Theory: Trauma, Time Theft, & The Captive Maternal' (*Carceral Notebooks*, 2016, http://www.thecarceral.org/cn12/14_Womb_of_Western_Theory.pdf (255)

Gender and Race in South Africa' (2005) consists of reading a series of articles published in Drum Magazine during the 1950s by the historian, Marie Jeffreys (1893-1968), who identified as Afrikaner and controversially wrote about this identity's 'coloured origins' as well as the 'european' origins of 'the coloured'[342].

Coloured Black finds affinity with Samuelson and Distiller in recognizing that the violence in reclaiming Black mothers is often left unaddressed by 'european's and Afrikaners who benefited from historical and genealogical amnesia, which now serves as a 'blood line' through which to 'belong' in South Africa[343]. Cedric's *Blood Relatives* is bound up in this difficulty and in "gendered discourses of female idealization"[344]. *Coloured Black's close-touching* read's 'feeling for' The Zulu Mother as genealogical absence touches this territory. She is exposed as a vanishing that Cedric stages as a visual critique of Coloured by documenting the refusal of his maternal grandmother, Amy to disavow her Zuluness and become 'coloured'. Yet, *Coloured Black* departs from Distiller and Samuelson (including arguments raised in Samuelson's *Remembering the Nation, Dismembering Women? Stories of the South African Transition* 2007) by withdrawing from the insistence on marking these gendered bodies as a "source and site of creativity"[345]. Hartman in 'The Belly of the World: A Note on Black Women's Labors' (2016) reminds us,

> "If we intend to do more than make the recalcitrant domestic, the outcast, and insurrectionist a figure for our revolutionary longing, or impose yet another burden on Black female flesh by making it "a placeholder for freedom," then we must never lose

[342] The article series included Lynn Acutt's portrait of John Dunn and the Dunns were included in the series. Drum: A Magazine of Africa for Africa., 1951 at Herskovits Library at Northwestern University

[343] See Also Bystrom, Kerry. Democracy At Home In South Africa: Family Fictions And Transitional Culture. Gender And Cultural Studies In Africa And The Diaspora. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

[344] Distiller, Natasha, and Meg Samuelson. ""Denying the coloured Mother": Gender and Race in South Africa." L'Homme 16, no. 2 (2005): L'Homme, 01/2005, Vol.16(2).

[345] Samuelson, Meg. Remembering the Nation, Dismembering Women?: Stories of the South African Transition. Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007.

> sight of the material conditions of her existence or how much she has been required to give for our survival.
>
> Those of us who have been "touched by the mother" need acknowledge that her ability to provide care, food, and refuge often has placed her in great jeopardy and, above all, required her to give with no expectation of reciprocity or return. *All we have is what she holds in her outstretched hands*. There is no getting around this. Yet, her freedom struggle remains opaque, untranslatable into the lexicon of the political. She provides so much, yet rarely does she thrive. It seems that her role has been fixed and that her role is as a provider of care, which is the very mode of her exploitation and indifferent use by the world, a world blind to her gifts, her intellect, her talents. This brilliant and formidable labor of care, paradoxically, has been produced through violent structures of slavery, anti-Black racism, virulent sexism, and disposability. The forms of care, intimacy, and sustenance exploited by racial capitalism, most importantly, are not reducible to or exhausted by it.
>
> These labors cannot be assimilated to the template or grid of the Black worker, but instead nourish the latent text of the fugitive. They enable those "who were never meant to survive" to sometimes do just that. This care, which is coerced and freely given, is the Black heart of our social poesis, of making and relation."[346]

Hartman's quote is lengthy, but it warrants stating in full that 'being touched by the mother' is neither a recuperation of love nor an emotional refuge, it is the 'Black heart of our social poesis'. The heart of colonialism and apartheid that beats with dark mysteries that refuses to be seen, "demystified and known so it can be put to rest"[347]. Who is 'the 'coloured' mother'? Did she only have 'european' and 'coloured' children? Post-apartheid critiques of family, gender and race, appear to insist on only 'coloured's' entanglement with 'european's. Kerry Bystrom's *Democracy at Home in South Africa*: *Family Fictions and Transitional Culture* (2016) is another example. Each chapter stages, "an intimate conversation about a crisis of relation–a puzzle of how to come to terms with family and home spaces as well as their wider

[346] Hartman, Saidiya. "The Belly of the World: A Note on Black Women's Labors." Souls 18, no. 1 (2016): 166-73.

[347] Richards, C. 'Retouching Apartheid: Intimacy, Interiority, and Photography' in Enwezor, Okwui, Bester, Rory, and International Center of Photography, Issuing Body. Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life. New York, NY: Munich, Germany; London, U.K.; New York;: International Center of Photography ; DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2013 (234-245).

implications–provoked by the demands of the democratic transition"[348]. The first chapter begins with precisely this "New South African Family Romance" of 'european' writing and "whether or how recognizing new blood relatives can lead to meaningful senses of relation on a wider scale"[349].

The chapter ends with a discussion of two "coloured or multiracial" women writers who help stage the "certain difficulties" of this new family romance. The final sentence of this chapter proves the point. Bystrom writes, "following on from the shift at the end of this chapter from white to 'coloured' family history, I move to a conversation about the kinds of family history most helpful to the work of repair within Black communities"[350]. Bystrom's apartheid drawn between family matters of 'the coloured' and 'the '"bantu"'' is a prevalent trope in South African discourse on race in which 'coloured' becomes code for a reinforcement *and* a critique of whiteness.

What is there left to say about the figure of the servant in South African racial imagination, as the founding figure of its domesticity?[351] Perhaps Jennifer Fish said it best, calling domestic work's continued exploitation of Black women, "the last bastion of apartheid"[352]. What more is there to add to the visualization of the servant, who also is a founding figure of the 'european' family in photography, where laboring servants are seen as a visual refrain,

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[348] Bystrom, Kerry. *Democracy At Home In South Africa: Family Fictions And Transitional Culture.* Gender And Cultural Studies In Africa And The Diaspora. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016 (18).
[349] Ibid (18).
[350] Ibid (52).
[351] On a relationship between slavery and the family in South Africa see Baderoon, Gabeba. "The Ghost in the House: Women, Race, and Domesticity in South Africa." The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry 1, no. 02 (2014): 173-88.
[352] Jennifer Fish, Domestic Democracy: At Home in South Africa (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 81.
Cited in Baderoon, Gabeba. "The Ghost in the House: Women, Race, and Domesticity in South Africa." The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry 1, no. 02 (2014): 173-88. p.187

keeping the children or the animals in 19th century family albums in photographic collections around the country (and the world)[353]. In the twentieth century, servants become subjects of documentary in South Africa and appear as visual testimony[354] and after apartheid, they still appear to haunt contemporary South African visual art[355]. Servants are now also a sartorial politics used in parliamentary politics as the female dress code for the country's growing opposition party, the Economic Freedom Fighters. There is little new to add the figure of the servant in the South African psyche. In some small way, *Coloured Black* attempts to write Ernest into the visual history of domestic service, which appears to overlook his contribution to the field[356]. Ernest's photographs and audio interview contribute towards the field as a 'black insider' during the 1960s who did not approch his subjects as stydes of sociology, but as collaborators in anti-apartheid critique.

Hartman's 'Venus in Two Acts' helps stage not only the stakes of *Coloured Black*'s narration but also the stakes of how servants appear in Ernest's exposures. Her essay helps align a set of imperatives with this narration, which is as much about conjuring a servant life as it is about making Ernest appear as a photographer. She writes,

> "If it is no longer sufficient to expose the scandal, then how might it be possible to generate a different set of descriptions from this archive? To imagine what could have been? To envision a free state from this order of statements? The dangers entailed in

[353] Schoeman, Karel., and South African Library. The Face of the Country : A South African Family Album, 1860-1910 : Photographic Portraits from the Collections of the South African Library. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1996.
[354] Lawson, Lesley., Helene. Perold, and Sached Trust. Working Women. Braamfontein, South Africa : Johannesburg, South Africa: Ravan Press ; Sached Trust, 1985. Thank you to Patricia Hayes for bringing this text to my attention.
See also Cock, Jacklyn. Maids & Madams: A Study in the Politics of Exploitation. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980.
[355] http://www.africavenir.org/publications/e-dossiers/revisions/gabi-ngcobo.html
See also the work of Zanele Muholi, Sabelo Malangeni, Mary Sibande
[356] An exceptions would be: Jayawardane, N. 'Friend of the family': maids, madams, and domestic cartographies of power in South African art in Walsh, Shannon, and Jon Soske. Ties That Bind: Race and the Politics of Friendship in South Africa. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016.

> this endeavor cannot be bracketed or avoided because of the inevitability of the reproduction of such scenes of violence, which define the state of Blackness and the life of the ex-slave"[357].

Hartman raises the necessary dangers of tending to Ernest's scenes of service, keeping in mind that they are also scenes of violence that appear as the everyday in which conditions of visibility are predicated on the knowledge that servants labour as persons without a name, as a people without identity, as Black figures without interiority, whose lives are read off the surface. These qualities of servanthood were also a function of Ernest's archive as much as it was a function of the history of servanthood. *Coloured Black* finds affinity between these qualities of racial categorization, which will be presented as descriptions that stem out of some of what it meant for Black subjects to be classified as 'coloured'.

4.2 Reembodying The Servant

What do the exposures of *House of Bondage* have to do with 'coloured identity', beyond Ernest's biography as a 'play-coloured' or even his deployment of coloured as photographic practice? It is assumed that he did not photograph 'coloured subjects', which Jacobs makes implicit in his final question, asking: "Why was he so focused on becoming 'coloured' when his work was more interested in the apparent certainties of Apartheid black and white binaries?' Jacobs' tacit apartheid positioning of 'coloured' as that which is or presents as neither black nor white aside, his question illuminates Morris-Reich's notion of 'racial imagination'. His question clarifies the imaginary distinguishability of the 'coloured' from the '"bantu"', when Ernest's very passing makes the point that these differences where not as apparent as apartheid would have had us believe. What coloured looked like in the 1960s is

[357] Hartman, Saidiya V. "Venus in Two Acts." Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism 26 (2008):7.

not what ‘coloured’ became by the end of apartheid. Later, a woman called Violet Thomas, a domestic worker who Ernest interviewed , would make it plausible that Ernest in fact could very well have photographed ‘coloured subjects’. Did Ernest make them appear as '"bantu"? Or is it assumed that the domestic workers that he photographed are not ‘coloured’? Whether by design or assumption, the blackness of Ernest’s collaborators do not remain static over time and perhaps becomes identified in the places in which the images appear rather than in the images themselves.

‘Coloured’ as medium is not figured on such an empirical plausibility. Rather, by imagining ‘coloured’ as medium, an attempt it made in theory to stage ‘coloured’ paradigmatically, rather than through only ‘coloured case studies’. Long before the testimony of Violet Thomas had become known, *Coloured Black* had set out on this thought experiment. Violet gave it a fact, when all there was to begin with was a fiction, a sense of ‘coloured’ as an imagined condition that could be embodied by subjects who did not appear as coloured is meant to be seen. The experiment entailed following a Black feeling that led to a ‘coloured’ place; a place touched by whiteness and kept in its hold, while having to be a witness to '"bantu"' captivity. ‘Coloureds’ and '"bantu"'s were together inside of a house of bondage, but kept apart, and a means to make that apartheid felt was needed. *Coloured Black* wrestles with new ways to personify racial class in general and a racial class of Blackness in particular. How could a coloured struggle be domesticated and its categorical claim naturalized in visual terms? ‘Coloured’ as medium needed a Black figuration. *Coloured Black* returns to matters of the slave not as cultural history or racial experience, but as a structural position, asking what it would mean to have servants appear to embody ‘coloured subjecthood’? As biographical figures of the racial imagination, Servants and Coloured share structures of recognition that identify people as categories by means of the skin surface and ways of appearing. The

narration of this imagined but real life world, does not 'prove' that there is a relationship between how the Servant and Coloured is recognized definitionally. This relationship is taken as a given, as the medium through which other kinds of Black struggles can appear.

In *Soos Familie, Stedelike Huiswerkers in Suid-Afrikaanse Tekste* (2015), Ena Jansen traces the representation of the city domestic worker in South African literature, figuring these women as "contact figures". Her conceptualization of 'contact' is drawn from Mary Louise Pratt's *Arts in the Contact Zone,* which "is defined as a perspective… that emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations… in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power"[358]. *Coloured Black* is populated by contact figures. Chief among them are Cedric and Ernest, who as photographers made respective critiques of apartheid through a strategic deployment of 'coloured' and Black self-identification, thus making contact with that which they opposed. The maternal captives that present themselves under these conditions of colonialism and apartheid also appear to make contact and touch, not only Ernest and Cedric, but also the method by which their differing absences become visibly felt.

The first is Ernest's mother, Martha who appears at Ernest's deathbed and makes a touching gesture that lets her know that her son soon will die. She brought his remains back to South Africa and buried Ernest in her own grave. Martha had asked the family to bury her with him when her time came. It would appear that in death, Martha refused being omitted from Ernest's biography. She was part of how the *Boysmeat* series presented itself as a focus of

[358] Cited in Muñoz, José Esteban. Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics. Cultural Studies of the Americas; v. 2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999 (91).

this study. *Coloured Black* writes her into the story of his life, not just as his mother but as part of his genealogy as a photographer, through her life as a "washerwoman"[359]. Small details about Martha would surface, such as, "when she worried about him, Martha Kole sometimes couldn't eat"[360]. Or that she lived to bury her husband and three of her children. Born to land-owning Blacks in Onverwacht, an area now in Limpopo, Martha was born of Sotho people, but spoke only Afrikaans. Her family called her 'Ousis': an Afrikaans term for an older sister, which is a slip from 'Ousie', an Afrikaner term for the Black help. Martha's refusal, "No, I will not bury him there"[361] enacts her survival in death, with the posthumous life of her son who she laid to rest, not as a corpse, but as incinerated remains, because she refused to leave Ernest, where Martha believed him not to have belonged in the first place: in exile, where there is no rest, only survival against the knowledge of never being able to return.

Violet Thomas was also not meant to survive. Yet, she survives in *Coloured Black*, not as a memory, nor an image, but as a voice. Captured on an audio reel, her interview with Ernest survived his archive's disappearance. Of all the subjects from *House of Bondage* that he could have interviewed, and of all the interviews that could have outlived its vanishing, it was the testimony of a domestic worker, Violet that survived. Her testimony itself becomes a critical contact zone weaved *i*nto the narration. Ernest had interviewed her about her history of domestic service in the Johannesburg suburbs of Rosebank, Sandown, Foresttown, Sandton, Bryanston, Hillbrow and Turfontein. He mostly listened and let Violet speak. She sounded older than him. He also once also called her 'Ma' after Violet had bit her tongue and

[359] Cole, Ernest, Gunilla. Knape, Struan. Robertson, and Ivor. Powell. Ernest Cole: Photographer. Götteborg: Hasselblad Foundation: Steidl, 2010.
[360] Martin, Douglas. "From Apartheid to Apartness, Ernest Cole's Victory Lies in his Photographs" *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 March 1990. Courtesy of the Hasselblad Library, Göteberg, Sweden.
[361]

Ernest coaxed her into speaking her mind. This was after she made her disclosure that stirred them both into laughter.

Violet and Ernest laughed together often, poking fun at the foolishness of 'european's. Giggled at the ways that she would take back her dignity in revenge, which caused friction with her employers. Mostly with 'european' women, who did not seem able to control her. “You are a terrible girl”, Violet was told. “Whenever a person speaks to you, you’ve always got an answer”, and to that Violet also had something to say. “But what’s wrong with that?” she replied. “I’m not saying anything bad, madam”. Violet was not afraid to tell ‘'european's’ the truth, like when she refused to gossip with a friend about one employer because “white people cannot keep secrets”. Once a madam had tried to assert her authority over Violet by criticizing the quality of her cleaning and she quipped, “You forget that you used to throw papers anywhere in the kitchen, you didn’t know what cleanliness was. I keep your place clean and today you want to teach me cleanliness?!”

Violet was a servant but she was not subservient. Although by the end of the interview, she resigned herself by saying, “we are not free, we are proper slaves”. Violet may have labored under slave conditions, but she did not tolerate being called one. She told Ernest about one madam who did. “When these slaves come by the door” she instructed Violet, “you should tell them to wait”. Violet was stunned. The meat she and the other servants of the house were meant to eat was also marked ‘slave’. It bothered Violet, when she was told to “take out meat for tonight” from the freezer and faced what she was called among other meat parcels, marked, ‘fillet’ and ‘steak’. Ernest appeared to have interviewed her on the day that she told her employer, “it’s of no use talking, master. I’ve made up my mind, I’m going. And that’s the end of that, sir”. Ernest asked Violet if she questioned them about the marked meat in the

freezer. “Yes. I was just looking for a way to bring it up”, Violet said.” So, I asked [the madam], ‘What is this?’. She said “Uhm it’s the girl’s meat”. I asked “Which girl? Hasn’t she got a name? Why do you write ‘slave’ on her parcel?... I told you that slavery was abolished!”

“What do you take us to be?” Violet insisted. “I’m saying it for the second time to you. You should address us the right way”. She got even angrier after the madam said, “But I don’t mean you” and Violet proclaimed, “but I’m an African. I’m an African”. She also said that she was ‘coloured’. This moment was the revelatory moment of the interview, which happened before she told Ernest how she quit her job that day. This revelation made the madam’s comment that she was not referring to Violet, when she used the term, ‘slave’ telling. Not only of this madam’s perception of the difference between ‘coloured’ and '"bantu"', but of Violet’s refusal to see herself that way. Madams, it would appear, saw her as ‘coloured’. Violet mentioned another time when she shouted back at her employer, who afterward went and cried in the bathroom. Violet overheard her say, “I’m irritated by this little ‘coloured’” and later would be told, “Jy’s vol kak jy![362]”

A slave; an african; a servant; ‘a coloured’: over the course of the interview Violet had called herself many things. The moment in the interview when she identified herself as ‘coloured’ was also the moment when she called herself by her full name and told Ernest of a madam who wanted her to dress in a manner that Violet disapproved of. Calling herself ‘coloured’ appeared as a way to claim a kind of sovereignty and refusal to look like a servant as another means of 'european' control. She and Ernest would often return to the matter of servant appearance, it was a point of friction between her and one madam, who Violet had shamed by

[362] Afrikaans for ‘you are full of shit’.

showing her long hair as revenge against being instructed to wear a cap, when Violet preferred wearing "a doek"[363]. This was when Violet called herself 'a coloured' and Ernest laughed. His chuckle sounded amused. Did he introduce himself to Violet and his intimate subjects as Ernest Cole or Ernest Kole? Did Violet know that he too was a kind of 'coloured'?

[363] For a reading of the maid's 'doek' see Mokoena, Hlonipha '*Maid Chic*'. Centre for Historical Reenactments (undated) *Passages:References and Footnotes*. A curatorial project by The Centre for Historical Enactments in collaboration with the Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism (p. 4)

CHAPTER 5: COLOURED IN THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE[364]

5.1. Fabricating Contact

Ernest's contact sheets in their visual content; but also in their material form offered the necessary theoretical framework through which a *close-touching* read can be understood. Mistakenness or a discrepancy in recognition became a critical mode through which *Coloured Black* framed Ernest as a biographical subject, framed his practice of racial play, and framed his domestic worker contact sheets as both visual material and materially visual. The folder in which the sheets were kept was a clue. Given the mysterious conditions under which Ernest's archive surfaced, and must have been held for almost fifty years, the face of the folder, at first appeared as if it were an 'archival cover'–another disguise–or some evidence of foreign tampering. If Ernest had created it, why would he misspell his own name? On almost every cover of the standard, mostly yellow, letter- sized, cut tab folders in which all his contact sheets were kept, Ernest is named, 'ERNST COLE'. Random numberings and letters are scribbled in different coloured pens and differing scripts. What did they add up to? 6, 28, 2. OA 70382 G. 66 – 6. ~~Rolls 1-22~~. 23 + 23 are circled and then (+roll 23), bracketed. The folder of the domestic workers series' is said to have held 143 strips/ contacts. Yet, Ernest's hand is visible. His familiar cursive spelled the title, 'Afrika Borwa' in blue ink, the same ink that appeared furiously scratched it out as if it were a mistake or no longer in need of remembering. Were the contents misnamed? The folder should have been titled, 'The Cheap Servant' as it was in *House of Bondage*. Instead it was called, "BOYSMEAT".

[364] This title references two works: Glymph, Thavolia. Out of the House of Bondage : The Transformation of the Plantation Household. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008 and Naidoo, Riason. 2008. *The Indian in Drum magazine in the 1950s*. Woodstock, Cape Town: Bell-Roberts Publ.

Another contact sheet appeared, at first glance, where it did not belong. A group of almost twenty Black women dressed as 'maids' or 'tea ladies' were gathered outside a shop front. Ernest appeared to have spent an entire roll of film, thirty-four frames, on these women gathered on the sidewalk as people entered and left the store, or passed by. This contact sheet was not found in the *"Boysmeat"* folder. I discovered it in a folder that also was incorrectly named, "Police and Passes". However, its typewritten title was scratched out on the cover and, hand written over it in that familiar cursive was the title, 'Signs', which contained the contact sheets of what became the essay, 'For Whites Only' in *House of Bondage*. *Coloured Black* reads the signs and what the material conditions of Ernest's archive reveal. What were the presences of these women in mistaken places suggesting? A return to *House of Bondage* made sense of the clues and presented the revelation. 'The Cheap Servant' in the sequence of its essays was an indication, it came after 'Black Spots' and 'Nightmare Rides' and before, 'For Whites Only'. The servant within the architecture of *House of Bondage* appeared to present itself as an interstitial figure, sandwiched between Black home and white world. The servant (gendered in the book, for the most part, as 'woman'), made that journey from captive life in the Black township to a life of captivity in the white suburbs.

The term fabrication refers to these mistaken materialities that honor the nature of the archival encounter along with the ways in which Ernest's archive embodied matters of concealment, disguise, and misrecognition. Fabrication also marks the nature of Blackness as it appears in *House of Bondage* and in two pages from Ernest's surviving notebook that presented itself as another difficulty. The servants in the *Boysmeat* series were not named,

which created a need to attend to the appearance of Black life as sign[365], which was precisely Ernest's anger against apartheid, as he writes in *House of Bondage*, "[t]he infectious spread of apartheid into the smallest detail of daily living has made South Africa a land of signs"[366]. He refers to the literal signs that populated public space, yet at the same time, Ernest also re-inscribed the language of the apartheid sign onto his Black subjects through his practice of naming them, "township mothers", "servants", "girls", "boys", "miners', "the African", "handcuffed Blacks", "diviner", "the Black Christian" and so on.

May it have been necessary to protect the identity of his subjects for the publication of the book? Ernest also photographed, not only under a pseudonym, but also under conditions in which he had to conceal his camera: how would he have been able to record names? There is evidence to suggest that Ernest recorded people's names, but may have kept them anonymous for *House of Bondage*. Scribbled across two pages of his dog-eared notebook was a list of woman's names: 'Esther', 'Beauty', 'Grace', 'Magdeline', and more than one 'Maggie'. There was a 'Rebecca', a 'Rosy', a 'Lizie, an 'Ettie', and a 'Mr. Moloi'. The names included telephone numbers, other illegible notes[367] and residential locations in the Johannesburg suburbs of Melrose, Parktown, Killarney, Hyde Park, Dunkeld, and Saxonwold.

[365] I also discovered an exposure of an actual apartheid sign, nailed to a brick face wall that read, "NOTICE. DELIVERY BOYS AND AFRICAN SERVANTS ENTRANCE IN LANE" in the *Boysmeat* contact sheets not the 'Signs' folder.
[366] Cole, Ernest. 1967. *House of Bondage*. Ridge Press. Random House Publishing. New York City (82).
[367] Scribbled amongst these words was the date, 'Thursday'. Could this have been the day that Ernest would visit? Thursday in South Africa was known as 'Shiela's Day': the servant's day off. But how could that be? Most servants he photographed were pictured working? When I first asked myself this question, I held my breathe in the thought that some of these scenes could be staged? Did Ernest fabricate the reality of these exposures? I did notice that none of the exposures of women cleaning the inside of white homes, showed one messy house. Were these women his accomplices on their day off?

The final mistaken materiality that influenced the fabricated treatment or narration of Ernest's *Boysmeat* contact sheets, was the contact sheets of the International Defense and Aid Fund (IDAF), where Ernest Cole photographs are found[368]. At the height of its activity during apartheid, IDAF was a global solidarity organization that operated from 1956-1991 and helped raise monies for legal and welfare services for liberation movements[369]. IDAF[370] served as a critical information service on behalf of an anti-apartheid movement working from exile, that serviced anti-apartheid propaganda efforts, "to keep the conscience of the world alive'[371]. The UN Centre Against Apartheid for instance was a key ally in the informational networks that IDAF coordinated.

By the 1980s, IDAF managed an enormous informational library that included, autobiographies of political activists, or biographies and other non-fictional books by allied writers and publishers, pamphlets and "fact papers" and "focus and briefing papers", music

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369 See Herbstein, Denis., Human Sciences Research Council, and National Bureau of Educational Social Research. White Lies: Canon Collins and the Secret War against Apartheid. Cape Town: Oxford: HSRC Press ; James Currey, 2004.

370 IDAF was not the ANC, although the two organizations shared board and management members. Barry Feinberg was on the board for Sechaba, the ANC magazine, but he was not involved in the design of the magazine, nor in the treatment of its images that were made to mean like text. The visual convention shared between IDAF and the ANC seemed to make images appear like text, and text were made into pictures that could be reproduced. In particular, IDAF shared that visual practice with the ANC through the ANC's use of the IDAF Photo Library that were comprised of that hybrid visuality. Their visual language resembled one another or they also sounded like each other. They were not one voice because those supporting the IDAF could not necessary want to appear as supporting the ANC.[5] IDAF for instance commissioned white photographers to photograph in South Africa[6] during apartheid, also in collaboration with the UN Centre Against Apartheid. Most of IDAF's Ernest Cole photographs,would have been photographed from the book. There are others that are press images that he produced in South Africa during the late fifties and 1960s, which they must have gotten from another source, if not from Ernest himself.

371 1989 IDAF Catalogue. University of Western Cape Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Cape Town, South Africa.
I interviewed Barry Feinberg, head of IDAF information service during its early period from the 1960s until the late 1970s (17 March 2017), who insisted on using the term, 'propaganda' after I had asked him about its use as also making IDAF efforts complicit in what propaganda implied in reference to the apartheid state. He instead retorted, "it was our propaganda'. I also don't understand why Feinberg is not mentioned in Herbstein's book, which is less about IDAF information service and more about Canon Collins as a political figure and IDAF's more overtly political activities.

records, posters, photo books, "films and videos" and a library of about 100-000 images[372]. IDAF operated like a photo agency although photographers would not send their unattributed prints directly to the organization, but would find themselves in the IDAF collection often through allied church organizations in London and Amsterdam[373]. A number of IDAF photographic library invoices for the year 1985 provide a sense of the demand among international media and cultural organizations for photographs and how much many of these entities were charged for the use of prints. Most importantly, it also provided a sense, less of how images were attributed (very few were), but more importantly, how images were described, which was telling of the anti-apartheid photographic complex:

> "boy singing at piano or Hector Peterson, children, Nelson Mandela, Winne Mandela, Albertina Sisulu, wounded baby in South Africa, 1976/ Soweto, Sharpville six, children in detention, Kgosana, Crossroads, KTC and vigilante, general, sister Bernard Ncube, removals, vigilantes/ police, Steve Biko, SA Police, sports boycott, children in detention and atrocities etc., Oliver Tambo, Theresa Ramashamole, families and living conditions in Townships, families and detainees, troops in townships, SARMCOL Workers Campaign, prison doors, Nannies and white child park bench, police/ violence, railway workers strike, health, SADF aggression, Desmond Tutu, confrontation of black v white (+ South African police), Rossing Mine Namibia, Moses Mayekiso, caspirs, demonstrations in townships, British companies in SA, press censorship, Dr Ivan Toms, Huddleton, township conditions, living conditions, miners strikes, hostel conditions, white housing, Biko's interrogators, Thabo Mbeki, Joe Slovo, Raymond Suttner, "front cover of Cry Beloved Country, Ruth First, Boesak, Chikane, Funerals, religion, SWAPO, squatter camps, shanty towns, Biko's Cell, Oscar Mpetha in a t-shirt at his home in 1984 (photo by Carolin Schuten), Oscar Mpetha in a wheelchair, rearview of a person wounded by buckshot in crossroads, cape town, August 1985. Photo by Dave Hartman), Bus boycott, trade unions, Delmas Treason Trialists, women in Namibia, Robben island, women in struggle, Govan Mbeki, Chris Hani, Dulcie September, Godfrey Motsepe, Dikeledi Funeral, Albie Sachs, Wally Serote, security force brutality, children torture, resettlement camps bophutoswana, Dingaan's Kraal, PW Botha, foreign involvement and multinationals in SA, a little boy feeling from a baton wielding policeman, AWB Eugene Terrablance, William Modibedi, Moses Mayekiso

[372] 1989 IDAF Catalogue. University of Western Cape Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Cape Town, South Africa.
[373] Paul Weinberg interviewed by Candice Jansen (29 November 2017). There are also a number of Cedric Nunn images in the IDAF collection and used in IDAF-affiliated publications that were sent through Afrapix, who shared office space with the World Council of Churches, who played an important role in these informational flows.

being arrested, Robert McBride, Pietermartizburg vigilantes, ANC Leaders, Harry Gwala, Tambo, General Apartheid, Zinzi Mandela, Fareed Esack, Buthelezi and Inkatha, Ishmail Ayob, Albert Luthuli, economic collaboration".


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The names, nouns, places, and key phrases from IDAF invoices are listed to visualize a critical point about anti-apartheid visuality by coupling this invoice list with the image of an IDAF contact sheet as resembling what Alex Hughes and Andrea Noble call a *phototextuality*[374]. There is a manner in which image becomes text and text becomes image in the ways in photographs circulated, were accessed, and produced as literature within anti-apartheid materials. Marked on the contact sheet by the textual frame, 'ANC Photos', presented as an image, in the first frame that also serves an indexical or classificatory function that circumscribes how the hybrid images are read. The words on the invoices, therefore mimic the apparent logic of an IDAF contact sheet to surface an important phototextuality that *Coloured Black* deploys as method. Hughes and Noble encourages us (following on from Victor Burgin's *Thinking Photography*) to "think about how photographic texts incorporate linguistic material and vice versa, about the tensions intrinsic to mixed media works, about the complexities of the image/text dynamic; and about the disjunctions of visual and textual literacy"[375].

What kind of literacies then does the IDAF contact sheet illicit? How does this kind of disjunctive literacy operate in *Coloured Black*'s treatment of Ernest's contact sheets? First, what is a contact sheet? The name refers to the material reality of an analogue photographic form. Contact sheets are made in the darkroom and their name refers to the process by which negatives are placed upon or *make contact* with photosensitive paper. Contact sheets embody an important part of the analogue photographic process. A photographic print is made, by placing a negative on an enlarger and projecting light through the negative, which projects an image onto a print. The contact sheet at its fundamental sense is an ordering form that fixes

[374] Hughes, Noble, Hughes, Alex, and Noble, Andrea. (eds) Phototextualities: Intersections of Photography and Narrative. 1st ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003.
[375] Ibid (3).

the fragility and dark inscrutability of negatives and can bring multiple exposures into a totalizing sequence or a visible text that makes apparent the reality of photographic exposure in miniature. Contact sheets are also conflated with truth since they are known in the vernacular as "proofs". As Kristen Lubben writes, the contact sheet places "a photograph back within the flow of time from which it was removed, the contact sheet holds out the promise of substantiation that an image is truly what it claims to be, that an event unfolded in the way the photographer claimed"[376].

The revelation of the IDAF contact sheet upturns the photographic form's tie to truth and instead exposes the contact sheet's susceptibility to fabrication. The IDAF contact sheet appears like a contact sheet, but it also is not a contact sheet. It is not created by negatives, but rather it is photographed into being through pre-existing imagery. An unknown photographer would photograph photographic prints and other visual materials from books and other sources and create a new original that could be photographically reproduced. The IDAF contact sheet thus has not one photographer, but is comprised of multiple photographic visions that are put to a single purpose. More than a contact sheet, the IDAF contact sheet is a political instrument that harnesses the potential of not only the image but also the photographic form itself, which is bound up in what Julie Noirot's calls a "paradoxical time and a fragile memory".

Reading with François Soulages' notion of "paradoxical time" as that which the contact sheet induces in its constituent "mixed temporalities" of "real time" (that which objectively is captured in the moment of exposure), of subjective time (how that exposure was framed by the photographer), and what Soulages calls, "non-photographic memory", (what the

[376] Lubben, Kristen. Magnum Contact Sheets. London: Thames & Hudson, 2011 (12).

photographer recalls about what was photographed before the contact sheet is viewed)[377]. Noirot then argues that the contact sheet is transformed into "a paradoxical meeting place for memory and forgetting, faithful testimony and fiction. The contact sheet thus reveals a fruitful, active and singular memory, both complex and fragile, made of repentance and backtracking"[378]. The IDAF contact sheets' fabrication is thus a kind of temporality and tracking that is constituted by a different kind of photographic practice, that exists outside of the time of the photographer and the photographed event, which is loosely referred to here as a 'political time' that presents itself as a 're-photographed memory'.

This politics of re-photography as a historic form of anti-apartheid visuality becomes a method through which Ernest's *Boysmeat* contact sheets are materially and theoretically cut through and[379] into what Noirot calls "the dead time" of the contact sheet. A time that she explains rests between each frame, which marks time and shows time passing as sequence.

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[377] Julie Noirot. "De La Genèse Photographique à La Photographie Génétique From Photographic Genesis into Photography Genetics." Temporalités, no. 14 (2011): Temporalités, 01 October 2011, Issue 14 (39). Noirot also includes a "plural and circular time" into this dynamic, which is demonstrated by the photographer's return to the contact sheet through marking and annotating its exposures on an ongoing basis.

[378] Ibid

[379] Cut becomes a critical and creative practice that draws from Jared Sexton's notion of the 'racial suture' in *AntiBlackness and the Critique of Multiracialism* (2008), which uses film theory's concept of "suture" to argue for a resonance between "the problem of composition in cinema, which is to say the problem of subject formation described by the processes of suture, and the internally conflicted obsessions of racial whiteness" (19). Nicole Fleetwood uses the concept of suture to argue for the notion of a 'visible seam': "Suture" in its theoretical context, and in its more rudimentary definition as the binding of wounds, provides tools for understanding digital assemblage in contemporary media art. Much of contemporary digital art not only challenges the normative process of identification but also the process of assemblage in visual media narratives and technology. Digital assemblage, employed by many contemporary media artists, borrows upon but is not the same as cinematic assemblage. Cinematic assemblage as an editing technique and aesthetic device abets in the production of dominant narratives. in contradistinction, digital assemblage may simulate "cutting shots together" but its practitioners also composite "shots" and their disparate elements to make meaning. Because of the ease of compositing, digital media artists can more readily insert and juxtapose discarded refuse, remains, "found" materials, and disparate images that, despite their compositing, disrupt the cohesion of a normative cinematic "shot" or "scene." Digital assemblage becomes an aesthetic and discursive tool for many to disrupt unified and complete messages of other forms of visual media. Digital assemblage can be used to challenge the seamless "stitching up" of the "cuts" or "wound" that characterizes classic cinematic narrative and normative visual culture" (181).

Between these intervals of marked temporalities is where *Coloured Black* intervenes to re-emphasising the potentiality of the contact sheet's "chronological confusion"[380], giving the "illusion of succession and simultaneity of shots"[381]. Noirot calls this "the time of contacting", "a chopped and jerky time, made of cuts and discontinuities". *Coloured Black* cuts into the dead time and reassembles exposures and sequences into new contact sheet forms that stage the *close touching* read in visual terms. Temporality is cut into and scale is played with, another significant quality of the contact sheet. The contact elicited by close reading, as Emily Landau has said about doll houses, 'when the details shrink, our attention to them magnifies". Traditionally, contact sheets would be looked at with a loupe, a magnifying instrument kept to one eye that would be run over the miniature exposures to evaluate their quality for the purposes of printing. Steven Millhauser's essay, 'Fascination of the Miniature' (1983) makes the point that 'the miniature' should not be confused with 'the minute' or 'smallness', which exists in isolation. The miniature is by nature a smaller version of something else and thus "implies a relation, a discrepancy"[382]. Millhauser argues that "we yield to the miniature in sensual self-surrender", which resonates with Marks' claim of a haptic work that "may create an image of such detail sometimes through miniaturism, that evades a distanced view, instead pulling the viewer in close"[383]

[380] Ibid (37).
[381] Ibid.
[382] Millhauser, Steven. "The Fascination of the Miniature." Grand Street 2, no. 4 (1983): 128.
[383] Marks, Laura U. The Skin of the Film Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses. E-Duke Books Scholarly Collection. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. (183)

5.2 Coloured in The House of Bondage: An Overview

Coloured in the House of Bondage begins with 'A World Without Whites', which describes the inside-outside pattern of servant life as a pattern of 'the coloured subject' within whiteness. Outside of The White House, at busy intersections, on the grass out front of houses, on the pavement, alongside driveways, riding bicycles, waiting for the buses to arrive, servants found community–a sense of privacy–an escape from the inside where servants laboured alone within a housework regime[384]. Another outside also appears inside The White House, in the 'servant quarters' which is another dimension of the apartheid architecture of 'european' domesticity that Ernest photographed. This section is named after how Ernest photographed domestic service, which stages servant life against The White House without the appearance of madams, or masters. Servants are seen in a world without whites, who are ghostly figures who pass by on the street without a glance, at either Ernest or the servants, seeming to imagine their worlds without Blacks, reminding us that a world without whites is still a white world.

'Appearing to Serve' fixates on how Black subjects appear as servants through iconic guises such as the maid's uniform, which Gabeba Baderoon notes is essential to the transformation of woman into domestic worker. She argues that the uniform performs two functions: "it signals that the woman is capable of and ready to do domestic labour, but also that she has fully entered the persona of a domestic worker, as though there is nothing other than this surface". Ernest photographed a maid's uniform without a servant wearing it. He also

[384] Cole, Ernest., and Thomas. Flaherty. *House of Bondage*. A Ridge Press Book. New York: Random House, 1967 (76). Ernest explains why the exposure of the outside could appear as refuge for, "[i]n white suburbs there are no recreation centres open to Black servants…. Entertaining friends is done outside garden walls, since employers do not want strange "boys" and "girls" on their premises"

photographed a woman servant getting dressed for work inside her servant quarters that sheds light on the regimes of visibility that the uniform enacts like a racialised skin surface, which classifies Black subjects into an 'ambiguous visibility'[385] where a servant in uniform is meant to be seen, but not known. As Baderoon argues, "[t]he maid's uniform simultaneously erases and heightens visibility—it allows women to disappear into a subservient identity"[386].

Baderoon cites, Hlonipha Mokoena, who notes, "for the maid to do her work she has to strip herself of all accessories and clothes that make her unique. She has to become nondescript, inconspicuous, non-threatening… [f]or her to perform her duties, she has to be seen to be submitting to the discipline of sameness"[387]. This discipline of sameness, is read as also structuring a collective experience of time, seeing uniformed servants as the keepers of time for The White House. The temporality not only of servanthood but also of Ernest's time spent in this world became undetectable because the servant uniform rendered every day, every exposure uniform in appearance. There was no way to tell the time, which within the form of the contact sheet presented useful conceptual dissonances that also made servant life appear outside of space and time.

'The Apartheid Charge' follows from a narration of the iconic guises under which servants are recognized, which like 'coloured', cannot be seen when not in visible relation to whiteness. The white child became a critical appendage through whom servants are recognized, which in 'The Apartheid Charge' is narrated in a register of culpability. The word, 'charge' has multiple meanings, pointing to "the scope of someone's responsibility" or

[385] Baderoon, Gabeba. *Regarding Muslims : From Slavery to Post-apartheid.* Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2014. (6, 12, 27, 38, 42-45)
[386] Baderoon, Gabeba. "The Ghost in the House: Women, Race, and Domesticity in South Africa." The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry 1, no. 02 (2014): 187.
[387] Ibid.

to a person or a thing "entrusted to one's care". 'Charge' also is another word for either a load, a burden or for cargo, it can be used to identify "the amount of money levied for a service". 'Charge' can be another word for an instruction or in the historic, military sense, 'charge' can be the name for 'a ground attack against a prepared enemy'. A charge is also an accusation. As an apartheid charge, the white children are marked on Ernest's contact sheet, which become difficult exposures as the gaze of the white children, who, unlike the servants for the most part, would look directly at him. The exposures of the white child with the Black servant, staring not just at Ernest, but at their future racial culpability, is imagined as an appearance of an innocence with which whites could still look a Black stranger in the eye.

Suspicion is also cast on the servant herself by narrating a series of exposures that depict a woman-servant playing with three boys in a backyard. The scene looked like play, but it felt dangerous as if a chilling scene of a crime in two senses: the first, the danger of Ernest having photographed the white children inside their homes without permission and the second, the open question of, to what extent did Ernest put his subjects in danger? How open was this woman to the risk? Did she understand that he was photographing her and looking to see apartheid? Did she know that she was being photographed for a book? Could she have exploited the white children's trust in her as an accomplice to Ernest's "crime"? In his exposures, servants can also be seen as necessary threatening figures, exploring Hartman's question, '[w]here does the impossible domestic fit into the general strike?'[388] who through their "intimate labour"[389] is also well placed to transgress the order of the White House as she is the one who has to tend to its vulnerabilities.

[388] Hartman, Saidiya. "The Belly of the World: A Note on Black Women's Labors." Souls 18, no. 1 (2016): 166-73.
[389] Ally, Shireen A. From Servants to Workers: South African Domestic Workers and the Democratic State. Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press, 2009.

Is there a connection between 'the coloured' and the dog? What does the animality of the dog have to do with the sensual life of eating as a servant under conditions of apartheid? What is there to make of dogs as non-human species entangled in apartheid race relations? **'**Eating Dogs' narrates under the shadow of 'colouredness as mixed breed' that surfaces in the repeated articulation of the politics of shame and blood[390]. 'Eating Dogs' draws from exposures of servants and dogs: walking together, dogs on leashes in servant hands, along the streets of the white suburbs, and dogs, unleashed inside The White House. In one sense the servant and the dog are related. Both serve as companion species to the 'european' family, yet there is a visual dissonance that appears when the servant and the dog are in proximity exhibiting complexities of 'baaskap' and divided loyalties. Ernest was bound up in this complexity. How the visual relation between the dog and the servant surfaced was entangled in an imagined sense of Ernest's erotic desire for one woman on whom he spent almost two rolls on film, photographing her walking a dog on a leash. This woman was one of the few singular subjects of *Boysmeat*, who never made it into *House of Bondage,* perhaps because there was something about her exposures that did not resemble a critique of apartheid. Other woman servants Ernest would stage against 'european' domesticity, but this servant appeared to be staged against his own desire.

The interrelation of the dog and servant also was bound up in the title of the series, '*Boysmeat*', which was a critical concern for Ernest in his interview with Violet, and which

[390] Marais, Mike. "Bastards and Bodies in Zoë Wicomb's David's Story." Journal of Commonwealth Literature, The 40, no. 3 (2005): 21-36.
See Arthur Nortje's poem, 'Dogsbody Halfbreed' (1970) or Breyten Breytenbach's, 'Dog Heart' (1998). See also Cape Governor in 1674's obituary of Krotoa in which she was described as "hovering between two worlds…being like dogs, always returning to her own vomit" cited in Distiller, Natasha, and Meg Samuelson. ""Denying the coloured Mother": Gender and Race in South Africa." L'Homme 16, no. 2 (2005): L'Homme, 01/2005, Vol.16(2).

he explains in *House of Bondage*, through the gendered ways that Ernest presents servanthood and which is important to quote here in full:

> "Employers must feed their servants and of course they try to get away as cheaply as possible. The standard fare, repeated day after monotonous day, is tea, bread, and jam for breakfast, and porridge and boysmeat for lunch and dinner. Boysmeat is the name given to the cheapest, last edible meat the butcher can find, cuts no white person would dream of buying for himself. Boysmeat may be the neck of a cow, a pigs nose, the hoof of a goat, or some equally unappetizing part. The butcher is free to use his discretion…. "The "boy" of course is the male African that the meat is intended for. In the eyes of whites, no African ever becomes a man. Until he reaches his teens he is a pickaninny; thereafter, until he dies of old age, he is merely "boy".

After describing what servants had to eat during apartheid, and how "the lady of the house" orders meat over the telephone, Ernest ends his brief take on Boysmeat by saying, "[b]ecause the African eats so poorly… Boysmeat is exchanged for dogsmeat"[391].

[391] Cole, Ernest., and Thomas. Flaherty. *House of Bondage.* A Ridge Press Book. New York: Random House, 1967


KODAK PLUS X PAN FILM








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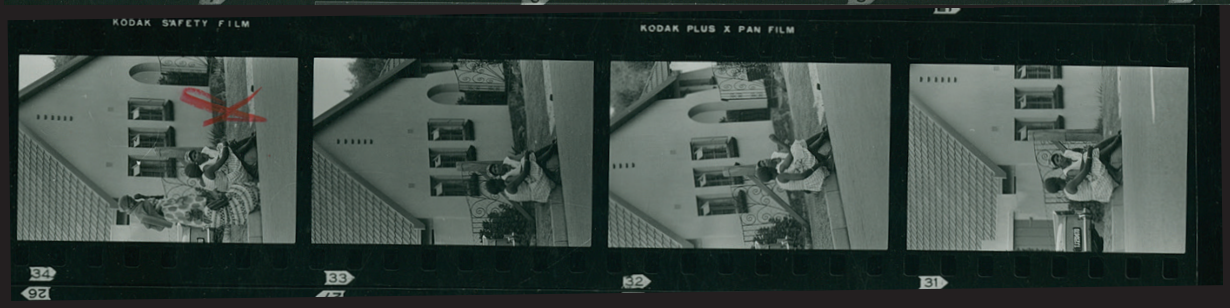
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5.3 A World Without Whites

Servanthood took shape outside on the streets of the white suburbs. Inside the white house would be where servants laboured, but outside on the streets was where servants found rest from white family and its housework regime. Streets in the white suburbs appeared as if they were not made for walking or even for being for play. The streets of the white suburbs appeared not made for people but for machines like bicycles, cars or lawnmowers. From the street, above the line of the walls, the white house could appear as but a roof or as the tops of trees that marked a private garden for the use of family only. Houses in the white suburbs would not always be visible behind tall white walls. In that space between where its concrete would meet the earth, servants planted pruned shrubbery and the grass that covered the pavement. What to call this domesticated outside? A gardened street? A street garden? Unimaginable for white family? The Black touch of the servant may have made the outside of the white house appear like a home, but Ernest photographed it as a home that was made for a servant community.

Exposures of servants sitting on grass outside white houses also suggests that Ernest may not have just watched for the inside-outside pattern of servant life. He may have also orchestrated it; posed servants in front of white houses. Or did she enjoy sitting there during her breaks? Would she usually bring out her radio to listen to or to sit on what looks like a newspaper that folds against her weight unlike a piece of fabric would? Would another servant on the bicycle have known to ride up that street to catch a conversation or a tune? Or turn up at the busy intersection of a tree-lined street? Did Ernest ask them to sit? Or were they already waiting? Or just together having a private conversation without him? Why sit so close to the Black and white painted traffic pole? Perhaps Ernest did not ask that they sit there because the pole was

in the way even if servants were gathered around it at a busy intersection, not too far from the white house. Yet, always outside of it, where servants could be alone.

Of course, the servants were never really alone. Ernest was always watching them. Following their movements and marking their place both inside and outside the white house. Servants alone held his attention, which took on the look of surveillance that deployed his talent for street photography. To what extent did he make use of his ability to not be seen and make servants appear in exposures as if he was unnoticed? Sometimes servants did notice him, even when they did not look at him or even know who he was. There could not have been many Black photographers walking around the streets of these white suburbs. Other times, it was not apparent if servants did notice him. Did Ernest disguise himself as one of them for the outside? Would he have made his identity as a photographer known? Did he feel the need to conceal his camera? Exposures of servants being photographed on the streets, unbeknownst, appear the most telling of Ernest's recognition of the inside-outside patterns that shaped servant life in white suburbs.

They did not all appear sitting outside white houses in the same way. At times, servants appeared far enough from him to look like strangers. Ernest could have been walking the streets and had stumbled onto the recognisable scene in which the pattern presented itself as a white house; two Black women sitting outside, not wearing a servant uniform, but seated close together, perched on the concrete edge of a street. The women were seated beside a driveway. A car was parked inside. Ernest stood for some time watching them from what looks like across the street. He did not move and made more than one frame. Did they see him? People had come and gone from where the women sat, yet, Ernest kept watching. He could have been quick.

Outside the white house, servants were exposed to a host of gazes; to looks that appear absent from windows in cars that drive by on the streets where servants were gathered. Or absent gazes from windows could have been kept behind curtains in white houses. Servants may have found rest outside, but they never found privacy. Outside the white house, servants were exposed to looks that cannot be seen except for Ernest's gaze, which also stands in for this absent quality of servants being watched and alone on the streets of the white suburbs.


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KODAK SAFETY FILM


KODAK SAFETY FILM


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Inside the white house there was also an outside that was not the family garden. Inside the white house, at the back of the house or at the top of the high rise apartment building were the servant quarters, which as a row of rooms, appeared like a street in the sky that resembled the look of apartheid architecture for Black labour. The place had no warmth. The street quality of this outside within the white home was drawn from not just its look, but also its purpose. It was a concrete passage, lined by a row of closed doors on either side, which served as a thoroughfare for servants who could make that journey from the street outside to the street within as part of their housework regime. Or that was how Ernest photographed it. Like them, he returned to that street in the sky again and again during his time spent with servants during the day. Although he made several exposures of the outside of servant quarters, he photographed them from only one side. Was it the same passage? It could very well not be, since many of these spaces were designed in a similar fashion. Ernest may not have gotten that close to many of the women he photographed in order to access this outside within the white home.

Ernest's view of the servant quarters pictured a passage of servanthood that was physical or special, one that measured the distance that servants had to travel to wash and hang laundry or to have some privacy. Ernest's view on the servant quarters also measured the psychological distance that his own journey as a photographer would undergo, along with the servant journey he undertook. Why did Ernest not photograph this passage from another direction? Why did he always face it in this way? Was it because Ernest did not feel free enough to go to the room of the women he would have followed there? Fixating on this view also meant that Ernest could visualise the scale of servant labour as an optical illusion that Ernest never travelled beyond because it was a way in which he could transform this inside, private space for servants to feel like the outside.

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KODAK SAFETY

Windows were another opening through which the inside and the outside of the white house revealed itself. Ernest photographed servants against these windows and into the light, which meant that he exposed the image for the measure of light inside the room, not for the light outside of it. If the light were behind him, it would darken the revelation. This tactical move, which would be fixed when printed in the darkroom. As raw exposure, the windows in these exposures look like frames of blinding light that enchanted the room inside the white house. Ernest often photographed servants nearby windows, perhaps for this clarity, which was not just about her image, but also the image of the domestic interior.

He photographed servants cleaning or appearing to clean but the rooms were never messy. They appeared touched by her, which meant that the rooms of the white house appeared untouched by the family who would return and find their home unlike they had left it. Ernest photographed her wiping tidy surfaces or tending to beds already made with institutional precision. Blankets would be already folded on the bed. Sheets would have been made flat, smoothed by hand. The light fixtures hung over them would be dusted along with the frilly curtains, veiled window sills, fabricated lampshades in plush rooms with ornate headboards, and embellished mirror frames. The windows of these rooms would be as long as the wall and almost as wide as the length between the ceiling and the floor. Blinded by the light of the window also meant that you could not see out of it, only what was on the inside of it. In one room there was a window that appeared like the window in her servant quarters, which was a room not like the rooms of the white house.

While in the rooms of the white house, Ernest had space to photograph her moving, inside where she lived she had no room to move. Only room to lay or sit down. Her windows were not made for looking outside. Nor did they show any need for curtains. Her windows were a

source for the light during the day, otherwise it would be too dark on the inside of her bare and cramped quarters. The extent to which the light of her servant windows were overexposed is also in direct relation to how much light was in the room itself. Therefore the detail inside her room, Ernest rendered with those narrow windows under which her bed was made. The single bed that fitted the breadth of a room made for one person who did not have a lover or a family. She slept there alone, under a window that could have allowed the night sky blow over her head.

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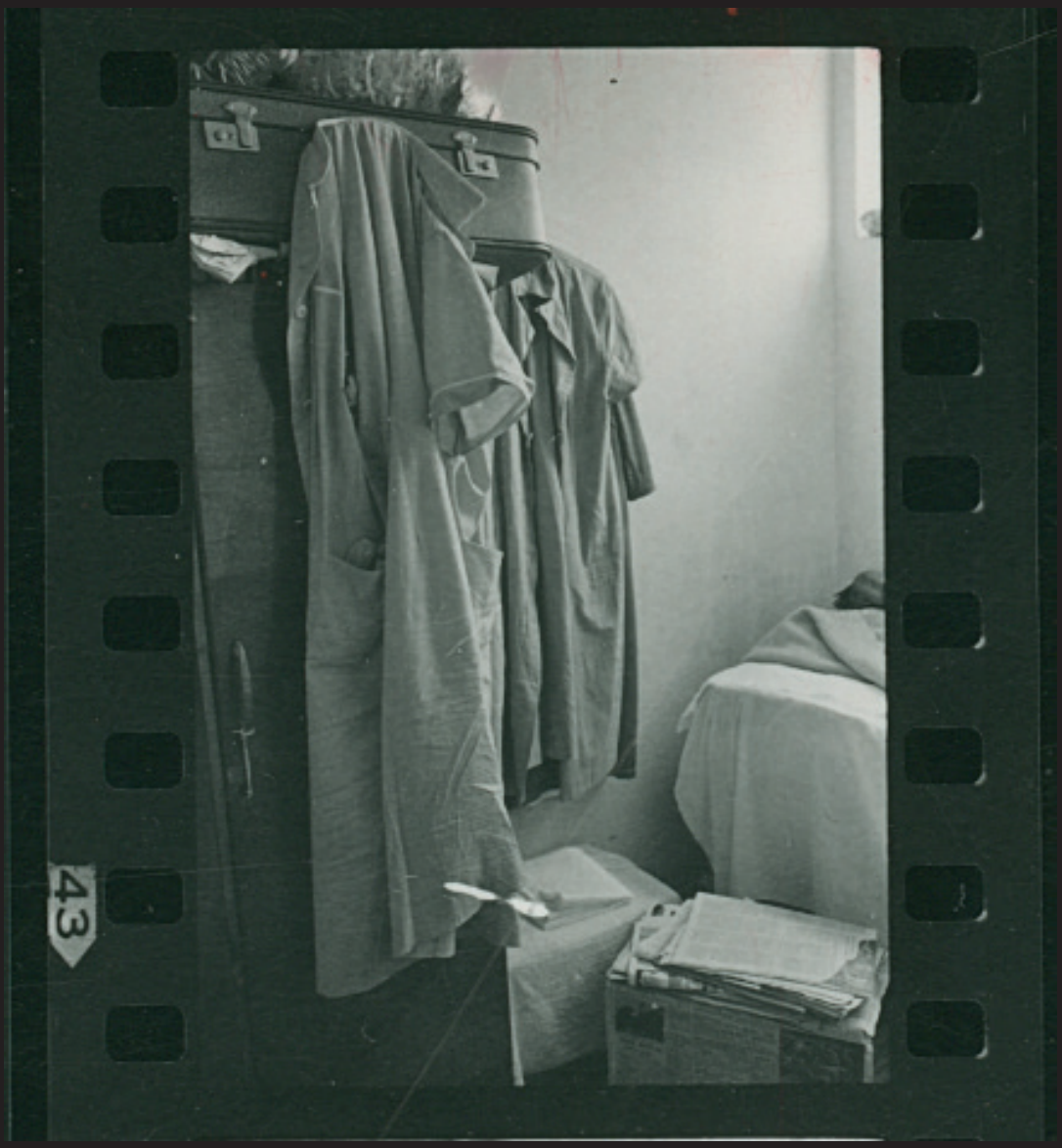
X PAN FILM

There were windows in the white house that were not just made for the outside or for curtains. There were windows made to watch the family in the white house eat. Windows that could be small, wooden and made through the kitchen wall. This opening would not be called a window, but a service hatch. Calling it a window, makes this hole in the wall, which appeared between the refrigerator and the kitchen cupboard, a naturalised domestic exposure of apartheid–or of how homes were designed at the time for race relations that kept the reality of how Black hands prepared food out of sight from the dinner table or from where the family entertained. Food would be passed through that window along with her name that would travel across from the other side. Ernest's exposure shuts that out. The window is closed. Did Ernest shut it or ask her to do so? Did she like to keep that window closed as she cleaned? The empty baby chair, made for eating, placed dead centre underneath it was a poetic touch. Or was it a trace of Ernest's intent? Or was the chair an object that figured the reality of her duty to feed the baby at the window. During the day, when she was alone? Or was it made ready for the evening, so that when the family had dinner, the baby's mealtime could be within sight?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5.4 Appearing to Serve

The weight of the servant uniform is a visual force, it has the power to act as a symbol in the absence of a body wearing it. Its iconicity is touching. Ernest only ever once pursued an image of the servant uniform as fabric, object, and a disembodied sign. What makes it a servant uniform? Is it the way it covers the wardrobe? One uniform hangs up straight. The other appears draped or hooked from the suitcase handle stacked on top of the cupboard. The neck of the overall was splayed open. It is a potent frame. Ernest had an eye for corners. He knew how to cut into them. His composition makes room for the suggestion that her resting place did not have much space. Her carpets, her table and chair and the touch of light from the window cuts an elegance with which Ernest frames. It is a rare frame. Ernest almost never photographs without people in the frame, although he did have a feel for objects.

These uniforms suggest the servant undressed, which means seen, whereas a uniform worn would suggest her invisibility. Her uniform then is the skin or her disguise as it hangs there like fabrics of flesh or a carcass of an identity. The servant uniform is a fabrication that clothes her body and takes on the purpose of a skin that identifies her as a hand. It also becomes iconic through means of resemblance and otherness. The servant uniform in all its fashioning, helps figure a group identity, in which one body is made to look like the other. This is how uniformed subjects become a visual community–a servanthood. These uniforms make servants appear related, when they may not be known to one another, to write their story as a collective biography.


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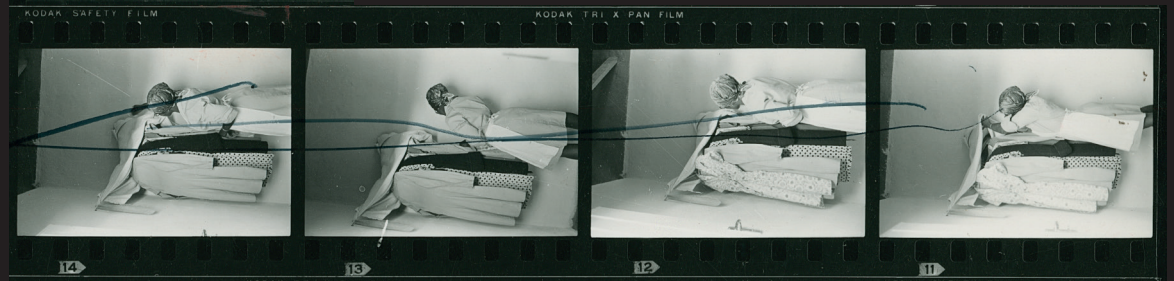
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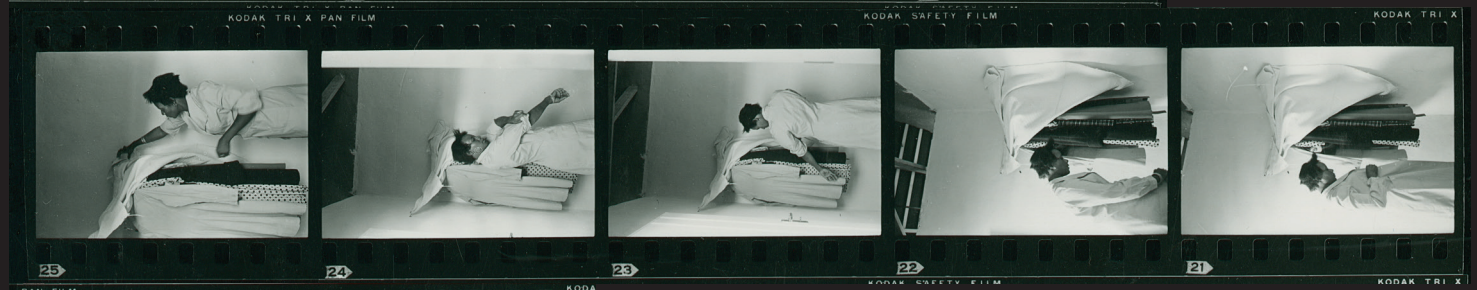
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KODAK TRI X


PAN FILM
KODA
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19

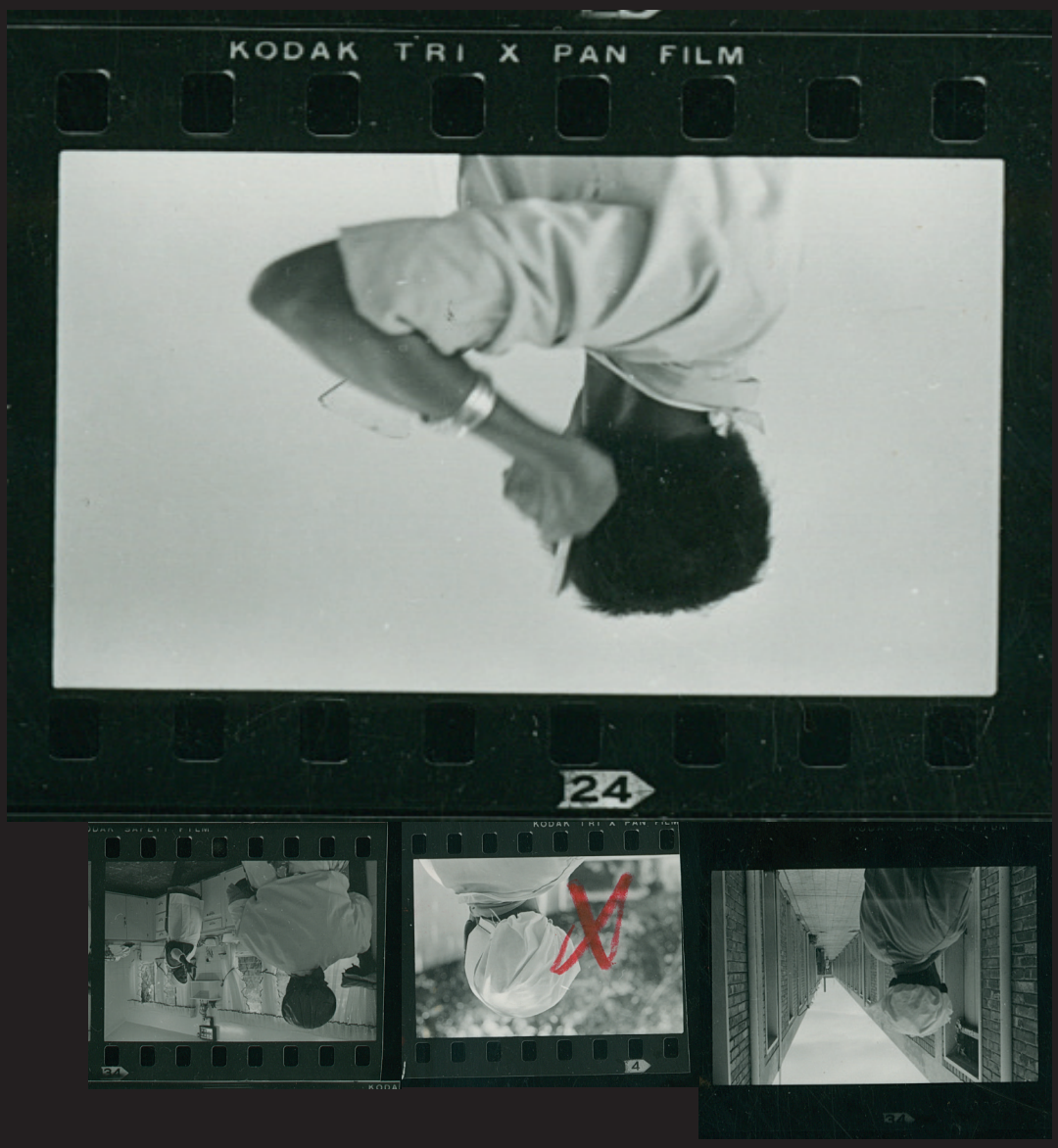
Servant identity was part of a complex of appearance, an aesthetic practice of apartheid relations, in which her uniform plays a role. Servant uniforms were not all the same. Neither did they all wear their uniforms in the same way. Servant uniforms did not belong to servants either. None of the woman servants Ernest photographed wore pants. The hem of their skirts, dresses or overalls were cut over the knee. The neckline was high. Her shoes did not appear comfortable for being on her feet all day. Her uniform was modest. She was not meant to be seen as an object of desire. Ernest once photographed a woman getting dressed into her uniform. He made sure to photograph her without any undue exposure. Her hair would get dressed last after the overalls came on and after she had fashioned the look to her desire. Ernest photographed this woman in portrait. Looking at the length of her, mostly from behind. The view made it possible to not only see her getting dressed, but to see where it happened.

She had made a makeshift cupboard assembled from nails, rope and cloth, which she fabricated in the corner of her servant quarter. The rope hung across the corner with nails, hammered into each side of the wall. There she would hang her own clothes after she changed into her uniform, her clothes would be left there until the end of the day. That is if she was not a “live-in” servant. Ernest’s long view on her dressing for work also shows the corner of the quarters, all the way to the roof that had no ceiling. She would look for her overall underneath the a large sheet and get into the uniform and from the bottom to the top, do up her buttons one by one. She folded her sleeves until they comfortably rested at her elbows. Her forearms and wrists needed to be exposed otherwise her sleeves would be wet for the rest of the day spent washing the clothes and the dishes, filling the buckets, and scrubbing the floors.

Time to cook breakfast. Time to wash the children. Time to take the children to school. Time to clean. Time to sweep and dust. Time to tidy. Time to pack the dishes in the sink. Time to bend over the bath. Time to soak the linen. Time to wash the laundry. Time to hang the washing. Time to scrub the toilet. Time to let the dishes dry. Time to eat outside. Time to pack away the crockery. Time to fetch the children from school. Time to let them play outside. Time to feed the kids. Time to iron and fold the washing. Time to put the clothes away. Time to feed the dog. Time to take it for a walk. Time to start dinner. Time to cook before the parents get home. Time to serve the family its meal. Time to eat outside. Time to clean up after dinner. Time to hear what the master and madam have to say. Time to be on call. Time to retire at night. Time to be alone. Time to sleep. Time to wake up and time to do it all over again. Her daily domestic regime needs a uniform to face its monotony and physical labour, so as to protect her and to protect those who look at her. It protects the white family from noticing the toll the domestic regime takes on her body. The servant uniform makes her appearance the same as her daily routine. Her uniform does make you see her defined by an order of time that makes her different but dresses her as the same.

The sense of time that the servant uniform sheathes her in, is a sense of being ever-present, of the here and now, keeping time for the white family's day. Against her visibility, they can tell the time. By seeing her or not seeing her, they understand what is happening but cannot see what has happened, what happened to her. Where she comes from. Who her children are. Who her mother is. Where she comes from everyday to work or where she goes, when she sleeps or travels back to her own home. The servant uniform fabricates her as being without history, keeping her past underneath the fabric, under the overalls, under the apron, or beneath the cap or 'the doek'[392].

[392] Headwrap.


KODAK TRI X PAN FILM
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Ernest writes in *House of Bondage*, "[o]n duty, servant dresses in unpretentious cap and apron. She must never go bareheaded during work hours[393]". Violet helped clarify the intermural politics of 'the doek' versus 'the cap'. She started working for a new madam after a friend left this employer for good. Violet took her place. She had known this madam before she had started working there. Violet remembers having worked only a week before the new madam said, "I think I would like you in a cap". Violet had been wearing "doeks' ' because she thought "caps don't suit me". The madam asked, "Don't you like caps?" and Violet responded, "I've got white doeks, I can wear a doek". But the madam insisted. "No, I don't like you in doeks. I would like to see you in a cap".

Violet then protests by saying, "Well I've got long hair, I'm coloured. I'm Violet Thomas"[394]. Ernest just laughed. Violet was being facetious. Ernest never asked her what she meant by 'coloured' and she continued. Violet had thought, "I don't know how I will look .. you know, with my hair curled and all that… I know our 'european's, they don't like to see us smart. That's why I prefer the doek"[395]. She then went on and told Ernest what she did next. "So I took my cap"[396], Violet said:

> "I washed it, I starched it with Smart. And I undid my hair nicely, [I] went into the kitchen, and my madam was embarrassed. I could see she didn't like the idea of me coming in without a cap – my hair is hanging and her hair is hanging too."

[393] Cole, Ernest., and Thomas. Flaherty. *House of Bondage.* A Ridge Press Book. New York: Random House, 1967 (80).
[394] Ernest Cole interview with Violet Thomas, circa 1966 (Audio translated by Diemo Masuko, 18 September 2018), 11.
[395] Ibid
[396] Ibid

Ernest: Yeah. Now just tell me, have you ever worked for people who didn't allow you to wear smart clothes?

Violet: This is the very one. You see when I come here, she used to give me a lift. I even went home on Thursday, and she would say, "Go and get dressed. I'll take you to the bus stop". Alright, okay. It was only one day. That day, I had fixed myself up nicely. That was the end… But it was only one day when I tried to make myself up. And there was another time when I was sleeping in Tembisa. I came [back] late in the morning. I still had my wig on properly and I was planning to go into the kitchen with an overall on top. The granny said "What are you well-dressed for in this bloody kitchen?! Where do you think you are?!" [laughs].

Other person in the room: [laughs].

Ernest: [laughs] Who was this?

Violet: The grandmother.

Other person in the room: The grandmother. The mother of the madam

Violet: "Why are you so well-dressed in this kitchen? Didn't you know that you're coming to work now? Your day off is finished".

Ernest: And what were you wearing? Was it a wig?

Violet: I was wearing a wig with my doek. I was wearing it very well because it was showing only a little. And then the shoes…because I didn't have time, I was late so I said "No, let me go and make them breakfast. I will come and remove the stockings later". But the stockings were visible. "What are you wearing a dress for in this kitchen? Where the hell do you think you're going to? To a party?!" [laughs].

Other person in the room: Yho, yho! [laughs].

Violet: And I was hungover that day [laughs]. I felt like strangling her. I told her "These are my clothes. I can wear what I like as long as I've got your overall and top". All she said was "Bloody cheek!".

Ernest: Mmm okay. So uhm for instance, there are others that are jealous of you wearing nice clothes. Why do you think the jealousy is there?

Violet: Immorality, that's the thing.

Other person in the room: Nothing else…

Violet: Yeah. My madam has actually said that if a girl is very smart in the kitchen, it means that us African women are after their men. She has said it to me.

Other person in the room: Yho!

Violet: She told me "I will not have a girl who is very smart in my kitchen, I want you to be simple and clean". You see when I'm wearing a doek like I am right now…

Ernest: [interrupts] It's alright?

Violet: Then it's okay. If I decide to take it off, maybe because it's too hot, then she refuses. I have to wear it like an old woman. She said she doesn't like a very well dressed woman in the kitchen because we attract their men by doing so, you know. You must be clean and simple.[397]"

A few days had passed. One morning, Violet had her hair in curlers and wore a doek when she gave the madam tea in bed. She remembers the madam looking at her and remarking with a smile, "I think you look much nicer in doeks". Violet explains. She and Ernest both laugh.

[397] Ernest Cole interview with Violet Thomas, circa 1966 (Audio translated by Diemo Masuko, 18 September 2018), 27-28.

What was so funny? Ernest interjected, "[b]ecause now she knows your hair"[398]. "Yes, that's the one!", Violet cackled. "Ai, man! We were having it hard, very hard. And surely, she wouldn't like to see me smart". This sobers Ernest. 'Oh yeah', he asks. "But why don't they like to see people smart?" For the first time, Violet stumbles over her words. She bites her tongue but Ernest coaxes her. "Nah, speak Ma [he laughs]. Why?".

> "Violet: [interrupts] Well so many Africans, they fall for Whites, you see. And when you are smart, they think the boss will go for you.
>
> Ernest: Sorry, you say…so many Whites fall for Africans, or what?
>
> Violet: Yes. And so many Africans, they fall for Whites. They're only scared of the law, that's all. So it's obvious that they think that the boss will fall for the maid when she's too posh.
>
> Ernest: Oh yeah? Alright [laughs].
>
> Violet: [laughs].

[398] Ernest Cole interview with Violet Thomas, circa 1966 (Audio translated by Diemo Masuko, 18 September 2018), 11.

KODAK SAFETY FILM
KODAK PLUS X PAN FILM
KODAK SAFETY FILM
KODAK SAFETY FILM
KODAK SAFETY FILM
KODAK TRI X PAN FILM
KODAK SAFETY FILM
GROS FISHERIES
JOKO TEA
SPRAY

Red crosses and unfinished circles mark that iconic image of the Black servant and the white child. It is a visual history and Ernest noticed its social pattern on the suburb street. He kept running into it, perhaps looking to see it, having already pre-visualised that apartheid relation. You see her and them touching, but you also imagine them apart. You visualise the difference by its physical proximity, not racial distance. The iconicity of this figure of mother and child, is about natal alienation, not biological relation or affinity. Look at the five frames in sequence that Ernest exposed of a servant with a white baby on her back that he photographs mostly from behind. He faced the bare child who is being carried, uncovered by a towel or a blanket. At first the child did not notice him. The child's hands were free. Hers held him behind her back. Her right hand held her left wrist. She made her back into a lap. With them, she always had her hands full, touching the white child. When Ernest eventually moves to face them, she looks as if she is saying something to him. Her eyes are closed. Her lips are pursed. But the child peers over her shoulder and looks at Ernest, eyes open. Ernest did manage to get what he wanted. When both she and the child are looking at him, she smiles; it stares.

Violet never really spoke about white children. Ernest did not ask. In *House of Bondage* he captions an image of a white baby clumsily touching its Black maid, writing, "[s]ervants are not forbidden to love. Woman holding the child said, "I love this child, though she'll grow up to treat me just like her mother does. Now she is innocent.[399]" Violet told a story about being verbally abused by a grown son of a madam that she once worked for. "Come on, bitch!", that's how he used to talk to me. Or "Voetsek!". Then I told the madam, "Can you hear what Jeffrey is saying?". "Oh, he's only a child. Don't take notice", she'd say. And I'd tell her "A

[399] Cole, Ernest., and Thomas. Flaherty. *House of Bondage.* A Ridge Press Book. New York: Random House, 1967 (76).

child at university?! He's now looking for a degree, working hard to get a degree. Don't tell me he's a child". Or [she'd say] things like "Oh you get paid for it, I can call you anything rude". Then I'd tell him, "Look here, I'll cut your neck off". I told her "Madam, you better pay me off so I can go". Violent only stayed there for a month. "I couldn't! I couldn't stand their son", she admitted. She was shocked that he would even call his own mother, "a bitch". Ernest whistled at the thought. Violet then adds, "I told his mother "Let him call you a bitch, not me. Because *you* brought him up like that".


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5.5 An Apartheid Charge

Ernest may have been following her, but the children were watching him. Their pointed gazes stare into a vision, they did not choose. They would stare at Ernest as she walked them home from school on the streets, or as they walked with her at the public park–even at home or on her back–the children looked directly at him. They acknowledged his foreign presence and surveillance of her movements with them. The white children appeared to have recognised Ernest in a manner that she did not. She may not even have noticed him, or made sure to not look as if she did, but the children were innocent. Their looks appear unencumbered by Ernest's intent to picture her with them. He appeared never interested in photographing white children without having her in the frame. Except for this one time. Except in this one frame.

Two white children offered themselves to him as a photograph. They insisted on his attention, but were not alone. She appeared nearby. Only her bare legs and dark shoes jut out into the frame from where she sat at a park bench. A boy, no older than five, crouches forward and presses his open palms against his lap and poses for Ernest, like a child would for an imagined photographer. A girl, a few years older than him crouched next to him. Her left arm is behind his back and with her right hand, she guides the gaze of the boy to Ernest's camera, which is pointed down at them. Were they siblings? In the fat of their cheeks and the darkness under their eyes, they resemble one another. The pair make a touching gesture. The boy having his wish to be photographed fulfilled and the girl, pointing at the camera with one finger, as if to say, 'look there'.

Why did Ernest expose this? He could have pretended to take the picture, played along for the sake of the children. Yet, he pressed the shutter. Why? At first glance, the exposure feels

like a snap shot or a throw-away frame of no real significance to Ernest's photographic intentions for documenting servant life. Or is it? While these children may have no bearing on the *Boysmeat* series, their innocence does. It lays bare the suspect nature of what Ernest was doing. The image of their childish exuberance, of their recognition of Ernest and his camera, and them being unafraid to make known their desire to play with him, unmasks the ruse. Did these children unnerve Ernest, who was not there to play? The little girl's pointed gesture instructs the little boy, but did it send a message to Ernest? She appears to have let him know that she was onto him. She too was simply playing along with the little boy in her and Ernest's charade.



Up and down the see-saw balances. Around and around Ernest goes: photographing a servant woman overseeing children play in a backyard of an enormous property. Behind Ernest was another expanse that contained a large swimming pool, cleaned by the 'garden boy'. There were a few exposures of him, but most were of her and the children. The four of them looked picture perfect. The three little white boys are no older than five. They clamour over the horse-headed see saw, which was made for only two, but they are immersed in the play, while she helps them take turns and hovers over them, lovingly. She looks fit for work in her uniform but the children do not look fit for play in a backyard. The boys were dressed in their 'Sunday Best': in long-sleeved shirts, buttoned up all the way with more formal dark pants and closed shoes. If she were their mother, she may not have allowed the boys to play on the grass in those clothes–but, she is not their mother. She was their maid, and they were a reflection of her duty.

She must have dressed them that way. She would always do what was best for them, which in this instance, was not what was best for her. They should not have been playing outside on the grass in those clothes, but she wanted to portray herself under the best light. Ensuring that she be photographed at her best was dangerous for her. Did the children's parents know? Or give permission for Ernest to be in their house, photographing their children? Being seen at her best was also dangerous for those clothes, which she would have to get the grass stains out of and if the parents did not know, she would have to do so in secret. Would the children not have told their parents what had happened that day? If they had found out, could she have lost her job? Had she thought about it like that? Or did Ernest manipulate her pleasure for being photographed? Could these images of domestic apartheid be telling not just of Ernest's transgression, but also of her own? Was she in on it or not?

Did she know, Ernest was there to photograph her against the white house and the children? Did he stage them at play in the backyard? Did he ask for the children to be dressed that way? It is not likely that Ernest would have gotten permission from their parents to photograph them. Or did he? The children may have told their parents about the photographic encounter when they had returned from work at the end of the day. Maybe he gave her some prints for the family album. Was Ernest putting her in danger of losing her job? Did she know how to get the children to keep a secret? How much did 'the boy' cleaning the pool know as a witness to crime being committed?

KODAK PLUS X PAN FILM
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KODAK SAFETY FILM
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"On off hours, however, she may dress as fashionably as she can afford. Girl in striped suit lost two jobs because she was too chic" writes Ernest of a woman that looks just like her in *The Cheap Servant*[400]. Who was she? She was chic, not only from head to toe, but also in the manner that let Ernest photograph her at the bus stop. She looks as if she imagined herself at a fashion shoot. She understood the power of her image. She wields it to her discretion. She wore Black short-heeled, closed-toed shoes and dark stockings. Her skirt was hemmed just below the knee. The sleeve of her lapelled jacket was long. It had four dark buttons down her front, and on each side, two faux pocket flaps. She wore costume jewelry on both her wrists. Her Black handbag looked fancy. Her make-up flattered her and like her stockings, may have been a little heavy for the day time. Yet, by the time she arrives at her home, it may very well be dark. Was this how she always dressed on her way home? Or did she make sure to look the part that day for Ernest? She enjoyed being photographed. Maybe it flattered her. Maybe she flattered him.

At the bus stop, none of the Black people were dressed as 'girls' or 'boys'. They were undressed. Not naked, but in the clothes that belonged to them. Not in the appearance of the servant uniform. Her formal dress did not make her stand out among the people that she was waiting with at the bus stop. It made her blend in and become part of a Black sartorial expression. No one looked alike, but everyone waited on that same bus to take that same journey home, to different families. Although, the journey would have taken them away from the white house, it still was a journey that would have been undertaken under the eyes of the police, who were also there at the bus stop. One is Black; the other 'european', watching them

[400] Cole, Ernest., and Thomas. Flaherty. *House of Bondage.* A Ridge Press Book. New York: Random House, 1967 (80).

waiting in line, outside of the white house where they were together. Where she could be seen being photographed.

The two of them had collaborated before–or so it is suspected. She looked familiar, resembling the servant that Ernest had photographed playing with the children in the backyard. She may not be the same woman, but who was she? Ernest would have photographed her under two different guises. In the backyard with the three children, she was a girl, but at the bus stop, she was a woman. She could easily be mistaken for two different people because under apartheid's visual regime, Black 'girls' were women in disguise. Black women could make themselves appear like 'girls'. Depending on how you saw her; or through which eyes you looked. Through Ernest's gaze, he played with her visual powers and exploited her capacity to be Black and a girl-woman: to look one way and appear as another.


KODAK

5.6 Eating Dogs

Ernest photographed her the most. Almost 56 exposures, two rolls of film, and not one looked the same. Were these exposures about her walking a dog? Were they about a dog being walked by a servant? Were these frames instead exposing Ernest's liking for this shy young woman? These exposures were also the first time a clear subject emerged in Ernest's frames. What was it about these exposures that were different from the others? Was it the visual proximity of the dog to the Black subject? What did the image of its animal nature elicit when seen so close to a uniformed servant? How do dogs also become apartheid subjects? Or raced objects? The servant and the dog were one relation that also touched the visual relation between Ernest and the scene of the woman servant walking a dog. But then there was also Ernest's relation to her, which the dog paid witness to. The dog was a non-human witness to their interplay. To Ernest's attention for her, not just as a servant, but as an object of desire.

Ernest almost made the dog vanish once and appeared to have made a portrait of her by herself. But she was not looking at him. She had looked at the dog or out at the white suburb horizon against which Ernest framed her. She sat on a short, face-bricked wall, not posed upright for the camera. Her body hunched forward. The dog may have been pulling at her reach with its short leash. Was she waiting for it to finish? Waiting for the dog to be ready to move on from the pull of the scent that he had stuck his nose into? Or was she waiting on Ernest to finish? `Did he suggest she sit there in the first place? Would she have sat there with the dog if he was not around? She walks but appears to be waiting. Whether she was waiting on the dog or whether she was waiting on Ernest, she appeared to serve them; to tend to the fulfilment of animal pleasure and male desire.

She may not have been dressed like an erotic object. She was dressed as an object of domestic desire. So was the dog. They both looked well kept. Her servant uniform was picture perfect and so was the dog. Her uniform was cut to her body. The tailored hem of her dress, fell just below the knee, and her white apron cut into her slim waist and held the shape of her dress with its geometric front. The dog was groomed like a prized poodle or a pure breed. Its biology, like hers, was on display as a point of pride for the absent master who had the power to have them both appear to his desire. Her servant hair may have been kept concealed under a cap, while its dog hair was on show. Shaved short on its body. Its hair on the tip of its tail, on its head, around its ears, and just above its paws were kept long. Its dog hair did not shed or grow to the ground. Instead it softly stood at attention and embellished the look of the dog, made it appear like property. Did she like the way it looked? Did she get more attention from other servants when she walked it? Was that how Ernest first noticed her?

How much of a pleasure was it to walk the dog every day? Did Ernest make the difference? She stole glances at him out of the side of her eye, if only just to watch for where Ernest positioned himself as she walked. He paid attention to how her body moved and Ernest and her appear to have gone on a walk together. The dog was accompanying them. Ernest danced around her and she could appear to have been dancing with him. A visual play of the photographer, the servant, and the dog. Ernest was walking with her. She was walking the dog. The dog was being walked by her. Ernest was photographing her walking the dog. He was not holding her hand. But she held his gaze, while she held the dog on a leash.


KODAK TRI-X PAN FILM
KODAK SAFETY FILM

Who is walking whom? Are the servants walking the dogs? Or are the dogs walking the servant? Ernest's exposure of servants walking dogs figures a difficult visual relation between the Black body and the animal body within apartheid domesticity. Are the dogs accompanying the servants? Or are the servants companions to the dog? What role does the leash play in this visuality? To what extent was walking the dog a gendered occupation? Or being a servant, a female one? Ernest photographed very few male servants and only one made it into *House of Bondage*. Only one exposure of a servant walking a dog had been marked for printing in the *Boysmeast* series and it was an exposure of a male servant. Was it because this servant was a man? Did women walking dogs not suit Ernest's image of female servanthood? The male servants in his *Boysmeat* contact sheets do not appear indoors. Their housework regimes appear to be kept outdoors, which is where they would meet woman servants on bicycles or on foot to share a word. "[B]oys were underpaid, so they wouldn't stick to their jobs", Violet claimed. She also spoke of the experience of 'boys' as often being worse than for 'girls':

> "if you're thirsty and want water, I can't give you water. These flat boys don't touch our taps at our bathrooms. If they want water to scrub the floor, I've got to get water from the taps because they *[inaudible]*. And they don't throw their dirty water down the toilet like other flat owners, they throw it out right outside. And they won't touch those taps of ours, one of us must give them water to scrub."

Black men are often at the margins of the story of domestic service just as they are in Ernest's frame of the practice. Just as 'Mr. Moloi' was as a name, written at the margins of Ernest's list of servant contacts. Was this man, Mr Moloi? The man in khaki was wearing the dark apron, which only covered his legs not his torso. His apron was unlike the aprons that the women servants were pictured in. His apron did not evoke the maternal or pastoral qualities of a woman servant who cooked or cleaned indoors or held white babies to her breast. His apron appeared made for the outside or for grooming animals.

This servant walked three dogs at a time, which was a handful. Two leashes probably held in each hand. Ernest must have been running in trying to keep up with them and make a successful exposure of life on the streets for the servant dog walker. He had longer strides than the dogs he had been walking, but the little dogs were trotting, which meant that his stride needed to quicken into a little run, which also meant that Ernest had to keep up. Both him and the servant were at the mercy of the animals. He may have had control by means of the leash, but when these dogs saw other unleashed dogs roaming the empty streets, they must have run after them and so would he. In that moment Ernest chose to not run after the servant and the dogs and instead stay behind and make his exposure of that moment when the dogs were in control, rather than the servant from a distance. It looks as if the servant was walking two dogs instead of three. Two dogs, without servant walkers, had crossed the road. They were running free. Ernest had let that scene run off without him. Would Ernest have dressed himself to look like a 'boy' so as not to stand out in the white suburbs?



Outside on the streets of the white suburbs, the dogs that Ernest photographed being walked by servants were always on leashes. Inside the white house however, the dogs were free and unleashed. Ernest never caught them inside the house as she cleaned. Nor did he even appear interested in photographing dogs, except for when they were close to her. The dogs appeared faithful to servants in the white house. In the backyard with the three boys, a family dog had not run up to the children to join in on the play. Instead it ran up to her, rubbed itself up against her leg, and turned its nose upward to her for attention. She acknowledged its affection, looked down at it, and before she could touch its coat to return hers, Ernest made an exposure of a show of affinity between white children, the family dog and the Black maid in the backyard of the white house. It also was a fabrication of her identity as a substitute mother and master.

The dog appeared attached to her. On the streets, on a leash, the dog would wait to move until she said so or pulled at its leash. Within the property of the white house, the dog would follow servants around or sit with them while they ate from enamel plates. The dog would go to that place outside the inside of the white house, where the family rarely ventured. The dog would cross that border. During the day at least. Perhaps at night, when the family would be home for dinner, the dog would know its place. It would be with the family, and not with her in the dark outside. Then, when the dawn broke and the servants would appear, and the family vanish, the dog understood that it was subject to servant law. The servant would become its companion and the dog would be loyal to it. The servant would tend to the dog: feed it, walk it, perhaps groom it, and give it attention. The dog in Ernest's *Boysmeat* contact sheets thus displayed a loyalty divided between its master, and the master and madam's servant, who only appeared like its master when the dog was walking on a leash.


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"Now please tell me: what's boys meat?" Ernest wanted know from Violet. "Boys meat?" she asked. "It's soup meat. It's the worst meat – third grade or fourth grade, I don't know what to call it. Something that you wouldn't even.." Violet paused. "[P]ieces mixed with pork and what-what. The skin of what[ever]…that's what it is. Or neck. Sometimes you would find it being a neck". Ernest did not speak to the other woman in the room who also gave her opinion from time to time by laughing along, voicing agreement. This time, she added her two cents. "Sometimes you would find it being the penises of certain animals", she said before giggling. Violet agreed. "Yes. That's why I'm saying that you don't know what it is. The skin of a cow, a pig…you never know what it actually is." Then the unknown woman added, "because it's mixed. Somewhere somehow, the butcher mixed it to make money". "Yes, yes. In actual fact", Violet remembered, "it's the cheap meat. It's cheap meat because even when he calls the other guy, he'd say "Give me some servants' meat". So it's the cheapest meat you've got in your butchery". "Does it taste nice?", Ernest asked. "How can it taste nice?!" Violet exclaimed. So did the other woman. Ernest wondered, "is it tough?" "It's very tough. Of course, very tough" Violet insisted. "How long does it take to cook it?", Ernest continued. "It takes centuries!" Violet answered before Ernest, commiserated, "Jesus!" The other woman in the room added, "You can cook it in the morning from 7 'o clock".

Watching servants eat was another appearance of apartheid at play. Watching servants satisfy a human desire for food had the power to make apartheid appear in the culinary terms in which Ernest had figured the injustice of servanthood. By calling the series, *Boysmeat*, Ernest had foregrounded the actuality that masters provided servants in the white house meat that was also suited for dogs. Ernest had photographed this daily ritual, performed in the presence of dogs, which was another visual relationship between servant and animal that Ernest drew with his camera. A group of servants had gathered near washing lines, outside on

the streets in the sky. One woman was seated on a fruit crate, her cup was on the floor. Her plate on her lap. The dog had sat down, behind them and another eating servant. Ernest also photographed the dog appearing to sniff around the floor in the hope that a stray remain of what these servants had put into their mouths would fall on the ground. Perhaps after one of them had sucked the life from a bone, which she would drop from her hand with which she ate.

The means with which she ate objectified apartheid. She would not always eat with her hands, although when she did, it would be one instance in which her hands could belong to her, and satisfy her needs rather than the needs of the white house. Her hands could touch the white house and its children, yet her hands and her mouth was not to touch their crockery. The knives, forks and spoons with which the family of the white house ate, were not meant for her. Like a dog, she would have to eat using her own eating utensils, kept separate from those meant for family. Servants would have to eat out of metal. Coated in enamel, her eating utensils needed to be durable because they would be used outside the inside of the white house. Her eating utensils were made for a life spent outdoors, where they could not be carefully washed or dried. They could simply be rinsed or even just wiped, without the need for soap or running water.

Ernest photographed some servants eating outside. He photographed one woman eating inside her servant quarters and pictured this eating apartheid in a differently exposing light. It had poured into the room from her skylight, onto her where she sat at the table, which was laid with a white tablecloth and a square lace overlay, placed as a triangle in its centre. As she did not have a chair, the woman sat with her back against the wall and the table was beside rather than in front of her. The table could have been used for many purposes. Did she dress

it for Ernest? The bowls on the table would suggest that she was not eating alone. Above the table was a rectangular mirror which did not only give the room dimension in Ernest's exposure, it also exposed him in the frame. He had seen himself photographing her and made a few frames of himself in that room with her. A self-portrait that lets us see him, seeing himself photograph a servant. Ernest, the photographer appears with his camera held to his eye.

CHAPTER 6: FEELING COLOURED ZULULAND

6.1 Black Family Photography

Coloured Black reads conventionally understood social documentary as family photography in order to blur a political practice of photography with the affective, familial, and mnemonic registers of domesticity. How does political critique become naturalised through the visuality of the domestic? How does Black struggle become domesticated in photography? Ernest's *Boysmeat* series offers a picture of family that has historically made apartheid iconic, through an image of Black servants labouring for the 'european' family, which allows for an asymmetry of racial power to be seen touching, but be imagined apart. Laura Wexlar's *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (2000) opens up these questions through domestic imagery, which she argues, "present an apparently coherent but imaginary vision of real conditions"[401]. Wexlar argues for a subversion of this potential for domestic imagery to make a political critique cohere by noting that,

> "these same domestic images can put into question such presumed coherence by focusing counter-memories against it….The need instead is to accept the necessity of working against optical illusion to build photography's multitudes of ephemeral traces into documents as solid as any other"[402].

Cedric set out to make a family document from genealogical traces that simultaneously brought his family into a racial relation and challenged the terms of that relation. *Coloured Black* suggests that he did so by not only photographing family as social critique, but also by reembodying himself as a 'coloured photographer' somewhere between 'the family' and 'the

[401] Wexler, Laura. *Tender Violence : Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism*. Cultural Studies of the United States. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000 (5).
[402] Ibid. See also works such as Willis, Deborah. *Picturing Us : African American Identity in Photography*. New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton &, 1994; and Hirsch, Marianne. 1999. *The familial gaze*. Hanover: Dartmouth College.

struggle'. Cedric did not agree with the reading of his images as family photography. "No this is a documentary", he insisted. "It's a conscious documentary of looking at an environment in which a family exists; [looking at] what shapes it, [or] what influences it"[403]. Yet, Cedric did not personify his relatives as family, but rather as 'coloured community' in *Blood Relatives*. In an interview with Sean Jacobs, he expressed discomfort with the term, 'social documentary'[404]. "I have moments of being uncomfortable with it", Cedric explained. "I'm not exactly only that either. But I'm that some of the time". When asked, "What are you at other times when you're not a social documentary photographer*?*", he responded:

> "Well I've been many things. I've been a PR photographer, I've been a journalist, an art photographer. I'm called all sorts of different things. I've done some work in advertising. It's a way to make a living. It's almost impossible to make a living in documentary photography, unless you are elevated into a lofty position"[405].

The subject of family has never been far removed from the political practices of photography in South Africa and it remains a critical subject and photographic form within contemporary art practice[406]. The genre of family photography within the African and diasporic context tends

[403] Candice Jansen interview with Cedric Nunn (Aug, 2016).
[404] Jacobs, Sean, and Cedric Nunn. "Sean Jacobs in Conversation with Cedric Nunn." Social Dynamics 37, no. 2 (2011): 278-88.
[405] Candice Jansen interview with Cedric Nunn (Aug, 2016).
[406] See Kurgan, Terry. 2018. *Everyone is present: essays on photography, memory and family*; *Commonplace* (2016) by Sophie Feyder and Tamsyn Adams who stages a complicated visual equivalence and relation between the images of Ronald Ngilima and his son, Thorence of Black life in home spaces in areas like Benoni, Johannesburg during 1950s, with images that "belongs to a white, English-speaking farming family from Escourt in KwaZulu-Natal, covering 150 years of the family's history". See also recent exhibitions by Paul Weinberg: *The Other Camera* (2014) and by Steven Dubin: *Who I am* (2016). Badsha, Omar. 1979. *Letter to Farzanah*. Durban: Published by the Institute for Black Research. Photographer, Graham Goddard also started photographing family during the 1980s. See: Hayes, Patricia. "Photographic Publics and Photographic Desires in 1980s South Africa." Photographies 10, no. 3 (2017): 303-27. Also Photographers, Peter Mckenzie, Zubeida Vallie, photographed personal subject matters alongside their political photography. Santu Mofokeng and Paul Weinberg during the late 1980s collaborated on an exhibition, 'Going Home' juxtaposing Weinberg's white middle class upbringing with Mofokeng's Black home life in Soweto. More recently, *Hanging on a Wire: Photographs by Sophia Klaase* (2016) is a complication of writing and photographs by a young woman made over 12 years about herself and her community of Paulshoek in the Northern Cape. There are also photographers like Ashley Walters, Earl Abrahams, Lebohang Kganye, Jabu Nadia Newman and early works by Gabrielle Goliath. More recent curatorial efforts by

to circulate around the studio, the photo album and the life of cities. Visual practices of Black kinships are also where "the vernacular photograph" gains currency[407] in the critical turn to "self-fashioning" and "photographic agency" in scholarship that among other gestures, seeks reconciliation or to remedy the violence of the 'colonial gaze'[408]. But what about the Black family photographer? Or the chronicler of Black family, embedded within the impossibilities of relation in both the visual and the genealogical that Cedric stages or enacts as political critique? Or what becomes of 'the rural' as a psychic, political and social terrain for visual activism or "self-fashioning"?

Framing Cedric's 'documentary' as family photography and him as a 'family photographer' who photographs family as visual activism, opens not only the Black family in photography to a different set of questions, but also contributes to a discussion of the contemporary uses of family photographs. Family photography can also be conflated with the snap shot, the amateur photographer and the sentimentality of relation[409], which Cedric may not associate with his work on family. For the *Group Portrait* project, filmmaker, Marcus Tourien accompanied Cedric to his mother's home in Mangete and to his grandmother, Amy's home in iVuna to visit with chosen relatives. Tourien caught one moment on film in which Cedric, his teenage daughter, Kathleen, Cedric's mother, Lily among other family members were

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Siona O'Connell and 'Movie Snaps' images and 'Proclamation 73' by Chandra Frank and Zara Julius: https://proclamation73.wixsite.com/proclamation73#!

[407] This is arguable, gendered and heteronormative. See Latoya Ruby Fraser's The Notion of Family. Zanele Muholi's Faces and Phases refigures the visual and temporal life of Black kinship. See also Aperture's Winter 2018 edition called, 'Family'.

[408] Pinney, Christopher., and Nicolas. Peterson. Photography's Other Histories. Objects/histories. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. O'Connell, Siona. "The Aftermath of Oppression: In Search of Resolution through Family Photographs of the Forcibly Removed of District Six, Cape Town." Social Dynamics 40, no. 3 (2014): 1-8.

[409] See Rose, Gillian., and Ebooks Corporation. Doing Family Photography: The Domestic, The Public and The Politics of Sentiment. Re-materialising Cultural Geography. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010.

gathered around a collection of family photographs in a bedroom. Photographs were handled, discussed, remembered and Lily was asked to name family members in images who had passed on.

One of the images that depict a school group photograph of 'coloured youth' during the 1930s in Nongoma discussed by Cedric and his family in the film is also found in Palmer's dissertation. She notes that many 'coloured families' interviewed for her study, owned a copy of this photograph as a means to identify ancestors. Another story about family and photography emerged in Palmer's dissertation (and in Cedric's interview) as a kind of family lore about the role of John Dunn's image, which would be framed in Dunn descendants' homes. When prospective suitors of daughters (or sons?) would visit the home of their love interest, parents would point to his image and ask if prospective suitors knew who that man was in an effort to ascertain whether they were related.

Photography is important to Cedric's family, which also means to 'coloured community' in Zululand or KwaZulu-Natal. *Coloured Black* suggests that Dunn relation is not only visible within family photographs, but that family photographs (as objects and sites of memory) also help constitute that relation. Cedric therefore as a family photographer plays a significant role within this genealogical photography complex. Caught on film, as Cedric and his family talked through the collections of photographs, were some of the images that form part of this study. There were also family photographs that Cedric created, which were family mementoes, not documentary images. The poignant touch to this encounter with Cedric and his relatives' private moment with their collection of family photographs was the brown childhood school suitcase in which the photographs were kept. The suitcase must have belonged to Cedric as a child. His full name was written in large capital print letters, on the inside top lid of the suitcase.

Cedric is not always identified with his family photographs. The collection of images presented in *Coloured Black* were selected from more than a hundred of his photographs that depicted his relatives. The intramural difficulty was this. Cedric's relatives were not identified as family in the collections where his 'coloured subjects' were found[410]. Exposures of relatives could be found collected among other subjects as unclaimed relations. Was this a disavowal of family? Does it express the kind of unrealized potential of *Blood Relatives* as a project that has never travelled widely or been realized into a book? In his interview with Enwezor, Cedric characterizes his career with conflicted emotions: "[w]hat tends to happen is that you are typecast based on a project that was successful or unsuccessful, or your last show defines you to the public"[411]. Into this can be read a kind of sentiment felt towards *Blood Relatives* which forms a significant part of his oeuvre. Yet, to Enwezor, Cedric also expressed a regret of not having gone deeper into perhaps more personal projects at the end of his interview:

> "I was a bit disappointed by the fact that I didn't have that strength of conviction to follow my original vision–those quiet images that I could have made if I spent for more time exploring the backwaters of the world that I lived in. If I had stayed with that, those are the images that I would have made and it's a pity that I didn't make more of them"[412].

Thus, much of the time spent with Cedric was to identify family members in the collection of found exposures. It also meant identifying which family exposures were part of the *Blood Relatives* project, but which may not have been shown in the exhibition. There were also

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[410] These collections included: Rubenstein Library at Duke University's Documentary Arts Collection; the University of Cape Town's Digital Photography Collection; Africa Media Online (Cedric subsequently removed his images from the site)
[411] Cedric Nunn, *Call and Response*, (Ostfildern: Hatje/Cantz, 2011), 20
[412] Ibid (25)

exposures of family produced for personal purposes, which over time became part of his public work. Then there were family members who appeared as part of an earlier project that Cedric started and abandoned in the 1980s, about the 'coloured group areas' of Sydenham and Newlands East in Durban or his school, the Mangete Government 'coloured' Primary School. Through these found exposures, Amy, his maternal grandmother, revealed herself as a recurring figure. Through her presence, Cedric's exhibition about her, *Madhlawu'* and an additional selection of exposures about Amy that Cedric provided (some which were not exhibited), helped make her a central figure of *Coloured Black*.

The quiet of Cedric's practice and family photography therefore is not just about gentle temperament, deep affinity, and 'the ordinary'[413], it also is about dynamics of 'disquiet' and 'disidentification' that may not register as punctum, but rather as studium and often outside of the photographic frame itself. Quiet is about, as Tina Campt in *Listening to Images* (2017) writes, an "unsayability … something assumed to go unspoken or unsaid, unremarked, unrecognized, or overlooked"[414]. Campt tends to the quietude of the Black quotidian in identificatory photographs and theorizes its visual impact through frequencies of the sonic, which is not the kind of quiet stirred here. *Coloured Black* does find affinity with Campt in her haptic attention to the sensual life of visuality beyond its ocular-centricity and her identification of "quiet" as a Black insistence on the visual. She defines images as quiet, "to the extent that before they are analysed, they must be attended to by way of the unspoken relations that structure them"[415]. This unspoken, unsayability is exposed in my narration on two levels: the first, on the level of Cedric's photographic practice and the relations that

[413] Ndebele, Njabulo S. South African Literature and Culture : Rediscovery of the Ordinary. Manchester ; New York : New York, NY: Manchester University Press ; Distributed Exclusively in the USA and Canada by St. Martin's Press, 1994.
[414] Campt, Tina. Listening to Images. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017 (4).
[415] Ibid (8).

shape the way in which he photographs, and the second, on the level of the family that he depicts and the unarticulated structures of relation and disidentification that can be seen but also felt in the manner in which Cedric stages his relatives for his photography.

In this regard, Santu Mofokeng's *Black Photo Album* (2013) becomes a critical interlocutor for Cedric's family photography. Unlike Cedric who brings Blackness into a kind of psychic dis-relation within his own family portraiture, Mofokeng brings Blackness into a psychic dis-relation through collected photographs made as early as the 19th century up until the 1950s, which Mofokeng curated from ten families who lived across the urban outskirts of Johannesburg. *Coloured Black* brings Cedric and Mofokeng into dialogue through a 'dis-relation' because both photographers contend with the Black family's appearance and disappearance within visual states of natal alienation fostered under conditions of colonialism and apartheid.

Mofokeng writes of having come "to appreciate the magnitude of the crime of apartheid", which had him question the absence of the kind of visualization of Black people to which he was exposed within '"bantu"' education. The images of family that apartheid exposed him to were in contradistinction to the "solemn images of middle – and working-class – Black families, crafted according to the styles (in gesture, props and clothing) of Georgian and Victorian portrait painting"[416]. Mofokeng also critically reminds us that these photographs of Black life were not only disavowed by the colonial and apartheid state, but also within Black familial life, they were sometimes prized but even forgotten. He writes of finding these photographs, "slowly disintegrating in plastic bags, tin boxes, under beds, on top of

[416] Mofokeng, Santu. "Trajectory Of A Street Photographer." Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art, no. 11/12 (2000): 46.

cupboards and kists in the townships"[417]. These photographs, he writes, "portray a class of Black people", whose image Mofokeng suggests is also susceptible to being disavowed as "pathologies of bourgeois delusions"[418]. In *Black Photo Album*, he returns again and again to ask impossible questions of Black life's appearance within family photographs, that destabilize its historical fixity, by parsing images with a series of questions of the political present:

> "Are these images evidence of mental colonization or did they serve to challenge prevailing images of 'The African' in the western world? "Who were these people? "What were their aspirations? What is going to happen to those aspirations at the end of 20th century South Africa? Did these images serve to challenge prevailing western perceptions of the African? Are these images evidence of mental colonization? Do these images serve as testimony of mental colonization?"[419]

Mofokeng's questions resonate as a visual provocation for reading not just Cedric's family photographs, but the larger visual colonial corpus into which his family photographs intervenes. A corpus whose history exceeds the historical imagination of apartheid, visualizing what Christopher Lee calls an *unreasonable history*. Lee means 'unreasonable' in ways methodological and categorical, which is applicable to Dunn family history and the imaginary 'coloured Zululand' which is evoked here as a cultural geography that exists within family memory as a racial and historical formation constituted by what Lee calls 'colonial kinships'. Lee makes a critical distinction between kinship and genealogy, which are two axes of relation that my narration of Cedric's family photographs pivot on. Lee writes, "*Kinship*–defined by its horizontal nature, work[s] across a shared temporal frame inhabited by one or more generations–and *genealogy*–typified by its vertical character, citing

[417] Ibid.
[418] Mofokeng, Santu. and Campbell, James T. The Black Photo Album: Look at Me: 1890-1950. Göttingen: New York: Steidl; The Walther Collection, 2013.
[419] Ibid.

relations of descent between successive generations over time–symboliz[e] affective ties that were close and often deeply felt"[420].

Coloniality may be the operative structure of these kinships and genealogies, which means that filiation leans to 'european' fathers and absents Black mothers, which in the case of Dunn family contradicts Lee's claim that colonial kinships "denote a certain cosmology–a genealogical imagination–based on these connections…that perceived a world of relationships, patronage, and obligation rather than incontrovertible differences"[421]. *Coloured Black* diverges from Lee's affiliative notion of "colonial cultures of relatedness", arguably the archive of Dunn family, is not characterized by. As archive and familial relation, the Dunn family is typified not only by 'european' relation, but also Black natal alienation as a means with which to gain state recognition and autonomy from tribal law, cultivating a familial practice of "genealogical amnesia… the tense and tender ties that constitute domestic relations" for purposes of personal history and family identity[422]: John Dunn thus appears as the face of Dunn family, ever present, even if he cannot be seen as the absent patriarch of a family portrait that visualizes the kinds of domestic relations and filiations that draws the Dunn family into relation, while simultaneously, alienating not only the Dunn family from its Zulu relatives, but the Dunn family from one another.

Very little is known about John's wives, a collection of "captive maternals" except for his only, non-Zulu wife, Catherine Pierce, who is named as 'coloured'. Catherine was swept up

[420] Lee, Christopher J. Unreasonable Histories: Nativism, Multiracial Lives, and the Genealogical Imagination in British Africa. Radical Perspectives. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014 (17)
[421] Ibid.
[422] From Jaap van Velsen's *The Politics of Kinship: A Study in Social Manipulation among the Lakeside Tonga of Nyasaland* (1964) cited in Lee, Christopher J. Unreasonable Histories: Nativism, Multiracial Lives, and the Genealogical Imagination in British Africa. Radical Perspectives. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014 (50).

in John's life early on in hers. She left with him into "the hinterland of the Zulu kingdom"[423] as a 15-year-old daughter of a British retainer and a woman named as 'cape malay' who worked for John's father, Robert Dunn. Leaving with John was a choice between his life and a life of "domestic service and subservience, the only possibility open to a girl of mixed parentage in white colonial society"[424]. Catherine is significant, not just because she was John's 'head wife', but because she is also a wife for whom there is a story and an image, not just a name or a number. Her story is differently marked within the history of the Dunn family. Her children, being not biologically tied to Zulus, occupied an elevated position as 'coloured subjects'.

In Ballard's account of Catherine, she appears racist, unintelligent, and embittered. Her racial sentiment is said to differ from John's. While he wanted to break from 'european' society, Catherine "aspired to being as ''european'' as possible"[425]. Catherine is said to have held "violent prejudice"[426] against John's Zulu wives. Apparently, she had "feared a loss of status and privilege, seeing each additional African wife taken by Dunn as a potential rival for his favour"[427]. She bore him eight daughters and two sons. Her family lived like 'european's and had more material wealth than any of his other wives. Ballard recounts an incident after John had taken his second wife, Macebose Mhlongo from Ungoye in 1861, in which Catherine had learnt that Macebose and she were both expecting children at the same time. It was Macebose's first and Catherine was asked to prepare clothes for the baby, but Catherine bought salempore cloth because she believed it good enough for a "native child"[428].

[423] Ballard, Charles. John Dunn: The White Chief of Zululand. Craighall [South Africa]: Ad. Donker, 1985 (4).
[424] Ibid.
[425]Ibid (223).
[426] Ibid.
[427] Ibid
[428] Ibid

After Macebose's baby arrived, Catherine sent for the child, wanting to see it for herself. Apparently, after seeing that the baby looked just like hers, Catherine quickly had dresses made for the baby, "before it would be found out what she had done"[429]. Since Catherine looked at Dunn's Zulu wives as inferior, she believed that John marrying them drew an equivalence between them and her? Ballard believes that "Catherine had little sympathy or understanding for Dunn's position as a Zulu chief, or for the status and political importance attached to the accumulation of wives"[430]. His characterisation of Catherine makes her appear naïve, even infantile. Yet, if she was as conscious of wealth and social status as she is made out to have been, Catherine may have resented John marrying forty-eight wives, but she also must have known that his wives served her status, as they also had served his standing within the political economy of the Zulu kingdom.

[429] Ibid
[430] Ibid



6.2 Zulu Mother as Visual Feeling

Coloured Black argues that Zuluness is the photographic quiet of Cedric's family photography. In both *Blood Relatives* and his other family photographs, people who could be identified as 'Zulu' appear ambiguously visible at the margins of the frame, as silhouettes, curious children, or labourers, looking at Cedric from the periphery of his attention, which appeared fixed on family or 'coloured subjects'. When these Zulu people are photographed as subjects in their own right, Cedric left them for the most part unnamed. The certain distance kept between him and the Zulu community that Mangete was (and is) surrounded by is perhaps indicative of his status as an photographic insider, who can be as limited by the familiarity of the context. Although Cedric could have privileged access to this community because he was a native, it also meant that he was similarly bound by its social mores. He was subject to the unspoken intermural distances kept between 'coloured' and Zulu people.

Except with Katie Ndhlovu, who is still alive and living in the area. Cedric calls her "a neighbour"[431], who lived less than a kilometre from his family home in Mangete, but on tribal land. Katie was a regular customer at the family general dealer, the Endaweni Trading Store, where she and Cedric became friendly with one another. Apparently, Cedric has photographed her at her residence. She also asked him to photograph her daughter's initiation ceremony, who could very well be the baby on her back. Katie occupies the frame. Outside the back door, on the steps of the store, she appears composed. She did not need to smile, offering a look was enough. Her white sugar and bread is set down on the concrete step with the elegance of a still life arranged beside her and a faithful Black dog, who knew to wait for her to finish. Her left hand is on her hip and her right, held in a fist, while the baby on her

[431] Candice Jansen, Interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).

back embraces her. Its open hand and naked leg steals a glance out from behind its mother. Katie may have appeared to leave, but her shadow looked as if she had just arrived.

The Zulu Mother is a kind of phantom figure within the genealogical imagination of Cedric's photography. A corporeal phantom in the social sense taken from Daniel Heller-Roazen's *The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation* (2007), "in which bodies feel parts they do not possess and alternately fail to feel those parts that are truly theirs"[432]. Or as Marks suggests about "[h]aptic visuality [that] implies a fundamental mourning of the absent object or the absent body"[433]. The Zulu Mother therefore is the contact figure who charges the intermural of coloured-Zulu relationality with difficulty rooted in a tie to land, yet also a 'coloured disavowal' of Africanity. *Coloured Black* therefore does not look to see the historic trace of her, but rather through narration, *feels for* her presence, which Cedric photographs as a kind of politics exhibited in the figure of his maternal grandmother, Amy who offers a photographic vanishing in two senses. In one sense, Amy herself vanishes in *Coloured Black*'s reading of her appearing under multiple guises. She becomes a subject read off the skin surface, whose look is always contingent upon the place in which she appears. Cedric's images also circumscribe Amy, as if she were an ethnographic subject. He pays attention to Amy in a manner that draws emphasis on her exceptionality. Her image expressed his political sentiment. Amy simply appears to live her life, but she makes Black politics appear.

Around her, Cedric was not just an adoring grandson, he became the visual activist that he had imagined himself to be. Cedric insists that photographing Amy, his longest standing

[432] Heller-Roazen, Daniel. The Inner Touch : Archaeology of a Sensation. New York : Cambridge, Mass.: Zone Books ; Distributed by the MIT Press, 2007 (253).
[433] Ibid (191).

documentary subject was not "familial adoration"[434]. It was respect. "…[A]s in respecting an adult life and the choices that people make in how they live their lives. It was through the frame of trying to understand race, [that I saw] that she lived in a peculiar space.[435]" This peculiar space presented itself as one outside of race as apartheid would have had it during the 1980s. Amy gave Cedric a view outside of coloured, although she never spoke to him about her racial identification. "She didn't articulate anything. It was what I observed"[436] he commented. Amy is both Zulu and not Zulu. *Coloured Black* understands her portraits as generational traces of Zulu motherhood or an ancestral Zuluness that during the last twenty years of her life Cedric photographed as a vanishing connection to a great grandmother and her daughter, his grandmother, who he refused to forget, wanted to remember, and document her life.

The nineteenth century history of 'european' presence in Zululand is not just a history of white traders. It also is a history of Zulu women. "…[T]he offspring of these traders and their Zulu wives formed the basis of a unique, racially mixed community…"[437] Yet, this history of Zulu and 'european' union was not often sanctimonious. These women were often children in domestic service. After they became pregnant, from unions that could not pass contemporary standards of consent, these girls were also shunned by their families, and their coloured children were left to become orphans. If they were lucky, like Cedric's great grandmothers were, these girls would marry the adult men who impregnated them and their offspring would take after their parents. Like Cedric's father, many male descendants became traders or shopkeepers, and like Amy, "female descendants fulfilled similar roles to those of their Zulu

[434] Candice Jansen interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).
[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid.
[437] Faber, Van Der Merwe, and Faber, Paul. Group Portrait South Africa: Nine Family Histories. 1st ed. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2003 (37).

grandmothers by providing a secure refuge for their children and grandchildren, and throughout the twentieth century, remained the cornerstones of their increasingly extended families"[438].

Amy was that cornerstone for her family. She appeared to have always been called to stay close to her Zulu upbringing. Her mother, Velepi Mabaso was a significant influence on her life as a mother, but she was also the reason for Amy choosing to return home as a young girl after a stint of domestic service in Durban. The white family that she had worked for was relocating to the Cape by ship and they wanted Amy to move with them. She said no. Amy believed that she could not be that far away from her mother and took the train back to Nongoma[439] and remained close to Velepi, who she ended up caring for until her death in 1964. Cedric recalled a strong memory of her. "She was bedridden, this old lady and I was like four or five and she died maybe when I was about six. But I have vivid memories of being with her and being in her presence"[440]. Amy's choice to stay close to her mother and stay in iVuna until close to her end, are connected. These life choices are imagined as illustrative of Amy's refusal to forgo her Zuluness. A refusal to become 'coloured'. What could have happened if Amy had gone to the Cape? Cedric may have not even existed.

Amy's appearance makes a Black critique of coloured because she figures as what Jennifer González calls, 'an appended subject' that she in part defines as,

> "a subject that is comprised of appendages, of parts put together, of supplementary materials, or that of a subject or person who is defined by a relation of supplementary,

[438] Ibid.
[439] Tourien, Marcus, B-roll film footage (circa 1990).
[440] Candice Jansen interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).

> added to some other principal body–as the colonized subject might be perceived by an imperial nation as an appendage to a centralized state"[441].

As an appended subject, Amy gains political charge by seeing her 'appended' qualities of appearance against visual planes against which she dissolves in and out of visibility. Zuluness is one kind of visual field. 'colouredness' is another. The visual dissonance that Amy had the capacity to enact against these fields of racial imagination made her "not at all the typical coloured woman"[442], Cedric reflected on the these visual manners in which Amy appeared to have refused apartheid from her Zuluness. As a child, Amy's refusal to become 'coloured' was lost on him. Cedric remembers,

> "I used to be forced as a kid to go to this very alien place… You know my parents were progressive young modernists. And my grandmother was still living in antiquity… So, we would visit there faithfully every year and mum would make sure we went and spent time there. As much as it was an alien environment for us… it's [also] your grandmother's home, you know, so you love it because it was strange…."[443]

When Cedric re-discovered her in his late twenties, when Amy was in her eighties, he "began to see her and the land she inhabited with fresh eyes and new understanding"[444]. Cedric saw Amy in what he called, "a special light"[445], waking up to "how truly remarkable she was"[446]. His respect for her grew as he "began to comprehend the complexity of her environment and the simplicity that she brought to bear in relating to it[447]".

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[441] González, J. 'The Appended Subject: Race and Identity as Digital Assemblage', in Kolko, Beth, Lisa Nakamura, and Gilbert Rodman. 2013. *Race in Cyberspace*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis (27).
[442] Ibid.
[443] Ibid.
[444] Madhlawu' Exhibition Statement, 1997.
[445] Candice Jansen interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).
[446] Madhlawu' Exhibition Statement, 1997.
[447] Ibid.

Feeling for the Zulu Mother is not entirely accurate in Amy's case because Amy's mother apparently was not Zulu, but Swazi. What then is a Zulu Mother anyway? *Coloured Black* also suggests that Cedric's documentary of Amy unsettled a visual history of 'Zulu Mothers', which Christraud Geary writes of in the essay, 'Zulu mothers" and their children traveling around the world: from photograph to picture postcard'. Geary writes, "The vintage photographic print "Zulu Mothers" belongs to this corpus of imagery or sub-file, one that essentializes men, women, and children as representatives of such and such a "tribe", a classification often accomplished by its caption through linguistic framing"[448]. Zulu mothers thus are also visual tropes that beckon the colonial gaze even if Amy appears as vanishing evidence that Zulu mothers also had 'coloured children'. They were not mere tribal subjects, bare-breasted, with babies on their back, which populate colonial archives. Amy's image then is a testament to an "unacknowledged visuality"[449] in the African photographic archive that has us contend with the colonial representation of Zulu mothers, even if she cannot be called a Zulu.

The Zulu Mother is also the genealogical imagination and method for the ways in which familial biographies are narrated. This is taken from Lee's *Unreasonable Histories* in which he explains:

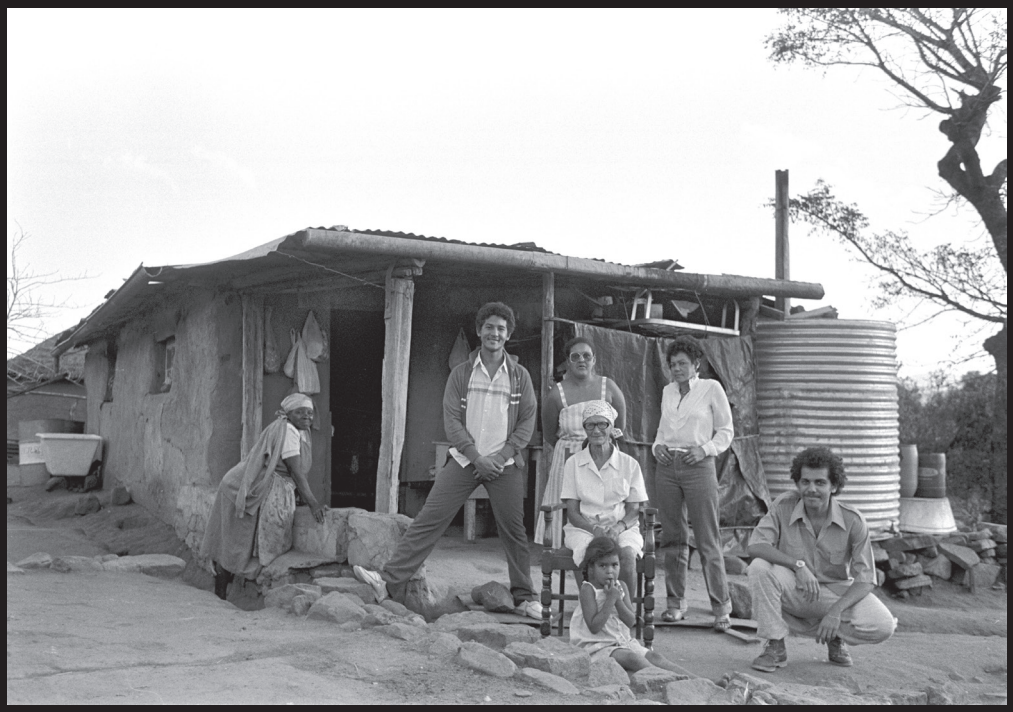
> **"**genealogical imagination… refers to both the political imagination uncovered and the alternative historical imagination demanded to assemble and think through this particular set of histories. As defined by Michel Foucault, a genealogical approach seeks to historicize phenomena that appear to be "without history". In contrast to linear histories that presuppose the existence of cohesive identity groups, this genre favors a "complex course of descent" that highlights contingency and irregularity. It is

[448] Christraud Geary, '"Zulu mothers" and their children traveling around the world: from photograph to picture postcard' in African Photography from the Walther Collection: Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive, Tamar Garb (ed), (Göttingen, Germany: Steidl; New York: Walther Collection, 2013: (73).
[449]Hayes, Patricia. "Introduction: Visual Genders." Gender & History 17, no. 3 (2005): 519-37.

> anti-teleological by definition, even when professing from the past to the present. A genealogical approach is further defined by its concern for subjugated forms of knowledge–knowledge that is not simply ignored, but actively disqualified. Genealogical histories are ultimately counter-histories that critically resist dominant views and practices of conformity"[450].

The Zulu Mother as visual feeling is a counter-history of 'coloured family' also addresses the historic absence of John Dunn's wives. A radial genealogical table of Dunn descendants not only misname his wives but render them as marginal to the history of Dunn family, who much like a Zulu clan, identifies itself with the patriarch. Very little biographical details are known about these women yet they are critically unarticulated historical actors who tie Cedric's family to Zululand and who influenced the shape of Amy's life. Feeling for The Zulu Mother is also to feel for the erasure of African women from South African history and the history of 'coloured family' by not only apartheid, but also by her children and her 'coloured descendants'.

[450] Lee, Christopher J. *Unreasonable Histories: Nativism, Multiracial Lives, and the Genealogical Imagination in British Africa*. Radical Perspectives. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014 (19).



The important role that Zulu women play in Cedric's family photography is also taken up in the figure of Amy's closest friend, known as 'MaKhumalo', who once was one of Amy's servants who had helped with farm work on Amy's former property. Cedric's family portrait made outside Amy's house in iVuna sheds light on the intermural domesticity of Amy as both a 'coloured' and a Zulu subject. Cedric and his cousins made the three-hour drive that day and returned Amy to her home in iVuna after Amy had visited her daughter in Durban. Her safe deliverance became an occasion for a family memento and everyone gathered around Amy in the front of her house. She sat on a wooden chair that appeared not made for the outside, but was put there, on the dusty ground where Cedric crouched beneath her, at the edge of the frame.

He had made enough room to include himself and the tall tree near the metal rain catcher that towered over Amy's roof. He made enough room for the architectural length of her dwelling. You can see some of what peeks out from behind it. Cedric also made room for more than home and family. He made room for MaKhumalo, who was not a member of the family, but who was standing outside the pictured relation. Did she know that Cedric would make her part of the portrait? MaKhumalo leaned in and smiled at the camera as if she knew that he would. This family image was found among Cedric's unclaimed relations online. He had made it as private memento[451] and did not include it in his first and only exhibition that he produced on Amy in 1997 for the Macufe Arts Festival in Bloemfontein that predated *Blood Relatives* by eight years.

Lisa Cartwright's notion of "topographic feeling" informs the final aesthetic modality through which 'Feeling coloured Zululand' narrates the undergirding relationship between

[451] Cedric Nunn correspondence 2019.

The Zulu Mother and land, place, and space, which takes on autonomous looks and visual and mnemonic sovereignties that make Amy and Dunn family appear both at home and 'land insecure' as 'coloured subjects'. Cartwright defines "topographic feeling" as "a sensual, tactile, physically grounded feeling for the transitional qualities of a place across which a body can be imagined to move. It is a feeling of connectedness to the ground that can be imagined from an optical standpoint outside that space"[452]. The Zulu Mother, through Amy becomes a body that moves through space and time and feeling that transitions across home and other domestic spaces. Thus 'Coloured' Zululand is not a physical place, but a visual feeling that is tied up in The Zulu Mother. One of Cedric 'aunts', Daphne Dunn provided this revelation when asked about what she felt toward her grandfather, John Dunn. She insisted that she also read it "in one of the books"[453] but her familial memory could not be verified in official historical accounts. Daphne replied,

> "I just felt proud of John Dunn. The only reason I felt proud of John Dunn, not because he was a white man, because he left us land. You know, they say when John Dunn died, the government thought, 'well John Dunn is dead now, the wives are going to go back where they came from so that gets rid of the Dunn family'. But now, when John Dunn died and when his wives were told that they must go back home, they refused, they said,' never'! 'We married John Dunn and we're staying on this land. And that's how come we're still here. Through John Dunn's wives. Black wives too!"

The Zulu Mother appears when asked about land and belonging in Zululand. Amy also raised it after she was asked if "the local people" did not mind 'coloured people' living in the area. Amy answered that they did not before taking a pause and clarifying, "most of us, we were born here on the same land after the war because our father was from Cape Town, coming to fight. Now they got us". Another voice asked her, "who gave them land" and Amy replied,

[452] Cartwright, L. 'Topographies of Feeling: On Catherine Opie's American Football Landscapes' in Brown, Elspeth H., and Thy Phu. 2014. *Feeling Photography* (301).
[453] Candice Jansen interview with Daphne Dunn (Mangete, 2017).

> "My father couldn't get a land because he is a white man, nobody used to get a land. When my brother was so big [she holds her hand out, palm down], now my mother went to ask, because they know my mother used to live that side, same place next to the king [DiniZulu]. They used to know us."[454]

6.3 Feeling coloured Zululand: An Overview

My narration or my narrative description follows a small series of Cedric's family photographs that spans the chronological life of Cedric's photographic engagement with photographing family. It begins around 1982, the time in which Cedric discovers the medium, also a time that Cedric described to Enwezor as saying, "I had very little confidence in the first few years–I looked at those images and thought, 'I have a long way to call myself a photographer. I didn't have faith in my own work, but I had an overriding faith in the medium.[455]" That faith culminates in my narration that ends in 2000, which appeared as an end of Cedric's focused attention on family as a documentary subject. This death of Cedric's family photography appeared to have ended with the death of his maternal grandmother, Amy. Although it was just one kind of death because *Blood Relatives* surfaces five years later and itself dies or falls into a kind of latency thereafter. My selection narrates difficulties of Black natal alienation in the genealogical imagination of 'coloured family' that touches upon both Cedric's paternal and maternal genealogies. Yet, in the way in which I have structured my narration and photographic sequence, these difficulties are contained or held captive within the figure of Amy and the last twenty years of her life.

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[454] Amy Louw interviewed by unknown interviewer, Tourien. Marcus B-Roll Film Footage (iVuna, circa 1990).
[455] Nunn, Cedric *Call and Response*, Ostfildern: Hatje/Cantz, 2011, (21).

‘Looking ‘coloured’ and Appearing Native’ stages the visual unknowability of Amy’s Blackness as having been bound up in the apartheid appearance of ‘the coloured’ and ‘the '"bantu"'’ or ‘the Zulu’. There appears to emerge a difference between the latter racial and ethnic categories from ‘the native’, which becomes de-racialized within the visual imaginary that Amy commands in her self-image. ‘Coloured’ is read off Amy’s skin and body surface. She can appear as ‘coloured’ and ‘native’, which also means not to look like a biological subject but rather a visual subject who holds the capacity to look like or unlike her surroundings. These sequences and narration stage Amy under multiple guises in which she exhibits her power both ‘coloured’ and native, and appears like place. I attempt to show that Cedric is attentive by not only what he photographs about Amy, but how he makes her appear. Her subsistence livelihood, relationship to the natural world and to land in particular is key, which is how Cedric’s portraits of her could be described as ‘environmental’. Amy is seen to not only live *on the land*, but also be *of the land* and in Cedric’s observational mode of documentary, following the rhythms of her daily life and appears to naturalize Amy within a Black political vision for ‘coloured subjecthood’. Camouflage, resemblance, contrast and dissonance are all critical registers of Amy’s appearance. They bring her into visual relation and disidentification with her surroundings between her Zulu life in iVuna, where she could take on the look of the land, and her ‘coloured life’ in Durban, where she could take on the shine of its domesticity. These *visual feelings* are weaved into the matter of Amy’s dress.

If Cedric staged Amy against land, he staged the Dunn family against home[456]. ‘Photographing against History’ narrates the textures of the Dunn's home life as Cedric himself staged it. He

[456] The land question is a fraught family matter for Dunn descendants. It has been an ongoing matter between them and the state for almost one hundred and twenty-five years, since John’s death in 1865. Before the war, Dunnsland is said to have stretched north of the Tugela River, as far as Richards Bay as a “buffer chiefdom”, located between colonial Natal and Zululand. After the war, Dunnsland borders were redrawn along with the map of a defeated Zulu kingdom into thirteen chieftainships, of

composed family in his portraiture, I suggest as visual genealogy, which gives the Dunn family as 'coloured subjects', a history that appears to trace these domestic relations back to their 'european' entanglements. Cedric posed families within and outside of their homes, but always upon domestic thresholds that opened up the histories of his relatives to the capacity to appear. The *visual feelings* touch on matters of architectural resemblance, photographed family photographs, ancestral presences as home objects, textured surfaces, and light that

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which John's was one of the largest. After he died, his descendants were left with a predicament. John had served as a Zulu chief on tribal land, governed by colonial authority, yet, his children were not native subjects. John did not govern his descendants according to tribal law, nor did they want to be tribal subjects after he died. For more than two decades they were a predicament for the colonial regime who legislated family ownership by two acts parliament: the John Dunn Land Distribution Acts of 1902 and 1935. Dunn descendants were not just a predicament of the state, tensions grew between them and the Zulu communities they lived surrounded by, and perennial land disputes over the course of the twentieth century. Apartheid race laws made matters worse, deepening divisions between Dunns and Zulus with removals in creating Mangete and a part of Emoyeni as coloured reserves and making it almost impossible for Dunns to participate in sugar cane farming open to 'european's-only.

During the late 1980s, Dunn descendants, now three generations old, received the title deeds to land which was promised more than fifty years before. It was a short-lived peace. By the late 1990s, a counter land claim was lodged by a local chief, unleashing another decade of land dispute that turned violent. The late Pat Dunn, a family leader and an aunt of Cedric's who also spoke at the opening of *Blood Relatives* gave a chilling testimony recorded on film about the violent acts and intimidation experienced in Mangete: cane fields were torched, the community hall was burnt down and Pat's husband was shot in the chest. Pat looks shaken as her voice breaks the desperation of not being able to stir the political will of the South African government to intervene. By 2004, after eight years of court cases and a few thousand had occupied Dunn land, the High Court heard the case and ruled in Dunn descendants' favour. Yet, land occupation of Dunn land continues today and law enforcement is visibly absent in Mangete, which is located like an island, surrounded by a sea of white-owned sugar cane farms and Zulu tribal land.

Cedric kept quiet about this history of land in *Blood Relatives* the film and the exhibition. I never asked him why. Yet, I could understand his quiet. It is a history that deserves its own investigation. The complexity of the law set against the changing racial classificatory regimes of people and land makes the history of land and the Dunns both politically and emotionally charged. The chief who Pat implicates in the post-apartheid dispute did not recognize "the white man's history" upon which Dunns' claims were made. Yet, Dunns are not simple victims. A community of Zulus were removed during apartheid in Mangete to declare it a coloured reserve, even if that choice was the only means with which Dunns could remain on their ancestral land. However, post-apartheid intimidation is still a fresh wound. Experience of intimidation came up without me asking in the two interviews I conducted with eighty-two-year-old, Daphne Dunn in Mangete (a granddaughter of John), with Bertha Hartley (wife of John's grandson) and Eileen Powell (John's granddaughter) in Stanger.

pours in from the outside apertures and the dimensionality of these home spaces that become 'living rooms'.

Cedric's mapping of visual genealogy is not just contained within the portrait, but it also is tied in with how Cedric created his portraits. My narration exists alongside this temporality of Cedric's family portraiture. In one sense, time is flattened through his staging of relatives against domestic surfaces upon which family photographs are hung and compositionally pressing dead or absent family, who stand in for a past that Cedric cannot photograph, against the living members in the photographs. The lives of the living photographed stretched back into time, while the lives of the photographed dead are also stretched into the present. On the other hand, Cedric's family portraiture stretches beyond the time and place in which the portrait is created. Cedric also returns to the scene of these temporal relations and re-photographs them, which I sequence and narrate as another passage of time.

'The House that Amy Built' stages difficulties of 'coloured'-'"bantu"' relations through its architectural relationality that appears both inside and outside of Amy's house, which Cedric made a concentrated study of her house; of how Amy visually relates to her Zulu neighbours and of how her house also stood as a monument to her resistance of 'coloured subjecthood'. Amy could have left iVuna and gone to live in more comfort in 'coloured community' with her daughters and extended family, although she did live in iVuna with one of her sons. Yet, Amy refused to move. She wanted to stay. This meant that Cedric's mother and aunt, Sheila, took turns to live and care for Amy at her house, for months at a time. I narrate the story of how Amy came to live in that mostly wattle and daub house, which she designed and oversaw the building of herself, after she outlived two husbands and had to leave her large stone house some distance away, as a result of both apartheid and tribal laws.

What could have been is a key tense of time that undergirds Cedric's fixation on Amy. She "…influenced my thinking. [watching her life] was like wow, *this is how it could have been* [emphasis added] … And this is a far superior way of relating as [Black] people than what I know [through] my exclusion as a 'coloured person' in a 'coloured neighbourhood', imbibing these notions of my separateness"[457]. Amy's world therefore was to the apartheid present, when Cedric photographed her, a vision for a Black future that never was. He understood it as a future of a past that apartheid foreclosed. Looking at Amy now is thus also to look at a future of the past that can never again be imagined. Yet, the limits of photographic image and Amy's portraits holds these impossible futures and historic potentials in an ongoing present in which these racial forecasts can never be, but only appear.

These forecasts hold a "two-fold attention"[458] in Cedric's exposures. One attention looks at the racial forecast inside Amy's house, and the other outside of it. Outside of Amy's house, Cedric photographed the ways in which she appears like her Zulu community. He would wait for visible shared gestures between Amy and her neighbours or for a gesture that would bring Amy close in proximity to them. Inside Amy's house, another racial forecast is made visible. Amy may have wanted to stay in the Zulu community, yet she and her community also understood her as apart from them. Her Zulu neighbours did understand Amy as different from them. Within the privacy of the home, the distance of race between her and them could be seen, yet not felt. Whereas outside it could not be seen. Cedric did not feel it. Inside her house, Amy appeared 'coloured' but outside, she 'looked Zulu'.

[457] Candice Jansen interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).
[458] Lisa Lowe, "The Intimacies of Four Continents," in Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 208 cited in
Hartman, Saidiya V. "Venus in Two Acts." Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism 26 (2008): 11.

‘Death of a Zulu Mother’ ends this chapter and *Coloured Black*, where an apartheid future of ‘coloured family’ begins. It reads more like brief moments of mourning. Mourning the loss of Amy. Mourning Cedric’s loss of her and mourning the loss of Zululand for a ‘coloured' family. Cedric’s loss of Amy is felt through a tender portrait that he made of her three years before her death, which was the closest Cedric ever came to Amy of all the portraits of her that I have seen. Both she and him, I imagined, at their most vulnerable and open to one another, as a portrait that Cedric looked to make of her from the beginning of their twenty-years together in photography. My narration tells some of what is known about Amy’s mother, Velepi, told against a portrait that Cedric made of the grave of Amy’s father, Arthur Nicholson. He never photographed Velepi’s grave in Eshowe but I did see an image of it in a family history of the Nicholson’s written by Maureen Bryson and William Kerry in 1997. The last cut, called ‘Velepi: An Elegy’ departs from a mournful portrait of family that Cedric made from a wall of family photographs in Amy’s house. It is named after Velepi, whose name translates into English as “where from " and in general conversation, “uVelaphi” asks, “where do you come from”? Only after coming to the end of writing my dissertation, did I realize the significance of Amy’s mother’s name, which was another one of those small gifts given to me along this journey. About Amy’s death, Cedric wrote:

> “Our matriarch is now gone. She died with dignity, at the age of 103, in the arms of her last few remaining children. The family, who are struggling to find a new centre in the wake of the gap that her parting left, keenly felt her departure. The home she created and maintained is gone, and with it our connection to the ‘old country’. But something remains, a pattern perhaps, that she established, of possibilities, of ways of being that transcend narrow boundaries. For that I thank her”[459].

[459] Madhlawu’ Exhibition Statement, 1997.





6.4 Looking 'Coloured' & Appearing Native

Amy was light skinned: touched by the sun and felt on the earth. She appeared not just as a reflection of the light. She also appeared as a reflection of the land. Through her, Cedric belonged to it, and through the land, Amy made home. He had called her, "a peasant farmer": "Resourceful" and "enterprising"[460] and remembered her days:

> "filled with planting maize, sorghum, pumpkins and cotton, hoeing, feeding fowls, ducks and pigs, making grass mats, sewing clothes to sell, brewing Zulu beer (for which she was renowned), selling snuff from the tobacco she had grown and of course the inevitable cleaning and cooking in her own home. As well as all this, there was the constant flow of neighbours and visitors who kept her informed about on goings-on in the community. There was always time to relax in the midday heat, and to enjoy company in the cool of the afternoons and evenings. Radio Zulu was a constant background sound"[461].

Cedric followed Amy going about her life like a faithful hound with his nose to the ground, which was made smooth as if by hand. She had come quite a distance and Cedric photographed her against this long view. Amy was eight-six years old then. She had outlived two husbands, raised eight children, and rebuilt a life for herself in iVuna and tended to it day after day. Her life was more than a domestic routine, it was a subsistence regime. Amy did not just live in a house, she lived off the land. Her hands were always full.

Her Zuluness always appeared in the background. Not just as her proximity to Zulu people in the community where she lived, but as the land against which Cedric rendered her. She was in touch with her surroundings and her depth of connection to the natural world, Cedric noticed as visual patterns that drew a continuity between her and the land, between Amy and the place where she lived between her body and the ground upon where she rested from the

[460] Madhlawu' Exhibition Statement, 1997.
[461] Ibid

hot of the midday sun, under the shade of the tree. Cedric once photographed her asleep in such a fashion, lying curled up on a reed mat, in foetal position with her head rested on a pillow that was folded against a wooden plank. Her body touched the ground, but she also appeared touched by the earth, by its solar rhythms, and by the way in which the dress she wore, made Amy appear covered in leaves like the tree that looks as if it grew out of her.

Amy was dressed in leaves and its pattern fashioned Amy into an iconic symbol of woman-land. She was camouflaged, made up in–a kind of disguise–that makes the eye draw a resemblance between Amy and her native land. This was not just a visual resemblance, it also was a familial relation that evoked the spirit of Amy's Zulu mother, who had always tied her to Zululand. A much told story about Amy is the story about her refusal to leave Zululand permanently as a young girl from her mother. She was very young and had started in domestic service, looking after a child, who could not have been much older than her, for a 'european' family who had relocated to Berea, Durban. They had taken Amy with them, where she worked for some time before another move was pending. The family were about to relocate to Cape Town and wanted to take Amy with them. "I refused.. I didn't want to leave my mother"[462], she insisted. Amy was put on a train and sent back home.

What if Amy had gone to Cape Town with that family? What would have become of her? She may not have married Willie or Dandy. She may not have had her children. Her life in 19th Century Cape Colony would have taken another turn. She could have lost her Zulu language. If she had left her native land, what would have become of her mother? Velapi lived with Amy in her later years. Amy looked after her as she aged until her death. Cedric

[462] Tourien. Marcus B-Roll Film Footage (iVuna, circa 1990).

does not know how old either Amy or her mother was when Velaphi died. He did remember her presence in Amy's home as a child. By the 1980s, when Cedric started photographing Amy with serious intent, Velaphi had long passed, but could be felt in the appearance of Amy and her life in Zululand. Amy's childhood choice to stay close to her was a choice that bared upon generations that came after her, which she could not have even imagined as a girl. As a grandmother, Amy was a living trace of Velaphi but also of that tie to the land, which Amy refused to sever, drawing the trajectory even of Cedric's life, which may not have existed otherwise. Velaphi was alive in Cedric's photographs of Amy, which was the life of the land she lived.


8177

Amy fashioned her life to her own desires. Although to what extent did she fashion herself for Cedric's camera? Cedric's portrait of her was not just observational images that depict Amy going about her ordinary life. Her image could transform labouring peasant into a photographic collaborator in the play she also exhibited in posing for Cedric. Where is his hand in this? Is it in the way she is posed? Seated on the ground, folded against the front door of her house with her body turned just away from him. Did Cedric ask her to sit in that fashion? Behind her large sunglasses, Amy appears to look straight at him, looking at her from the outside of the doorway. Was her hand woven mat laid for the moment? Amy is not seated on it, but on the floor, perhaps to not conceal her handwork. Her bare feet are rested on it like bird claws as delicate as the wooden stick laid across the mat.

What does that stick signify? It appears too short to walk with and too narrow to bare weight upon. Is it a kind of talisman? An object that wielded magical powers that placed in the doorway of her house, warded off that which had no place there? Or was the stick, not even a thought that Cedric or Amy paid much attention to? Or was it a thought that was inspired by Amy's cosmopolitan look? The Black and white polka dot scarf, stripped at the edges that was wrapped around her head looks as if it were a textile not meant for the labour of her peasant life, but meant for another occasion. Or meant for a dream of another life. Another persona of an urban fashionista. She could have enjoyed playing this dream for Cedric's camera. Cedric could have enjoyed photographing Amy at the threshold of her house. Making her appear as a clash of signs, which coalesced to figure an image of Amy that contrasts her as different from her surroundings. An self-fashioned image that made her surroundings appear domesticated by who she was.

What did the numbers behind her add up to? 8177 in large Black print on a white card that was placed upright, facing out the door in a wide cardboard box on Amy's bedside table. Inside the box were a number of flat and protruding things that appear like medicine. The box and its contents were covered with a white tulle netting lined with fabric along its edges. Amy may very well have sown that covering herself as a measure to keep flies and other insects from sitting on them. Did these numbers correspond to Amy's medical history? Did the number on the card correspond to a clinic record? Or did they point to the carceral, classificatory regimes that ordered the world outside of Amy's house, outside in the world of apartheid that Cedric was native to. Amy's image was one outside of this world and there in the threshold of her home, her image disfigured its racial signs.

Yet to Cedric, Amy's portrait was less about race and more about age. Not the process of aging but the wisdom of it, which was not just about Amy and her self-determined image. Cedric's mother and his aunt's wisdom to not insist that Amy leave iVuna and come to live with them where she could have running water, electricity and be looked after and surrounded by her extended family. Lily and Sheila had the wisdom to let Amy live as she wished. Cedric writes of having appreciated this upbringing. "I was fortunate to be raised in a community that valued the aged, which is so different from the view prevalent in the 'western civilized' world, in which old people's lives are seen as being wasted and over, fit only to be spent in an old-age home"[463].

Amy's refusal to leave and live in iVuna meant that near to the end of her life was difficult as she became bed-ridden, Lily and Sheila would alternate and leave their own family and

[463] Madhlawu' Exhibition Statement, 1997.

home life for five to six months at a time to live with Amy. The arrangement could have been seen as a burden for Amy's daughters. Sheila responded to the question of whether the arrangement was a burden, "we decided that she deserves what we are doing for her. We are doing it out of love and for what she has done for so many other people in her life"[464]. Shiela did admit that the remote rural life in iVuna could be "tedious" but "rewarding [because Amy] is a pleasure to look after. She is not demanding or anything like that"[465]. Sheila also was certain that if she did not do this for Amy, she would regret it. Amy's extended family would also have been deprived of seeing her grow old and witnessing her way of life, outside of the ordinary comforts of convention for a woman of her age, which Cedric writes of having valued:

> "In Madhlawu's world, old age commanded respect and inclusion, and she herself, though she constantly referred to herself as being old, commanded the status of equal. She gave respect as readily as she expected it. And whilst I can see how the rigid imposition of the perspective of old people, especially where it is out of step with the youth, could be constricting, there is a need for balance in which the value of all age is maintained. This I learned from Madhlawu."[466]

[464] Tourien. Marcus B-Roll Film Footage (iVuna, circa 1990).
[465] Ibid.
[466] Madhlawu' Exhibition Statement, 1997.





Amy took on the look of the environment in which she was photographed. She had the power to appear native to the place in which Cedric photographed her. Wherever Cedric may have made Amy's portrait, one element stayed consistent across the different guises under which he noticed her appear. Amy's head was always covered. She never showed her hair. Cedric had never noticed that in all the images of Amy that I had seen, she always wore either a hat or a scarf wrapped around her head. He also did not think about its origins; that it could be another mark of her Zulu upbringing and mother. Traditionally, married Zulu women always wore their head covered and Amy did present herself as a married woman, even if she was twice widowed. In a portrait of her at Sheila's house in Sydenham, Durban, Amy still wore her marriage ring. Maybe she wore it just when she left home as her ring does not appear in the images of her life in iVuna.

Amy appeared at Sheila's house in a manner in which she did not in iVuna. Of course at her daughter's house, Amy did not work or have the kind of responsibilities that she did at her own house. She did not need to feed animals, fetch water, harvest vegetables, cook on open fires or dress in clothes that could get dirty or torn. At her daughter's house, Amy was a guest and she could dress for an occasion of meeting strangers or appearing in the city. Shiela did not live in a Zulu community. She lived in an area for 'coloureds only', built by the apartheid state for 'coloured families'. Therefore, inside the house of her 'coloured' family, Amy's appeared to have taken on the feel of the bedroom. In the textures of the pillow cases, in the patterned impressions on the bedding, in the fabric folds of the ironed washing stacked beside her, there was a visual affinity with the clothes that Cedric photographed her wearing. The folds of her ruched shirt sleeve resemble the crocheted blanket in the making, the doily on the bed stand, the circled pattern on the linoleum covered floor, or the open flowered curtain that

let in the light. Amy appeared to shine in the patterns of racial and domestic fabrication that animated the room.

The space in which she sat for her portrait was more bed than room. The bed had overgrown the space and in Cedric's portrait, transformed itself into a landscape that flowed into the shape of another portrait of Amy, taken four years later. When seen side by side, the portraits contrast the natural world that is Amy's home, again with the 'coloured world' that was not her home, but where her family lived. From the radio in the left corner of the bedroom, past the length of the shadowed lovers on the wall, the pile of books on the side table, and out the window; the dark line of the headboard's curve undulated across most of the image and catches the curve of the horizon of the grassy valley against which Cedric photographed Amy from behind, carrying a world on her back. He had lost the negative to this image. Now, it lives in digital form as an image without an origin. Yet, it appears like an original moment. A discovery that Cedric had made about seeing Amy otherwise, as he had never seen her before. He was close to her, but behind her slow ascent uphill, he photographs Amy from below.

She wears her dress of leaves and her sun hat, which Amy made herself, and that had seen better days. Its feel resembled the material of the harvest bag. The contents of her bag made themselves known from inside the sack without holes or tears. Amy holds it with her arms behind her back and her hands cup the bag in different directions. The fingernails on her right hand are visible and soiled, but the shape of her fingers make an agile, contorted gesture. The folds of her elbow and wrist and the enlarged joints of her long bent fingers look gnarled like the weathered succulents on the left side of the frame: the direction to which Amy had her head turned. The world she appears to be walking through feels arid, whereas, in the world in

which Amy sits inside the room, she almost appears wet by the catch of the light against the sheen of her blouse. Between this divide of the bedroom and the bushes is a felt passage of time and space that offer differing feelings of home through the appearance of land and house, not through the substance of its material conditions. These portraits of Amy share a horizon, but not a home. The 'coloured house' can only offer the appearance of land and the natural world and Amy could find herself at home in both.





6.5 Photographing Against History

The wooden pillars that framed the doorway, draw attention to the architectural resemblance between the house of John Dunn and his descendants. Or one of them at least. Florrie's house had taken on the guise of her great grandfather's house. Or perhaps it was the similarity with which Cedric composed the portrait of Florrie outside her house and a group of relatives on the verandah of the house that John had built for himself and his first wife, Catherine. Two generations removed, Florrie and her wooden house was a shadow of her great grandfather's original stone home, and Cedric photographed her standing against it. The measure of her house and her personality were incongruent. "Larger than life" and "'flamboyant" were some of the words that Cedric used to describe what Florrie was like, yet her home appeared modest[467].

Florrie's house was marked by shadows. She suffered from alcoholism, which Cedric recalls, 'was a great sadness around a lot of those lives. Very few escaped that'[468]. By those lives, he meant his parents' generation of Zululand 'coloureds', who were reared by parent's, orphaned by their extended 'european' and Zulu families early in the twentieth century. Those children grew up with other 'coloureds' who were family, but who formed also a community having been born into a new racial class, designated by the apartheid state. Florrie's generation could move between cities and towns like Durban and Pietermaritzburg and lived lives of which their family were unaware. Cedric had thought that Florrie had never married or had children, as during the 1980s he was too young to have known the story of her life. Florrie's sister-in-law, Bertha, remembers Florrie's early life, which she had to forge after

[467] Candice Jansen, Interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).
[468] Ibid.

befalling her own tragedy as a young woman. Florrie had fallen pregnant from an unknown white man, while she was still living with her parents. When Lena, Florrie's mother, learnt of this, she beat Florrie severely. She had her baby in Mangete and thereafter, caught wind of a Mauritian man in the sugar business, who had been looking for a housekeeper. Florrie left Mangete with her baby, took up domestic service in his home and ended up marrying this man and having three more children[469]. The empty, worn lounge chair in the left corner of her veranda, and the dog that appears to be looking at Cedric, hidden under its shadow, punctuate the sense of Florrie's life spent alone. Cedric had thought she died without a trace, as his family photographs of Florrie are some of the last images of her[470].

Florrie may not have imagined that her plain, wooden house could have resembled the monumental house of her great grandfather. Did she build hers, with his in mind? Or did Cedric have John's house on his mind when he photographed Florrie outside of hers? Her portrait was made years after Cedric once visited John's house in 1982. He was still new to photography then, and growing into the idea that his own family in Mangete were subjects worth photographing. His father's cousin, Basil Nunn took him there because Cedric had never been to that remote part of Mangete where it was built. Basil stands with his hands inside his pockets looking with satisfaction across the view of what he had made possible. It was not the first time that he had a hand in Cedric's life. Basil had helped Cedric find a family to stay with when he went to high school in Ixopo. Basil and Herbert, Cedric's father were close and worked together for some time in Hluhluwe with Basil managing the farm and Herbert, the general dealer.

[469] Candice Jansen interview with Bertha Hartley (Stanger, 2017).
[470] Candice Jansen, Interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).

The house was occupied then by the Greens, third generation Dunn descendants by John's marriage to his first wife, Catherine. She and her children had been photographed in front of that house before, perhaps after John had rebuilt it after the war. Had Cedric had seen this image of John's house before he made this family portrait? Did he know that he was recreating history by monumentalising the Dunn family outside of this house? The century between them appears to show the contraction of wealth and status, which the Dunn family had undergone after his death. Catherine's family portrait was a domestic show of 'coloured class' of a bygone era. She and her daughters were dressed in fine clothes, arranged standing and sitting on the steps of the veranda, surrounded by more naked Zulu boys and girls, ostensibly the family servants, who were posed on the ground beneath them.

Cedric's family portrait, outside of John Dunn's house, pictures a woman-less family of men and children on the porch of a house kept in the shadow of its former glory. A family overwhelmed by the scale of its historic grandeur. Houses were important to Dunn family history, not just as an architecture of memory, but as a domestic architecture that also circumscribed the place of the Dunn family in the archive. The wood and iron family house that John had grown up in, is said to have overlooked the harbour at Port Natal, built by his father, Robert Dunn, who by 1839 was a man of substantial means. Their home was called, "Sea View" and Robert was described by "one old African man" as having had "many Hottentot and native followers, there was plenty of liquor at his place"[471]. Zulu people are said to have called him, 'Misdoni'. The domestic world that John was reared in was not characterised by poverty. "His nursemaids were Khoi women brought from Algoa Bay by

[471] Ballard, Charles. John Dunn: The White Chief of Zululand. Craighall [South Africa]: Ad. Donker, 1985 (24).

Robert Dunn; Cape coloured and local African servants were an integral part of the Dunn domestic establishment at Sea View"[472].

Sea View no longer exists. There are no known images of it as there are of John's house over a span of not only time, but also political change. Cedric's visual record of John's house is all that remains. After the Greens left, John's house was left vacant for too long and thus exposed to the needs of the surrounding community who dismantled it brick by brick and stripped the house of its materials and the Dunn family of a memory of home. A home that was made to be seen from far away. The dark, thick wooden frame built around the open front door announced its splendour. The Greens, gathered in a small group outside the door help to measure its scale. As a photographer, Cedric had two choices: place himself too close to family and loose the suggestion of their monumental history or be removed from family and frame the architecture of its house. His compositional tactic of placing himself between closeness and distance could hold the scale and perhaps the contradiction of his own ambivalence towards John and his history in Zululand.

[472] Ibid.


OUR HELP
IS IN THE
NAME OF
THE LORD

Cedric's family portrait of Lena Hartley, John's last surviving daughter, stirs a house of feelings. Lena was a stern woman of her times, who hurt her family and who herself was hurt by the shape of her life. In 1986, when Cedric made a portrait of her inside her wood and iron home, Lena was not far from celebrating her hundredth birthday. When she died is unknown. Yet, in Cedric's portrait, Lena might as well be dead. She sits as an artefact of a remote past like the colonial portraits of white men who tower over her, much like in her life as John's daughter and Victor's wife. His portrait had prominence. It hung against the wall, inside an ornate three tiered frame, behind glass that in Cedric's portrait, caught a square of light from the open door. Victor may have been intent on making his hand-coloured photographic portrait be made to look superior to what appears as a glass-less, amateur, hand-drawn reproduction of John's image kept in a modest frame. John may have been the man of Lena's family, but Victor was the man of this house. In spite of the exhibitory difference between John and Victor's portrait, their eminence was unrivalled. Even a framed text of the Lords' prayer is beneath them.

Lena appears to dissolve into this familial world of image, object and artefact, frozen into a pose that resists the delight of being photographed. The scowl of her face tells of a woman who may not even have known how to smile. Lena could show no ease because nothing about her life was easy. The objects in her home were dark and heavy. From her living room, it feels as if footsteps could make the house echo and its things quiver with the gait. There is a small clock, turned to face her, just above her head that Lena must have used to watch and wait for the time to come as Cedric photographed her back into time. From the back of Lena's hands, the veins that run up into her arms flow blood and history, that runs upwards, beyond Lena, along the seams of the panelled wall and into the images of her becoming both a daughter and a wife, between the triad of husband, father and God. But there at the light

switch, nailed next to the missing door frame that opens up a sliver of another room is the felt absence in this genealogical arrangement. Where is the image of Lena's mother?

Her name has been recorded as 'Nogebdu Mtetwa'. Lena was her only child[473]. As a young girl, Lena is said to have run away from home to Durban; illiterate–having never gone to school. Why Lena never went to school is not known because John had created a school for his children, most of whom were educated. Lena eventually found herself in domestic service as a childminder for a white family. Her daughter-in-law, Bertha, remembers that during this time, Lena met Victor. The details of how they met are unclear, but what was certain is that Lena became pregnant with Victor's child and the two needed to get married. Victor was much older than the barely teenaged Lena, who a magistrate declared too young to marry, which is how the two married in Mtunzini and not in Durban. It is unknown whether Lena and Victor had eleven or twelve children[474], most of whom were born in that house, in Mangete on the land that Lena inherited as one of John's children. Lena was of the more wealthy Dunns, she and Victor owned and ran a successful general dealer and Lena taught herself many skills including how to drive.

"She worshipped the ground a white man walked on. She worshipped whites", Bertha recalled. "If you were fair, she would take to you immediately", another Dunn descendant, Eileen Powell agreed. "But if you had dark skin!" Bertha emphasised, admitting, "I was called names … I had a hard time with her, this old lady". Lena, although darker-skinned herself may have disapproved of Bertha, Nogebdu, her Zulu mother, had it the worst. She

[473] Genealogical Table of John Dunn wives and his descendants. Courtesy of Killie Campbell Africana Library, University of KwaZulu-Natal (circa 1940). Researchers definitely misspelt the names of John Dunn's wives.
[474] Ibid and Candice Jansen interview with Bertha Hartley (Stanger, 2017).

would often visit and make the almost fifty kilometre distance from Ngoye, close to Epangeni to Mangete on foot, accompanied by a young child from her village. Victor is said to have been fond of Nogebdu, but Lena did not approve of having her around. She would make Nogebdu remain outside of her house and when Lena's daughters, who had married white, brought their families to visit, Nogebdu would be sent away so as to not be seen. One Christmas, Lena's daughters had brought their white in-laws to visit and Nogebdu was sent to stay with 'Leonhard'[475], the son of another Dunn wife, 'Nointaba Mzimela'. Bertha retells that Nogebdu died around that time having drunk too much and drowned after crossing a shallow stream.

Bertha married Lena's son, Harry. The two had met in Durban in 1965. After Harry received his portion of land in Mangete, the two travelled there every Friday and built "a little Zulu room"[476] for themselves while erecting a larger house, piece by piece, until Bertha and Harry had built themselves the house that Cedric photographed them in. The two had lived in it for thirty-nine years. They never had children to share their life with and instead, Bertha and Harry appeared to share their home with a galaxy of ancestors. Children would have suggested a future of this family, but these framed ancestors evoked its past. Cedric had arranged Bertha and Harry to sit for a portrait in front of their arrangement of family photographs, which included a few portraits of Jesus, who was part of the family. Thus, the pair did not appear alone, but were surrounded by a visual family who may not have been present in the flesh, but who made their presence felt as family photographs.

[475] Genealogical Table of John Dunn wives and his descendants. Courtesy of Killie Campbell Africana Library, University of KwaZulu-Natal (circa 1940).
[476] Candice Jansen interview with Bertha Hartley and Eileen Powell (Stanger, 2017).







By 2002, much had changed in Mangete. Most of the family that Cedric had photographed during the 1980s had either left, died, or their homes no longer existed on the land. He had returned to the few who still remained, and re-photographed familial subjects and spaces, touching on what and who no longer was, but also on how the Dunn family had continued to unfold into a new, younger generation. Luther Schofield marks that generation in the family portrait that Cedric made of him and two generations of Dunn women: his mother, Heather Koster, his grandmother, Hazel Dunn and his aunt, Daphne Dunn. Luther is now a young man, but in his grandmother's house in 2002, he appears as a camera shy little boy loved by this family of women, who all have their eyes on him as he steals a glance at Cedric. In reality, Luther is photographed surrounded by two generations of Dunn in the flesh and three older generations as represented as image and object in this family portrait, which may have been made in 2002, but was imagined back in time as the origin of the Dunn family.

A framed reproduction of Dunn's image hangs on the wall above Hazel's head. It is a version of his image that surfaces in Dunn households after apartheid and the establishment of the Dunn Descendants Association, who provided the Dunn family with the image[477]. John's image drew his descendants into a contemporary relation and a history of family that may have no longer been commemorated in public terms, but was kept present in the privacy of Dunn family homes. After John follows the next generation, his son: Randolph Dunn (1885-1945), marked by the portrait of Nelly Dunn, his wife, that hangs behind Heather. In a different portrait, Cedric centres Nelly's portrait between Daphne and Hazel who poses in a less relaxed manner. It is a less graceful family portrait. The sisters appear almost lifeless,

[477] Candice Jansen interview with John Hunt interview, Mangete 2017**.** Hunt told me this after I saw the same image in his bathroom and asked about it, having seen it before in this family portrait.

standing erect, with their hands behind their backs like figurines, taking on the qualities of the crowd of objects that punctuate the living room.

Daphne and Hazel's stiff postures and the pleats of their skirts echo the frozen gesture and folds of gown on the Virgin Mary miniature placed on a small table of candles, an open bible, and smaller framed pictures. Daphne and Hazel had kept a spirited living room. Its interior life appears patterned with plants, real and artificial, with small and framed things on the wall and on other surfaces. Religious iconography dresses the white walls of the living room that took on the feel of a temple or a place of devotion. Did Hazel and Daphne ask for that portrait? Did they ask to be photographed with the image of their late mother between them? Or had Cedric recalled the portrait he had made of all three of them in that same living room, when Nelly was still alive sixteen years before? Cedric returned to photograph the generations of Dunn family that had unfolded after apartheid and staged them against generations of family history. He was also tracing his own history of Dunn family portraiture.

In 1986, Cedric staged Daphne, Hazel and an elderly, Nelly in that living room, which then appeared more quiet. The walls were more bare. The objects had more room on the surfaces upon which they were displayed. They retained a sacred shine. Yet, not in the light of religious representation, but in the shine of glass objects, and polished wooden surfaces that caught the light of the open door that Cedric photographed the women in front of. Hazel sits on a Black leather lounge chair and to her left sits Nelly, on a wooden one. Both hold their hands in a humble gesture: Hazel has her elbows on the arm rest and her hands are folded underneath her chest. Nelly has her elbows by her side and her hands are cupped in her lap. Their chairs are arranged in an inward formation and Daphne stands between them, with her left hand behind her back and her right arm reached out towards Nelly, touching her back

rest, disappearing her hand behind Nelly's head. The shape of the family that these women form is an arrangement of closed semi-circle that draws you into their home. Mother and daughters make an elegant form of familial relation, not just in their arrangement, but also in their choice of dress. Dressmaking was a skill that had run in the family, a talent that Hazel was touched by[478].

Everyone was looking at Cedric, except for Daphne. Her soft gaze was directed somewhere else in her mind. Her look helped bring a familial absence into relation that had hung on the wall behind her; almost touching it with the reach of her arm Behind Daphne was the hand-coloured portrait of her father, Nelly's late husband, Randolph, whose framed gaze appears to look upon this domestic scene. The Zulu curio hung by Randolph's side was a fitting familial memorial to a man, who Daphne remembers as never disavowing his Zulu-side and keeping social ties with the neighbouring Zulu community[479]. Randolph's mother's name is recorded as Mtango Dube[480], but the family called her by another name. Family lore would have it that she had fled her marriage from John after she had reported on the infidelity of another wife and was threatened. She had Randolph and a twin sister, along with another child by a Zulu man. He was attached to his mother, and would bring her to stay with their family for extended periods of time. Daphne thought that she had her grandmother's bottom lip and remembers the stories she told about growing up making Daphne and her sisters also believe that they were princesses[481].

[478] Candice Jansen interview with Daphne Dunn (Mangete, 2017).
[479] Ibid.
[480] De Vos, P. J. 1946. *The Dunns of Zululand: confidential report to the Social and Economic Planning Council.* [Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified].
[481] Candice Jansen interview with Daphne Dunn (Mangete, 2017).



6.6 The House that Amy Built

Amy's house had many dimensions. How it appeared would have depended from which angle you were looking. Not all of it could be seen at once. Looking in one direction, would mean not seeing another. Amy's house could seem narrow and cramped, but it also could appear long and open. She designed it herself, although the circumstances under which she came to live there were out of her control. The house in which Amy lived when Cedric photographed her was not the house in which she raised her children. As newlyweds, Amy and her first husband, Willie built themselves a house, not far from Nongoma, to the south of Ceza. There Amy had her first five daughters. She and Willie prospered having owned cattle, donkeys, and horses. Eventually, Amy and Willie settled on some land nearby, where the White Umfolozi and the Invuna River met. Malaria threatened the area, and Amy and Willie had to move away from the river, closer to the top of the mountain and walk the distance to fetch their water. At the age of thirty-four, Willie suffered a sudden death and Amy, according to Zulu custom, married his brother, Dandy, with whom she had three children. By the 1930s, the scourge of Malaria was brought under control and Amy and Dandy moved closer to the river. Dandy then built Amy a house of stone and brick. Amy's son Ronny, remembers it fondly:

> "It had three bedrooms, with a big veranda, a dining room, kitchen … there was the beer room. We weren't allowed there, unless you go to clean, like my mother went there, she was very good at brewing beer, she learnt from our clan when our kraal was here. My father had a plastered rondavel where he worked; he had a tree there that was his workshop, two trees. And there was a bench under the tree [and] that is where he mostly spent his time. I worked with him there, because he repaired ploughs. We had a kind of plantation and a garden for my mother, mulberry trees, banana trees and orange trees"[482].

[482] Faber, Van Der Merwe, and Faber, Paul. Group Portrait South Africa: Nine Family Histories. 1st ed. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2003 (48).

Dandy died in 1963. He was buried close to his brother in Ceza. Amy again was widowed. There are two accounts of why Amy left this house. The first attributes her new 'coloured' categorisation as a reason for why she had to leave, as the area formed part of the Zulu homeland and 'coloureds' were no longer allowed to live there. The land upon which her house was built had become the new location for tribal grazing ground[483]. Cedric recalls that the local chief had instructed her to move as a land 'owning' woman without a husband was a vulnerable tribal subject[484].

Either way, Amy's house was demolished because what she looked like and who she was, did not conform to either tribe or state definition. Yet, Amy refused to conform. She would not leave Zululand, nor leave for a 'coloured community'. She found higher ground and erected temporary rondavels, and wattle and daub structures further up the mountain. The things of her old house did not match her new one, but Amy seemed happy there with no electricity, or running water, and a pit latrine. Her furniture was still of use. Her cupboards, tables, and chairs; all the cups and plates, vases and tupperwares were reminders of her old house, but also reflected the touch of her family who supported Amy's choice to remain and build the life that she wanted to live. Amy's house was her own creation. Every zinc plate, every bar of wood, every diameter, she claims to have measured and designed herself with the help of family[485].

[483] Ibid.
[484] Candice Jansen, Interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).
[485] Amy interview with unknown interviewer, Tourien, Marcus. B-roll Film Footage (iVuna, circa 1990).





Outside Amy's house was work, but there was also play. She could often keep to herself and Cedric would photograph her appearing apart from the Zulu community in which she lived. Other times, Cedric photographed Amy as being part of them in her tendency to touch her Zulu neighbours. Her beer brewing would bring people together for laughter and games. Amy would not be at the centre of the commotion. She would giggle along, outside of it. Her conversation would have people lean in to listen. Amy would talk with her hands and make her fingers communicate like a face, as hers would be hidden behind the brim of a straw hat. Like the barefoot Zulu women seated on the ground, erect and elegant, Amy too would be perched alongside them. The birds: chickens, roosters, ducks and other fowl; small ones, large ones, dark ones and ones, light coloured and covered in voluminous feathers would waddle and peck around them and the mud huts that surrounded them in the kraal.

Cedric was outside of this community. Amy was not only his way in, but she remained his singular focus, even when she was not the centre of the activity. He ensured that he never exposed Amy outside of what appeared Zulu. Cedric had his camera fixed on her and waited for gestures that would make Amy appear in common with her neighbours. In the display of physical contact she made with them. In the sense of togetherness in their proximity to her. In Amy's embrace of people who did not look like family, but who she cared for as if they were. Sewing for others would be a touching gesture that Amy made. It was in this image of Amy trying on an apron which she had sewed for one woman, in which Cedric's position, outside of this social world is exposed. Amy and the woman look as if in a dance with one another in trying on an apron that Amy had sewed. Amy is bowed, with her arms around the waist of the woman, whose arms are lifted to help her tie the band behind her back.

Amy handles a stack of aprons, maybe housedresses and other pieces of clothing that she had

sewed on her lap. They appeared to have come out of a shallow suitcase, laid open at her feet. The name, 'G Louw' is finely handwritten in large print on the inside of the suitcase. The 'G' must have stood for "Granny Louw", which her family called her or maybe it was a suitcase that had once belonged to a member of the Louw family into which Amy married. It could have been a school child's suitcase, since Amy went to school with many Louws, which is where she met Willie. Willie's father was Piet Louw, a Dutch trader who according to family lore, which Trevor Martin Louw, who everyone knew as 'Tiny' retells, was a friend of King Dinizulu. Piet and the king became friends, after almost being enemies.

It was a time remembered as dangerous for white traders and their 'coloured children' who were apparently being sought out and killed. Piet's brothers were killed and Piet had defended himself against Dinizulu's indunas and killed five of them himself. The King is said to have gained a respect for Piet, who was invited to his kraal and the two developed a lasting friendship as "blood brothers"[486]. Piet had five Zulu wives and thirty-six children. He married two sets of sisters from the 'Sokhulu's' and the 'Nhlanga's'. He also married a 'Shwabhete'. Piet had built a school for all his children and many other 'coloured children,' like Amy had gone there to be educated. "Most of the Louws retained [a connection to their Zulu-side and had], remained in that region, fairly integrated", recalled Cedric about what he remembers of his Louw family. Trevor Louw would agree, having boasted that he was a skilled stick fighter and "could take on any Zulu boy"[487].

[486] 'Tiny' Louw interviewed by Elsabe Brits. Tourien, Marcus. B-roll Footage (iVuna, 1990).
[487] Ibid.





MA Khumalo and Amy were beloved friends. She loved Amy and Amy loved her. They enjoyed one another's company. How did they become friends? What did Amy say about her to him? Did he even ask? What kinds of things would they talk about? At what times of the day would they visit? Did they do kind things for one another? About which matters did they disagree? Amy was much older than her friend. Did MaKhumalo come to her for advice? Or did they often borrow items from one another, like thread, bird seed or maize? Who was MaKhumalo? Did she have children? Where was she born? How did she feel about Amy after all these years of being neighbours? All that remains of their relationship are Cedric's photographs that deploys a surface reading of their relation; of Amy as coloured and MaKhumalo as Zulu. Being around each other may have appeared like a pleasure, but together, inside of a house, Amy and MaKhumalo also appeared like apartheid.

Did Cedric photograph the two of them together in each of their houses because he had noticed not how Amy and MaKhumalo were close, but also how they were apart? Was he looking at their intimacy and exposing it with an apartheid gaze? In MaKhumalo's living room, Cedric revealed one look at the social distance between her and Amy. At first glance, it appears like an ordinary physical distance. Amy sits on the coach, pushed against the wall, underneath a closed window, with the curtain drawn aside. She has her hands cupped over her knee and has her body half turned upward, towards MaKhumalo who leans over the closed bottom half of the ajar front door. She too is half turned to Amy and balances her elbow on the edge of the door. Her dark hand is flattened in gesticulation. Inside the house it is dark and Cedric exposed for the pair who are backlit by the light of the door and the window, which overexposes the revelation that MaKhumalo would never sit on furniture with Amy in the room.

But how would this apartheid be felt because even if it is seen, it would not be known unless told. What looks like an ordinary conversation between two women inside a house, appears like an apartheid relation of race, between a coloured and a "'bantu"' woman. Or Maybe MaKhumalo felt more comfortable at the door. That way, she could see outside and watch for whatever she needed to see, while talking to Amy seated inside her living room. Maybe she was not comfortable with Cedric's presence. With him around, she knew that she would be photographed. Perhaps MaKhumalo was a little camera shy, especially inside her own home. What were they talking about? Amy appears to be listening with intent, either surprised by, or calculating of what she hears. MaKhumalo appears to be describing a fact; perhaps telling Amy something that she had not given much thought to before. Cedric appears not to have listened to what was being communicated between the two of them, but instead to have watched for what was being shown.

More than ten years later, Cedric saw it again. By 1999, Amy had become largely bed-ridden and could no longer really leave her house. For most of the day, she would lie in her bed, propped up behind pillows, against a headboard, under blankets in her nightgown. Around her would be everything she needed. Her bedpan would be under the bed. Her toiletries, medications and tissues would be either on or underneath her bedside table. Her bed was right by the door where everyone would either leave or enter, or stay seated at the door and still be able to visit her and talk. Amy did not face the door but instead her back was to it and she faced into her house or the curtains that could be drawn to give her privacy from the rest of the home or block off the draft, which could blow through the house from end to end. Amy's house had become the space in which she had a private life, but also a life with her outside community. Her relations with them endured. MaKhumalo still visited regularly.

During one visit, Cedric again exposed the unspoken recognition of difference between Amy and MaKhumalo and because of Amy's bed-ridden reality, took on an even greater apartheid charge. It was not that Amy was on the bed and MaKhumalo was knelt on the floor. Nor was it the symbolism of what they were touching in their speech and the visual planes against which their hands appeared: Amy's right hand hidden behind her head, holding the headboard and lifted above MaKhumalo, whose left hand was flat against the floor and whose right hand was palm-faced up and slipped into a pair of sandals under the bed. Cedric exposed them as opposing reflections of one another. Amy: frail, light-skinned and faced in the shadow. MaKhumalo, hearty, dark-skinned and faced into the light. Yet, it was not the visual relation of their bodies that charged the apartheid. It was the empty chair faced into their conversation that begged the question. It was almost ten years after apartheid. Why would MaKhumalo not sit on it? Was her choice to sit on the floor, a show of 'european' superiority? Or was it a display of Zulu respect? Was it what Amy wanted?



6.7 Death of a Zulu Mother

In three years, Amy would be dead. She would have been alive for a hundred and three years. Near her end, Amy would have been fetched from iVuna and brought to Mangete to Lily's house for her to die in the presence of family. Would Amy have known, as the hill of her home became a distance when leaving, that it would be the last time she would ever see iVuna again? Would her neighbours have said farewell and felt the end in her departure as the last time they would ever see Amy alive? Where would Cedric have been when she passed? Who would have given the eulogy at her funeral? Amy would be buried in the graveyard of the Anglican Church of Nongoma, close to her sons. Would Amy's family have let her neighbours know? Would they have attended her funeral? Would MaKhumalo have known of her death? In three years, Amy would never again return to her house, which would not stand for much longer in her absence and vanish into what was to come. In three years, Amy would be no more and along with her, would go Cedric's tie to his memories of all that could have been. In three years, Amy would be dead. This portrait feels like her and Cedric's last goodbye.

It appeared like a portrait that he had been looking to make from the start of his journey photographing Amy. It was almost as if this time, he had the courage to come close, as close to Amy as he had ever been. Cedric had been close before, but never like this. Amy sits on the floor and Cedric is at eye level. She sits on the floor because she is tired of lying down. Beside her bedside table, against her bed, Amy sits with her knees bent into her chest and appears shrunken inside her pale nightgown, which is pulled over her folded knees like a skin. Her frail body looking more bone than muscle. Amy is not simply posing for the camera. Cedric is really looking at her nearing the end of her will to live, while appearing

beyond her imminent death. Cedric's gaze exposes the closeness between them, exposed to one another and all that had passed between them over the years as collaborators. In his last look at Amy, Cedric immortalises her who is both the resistant racial subject of his political view and the great Zulu mother of his familial affiliation. Amy's portrait had brought Cedric into being as a visual activist and a Black grandson. She did not just give him her image. She also gave him her gaze.

Before, Amy often would not look Cedric in the eye. She could be looking elsewhere, at the task at hand, or at others, but rarely is her gaze at him made visible without the frames of glasses worn for seeing better or to shield her eyes against the sun. In this portrait she did it again, but this time with her hands. Her right hand is cupped to her face. Her hand and parted fingers shields her face from the light that falls across the room from the open door. The light casts a halo on her, the room, and its objects. The lightness of her fine hair catches its shine and circles her head like a crown. Amy's pictured gesture conceals, but also draws Cedric in close and appears to let him in on a secret. She looks as if to stare, not blankly, but in different ways. Her small, beady eyes look ahead, while also looking askance. Amy had an ocular condition since she was child[488], which also gave her double vision. Not always seeing one image, but she could see two images side by side, or one on top of the other. Amy is looking at the camera, but she is also seeing beyond it, at Cedric, who is also looking at her. Amy is both seen, and the subject seeing, just as Cedric is being seen, as much as he is the photographer seeing[489].

[488] Tourien, Marcus, B-roll film footage (circa 1990).
[489] This is turn on Hirsch's familial looks because I think she is talking about family looking at family pics. But what is this? We are not family looking at this familial look/ exchange? What's then happening to the family photograph when it is not about family but race?



It takes some time to realize that you are looking at a grave. The eye could first fall on the tree in the centre of frame that looks almost human, like a bent woman in silhouette, whose reach into the heavens had rooted her legs into the ground and made her arms branch up into a constellation of leaves. The sensual shape of this sapling appears as if it were a woman who had become a tree. Not a tree whose curved trunk resembled the woman caught in mid-stride, walking off in the distance. The natural and human worlds in this landscape seemed to play make believe. This grave asks of us to become quiet; to see and realize that most of the frame was in fact taken up by it. Yet, it can easily be overlooked as a place marked by large stones made into the shape of a bed. A death rests amongst the living. The passing woman, nearing what looks like a house and the settlement perched on the hill in the distance beyond the horizon, suggest this grave as part of community. Yet, it looks as if this grave has been forgotten, untouched for some time by those who remembered the life buried there. Instead, the land reclaimed it with its wild flowers, weeds, grasses, and insect life that has risen up from this death bed to bury the cross planted at its head. This is the overgrown grave of Amy's father.

Arthur Nicholson was buried in Bangonomo, near Nongoma in 1933. He had lived most of his life in Zululand, estranged from his family in England, who only ever heard from him once to let them know that he had arrived in Zululand in 1879. He was twenty-five years old and had left a "splendid chance"[490] as a clerk in the Bank of England, "but somehow he got sick of it and threw it up and went on the chance to South Africa". His family did not know if he was dead or alive. They had presumed him dead in the war after Arthur never responded

[490] Bryson, Maureen Smith, and Kerry William Bate. 1997. "The William Nicholson Family – Charles Nicholson" in *The lives and letters of the Sylvesters and Nicholsons*. Las Vegas, Nevada: M.S. Bryson (584).

to their letters. His brother Vernon wrote, “I am afraid he was one of those pioneers who go out to lay down the tracks for the luckier ones who follow”[491].

Arthur was less of an exception and more one of numerous 'european' men who had made a life for themselves in Zululand, a social practice recorded since the time of King Shaka. He had worked as a bookkeeper for a trading store in Bangonomo and his union with Amy's mother also appeared typical for the times. His marriage to her was not the reason for him never corresponding with his family in England, although a granddaughter had speculated , “I think he was too ashamed to tell then that he had married a Black lady”[492]. While Arthur’s family may not have approved of him marrying a Black woman, Arthur married Amy’s mother more than twenty years after he had come to South Africa[493]. It is not known whether he had been in Zululand from the start of his arrival or even whether Arthur had married other women, or fathered additional children. His marriage to Amy’s mother is his only recorded union. She was his servant. He was her master. Arthur would have been around the age of forty-five. She would have been about fourteen years old[494].

Amy’s mother is called by more than one name. Elina[495], Ellen or Eleanor Mabaso[496]. Her African name was Velepi. She was not a Zulu, but rather was a Swazi woman who may have

[491] Ibid.
[492] Bryson, Maureen Smith, and Kerry William Bate. 1997. “The William Nicholson Family – Charles Nicholson” in *The lives and letters of the Sylvesters and Nicholsons*. Las Vegas, Nevada: M.S. Bryson. Pg. 586
[493] Ibid.
[494] Ibid.
[495] Faber, Van Der Merwe, and Faber, Paul. Group Portrait South Africa: Nine Family Histories. 1st ed. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2003 (46).
[496] Bryson, Maureen Smith, and Kerry William Bate. 1997. “The William Nicholson Family – Charles Nicholson” in *The lives and letters of the Sylvesters and Nicholsons*. Las Vegas, Nevada: M.S. Bryson (598).

been born in Zululand[497]. When Velepi became pregnant, she was "shunned and thrown out by the entire Velepi [Mabaso] family and Arthur took her to the Anglican Church where they were married"[498]. While the two were married in the church, Arthur did pay lobola and "had to compensate [Velepi's family] for making her pregnant"[499]. She bore fifteen children. Seven died in infancy and one of her sons is said to have been struck by lightning[500]. Amy was Arthur and Velepi's second child and their oldest daughter. Velepi died around the same age as Arthur, more than thirty years later in Eshowe, where she is buried at the Anglican Church graveyard. Cedric never photographed Velepi's grave but remembers being present at her funeral as a child. Her headstone reads, "In Loving Memory of a Beloved Mother, Eleanor Nicholson, Passed Away 22nd Sept. 1964"[501].

[497] Ibid (586).
[498] Ibid
[499] Ibid.
[500] Ibid (584).
[501] Bryson, Maureen Smith, and Kerry William Bate. 1997. "The William Nicholson Family – Charles Nicholson" in *The lives and letters of the Sylvesters and Nicholsons*. Las Vegas, Nevada: M.S. Bryson (584).



Every day, Amy would see a wall of family photographs from her bed. When she awoke in the morning, Amy could open her eyes, see her family and tell the time by the heart shaped clock on the wall. She could look across the generations that she had started and when she closed her eyes for sleep at night, she could imagine them thinking of her. Even though Amy had the tendency to fashion her life, creating a wall of personal mementoes was not her idea. She did not ask for the display. It was a family effort that would grow with each visit to Amy's house when the feeling arose to hang a keepsake on the wall[502]. Its textured surface appeared smoothed by hand that found kinship in the touch of hands felt in the patterned fabrics, folded and gathered around it. The wall did not have neat edges. They were visible and frayed like fabric.

As years went by, the wall became a touching arrangement and Amy's life was cast in multiple frames. Yet, not all frames were photographs of grandchildren or photographs from memorable occasions that could also be slipped into the frames of other photographs. A certificate that recognised Amy's hundredth birthday from the Department of Social Development hung in relief. At the very top of the arrangement it almost teetered forward and because of its angle, cast the heaviest shadow. Religious iconography and graphic souvenirs of loving words were interspersed among the frames. Two round hats and reed mats that Amy weaved also have their place. Amy's family appeared to have a sentimental life in photographs, which they shared with her so that when family was not physically present, their photographs could stand in for their absence. Cedric was responsible for one frame. It was the oldest photograph on the wall. Professionally mounted and hung in the right hand corner was one of the photographs made of Amy and Willie on their wedding day.

[502] Candice Jansen, Interview with Cedric Nunn. Durban, South Africa, (Aug, 2016).

Why did Cedric make a photographic study of Amy's house? He photographed both the inside and the outside of her home. He paid attention to the objects that gave it the look and utility of life. He looked closely at the walls. These interior images of Amy's home appear as if Cedric had known that this may be the last time he would ever get the chance to objectify Amy's life. It appeared as if Cedric felt the time coming and with it the sense of urgency to document Amy and create an inventory of the architecture of her life. Amy was still alive, but not moving much and thus confined to the bed. Perhaps it was not easy to see her that way and to look at objects and spaces was a visual relief from the sight of her. It had become no longer about immortalising her, but about archiving her life through transforming her house into a mausoleum.

Cedric's portrait of Amy's wall evokes a sense of mourning. There was then so much that would soon would no longer be. He was mourning Amy's imminent death in photographic terms; mourning the death of his photographic collaborator; mourning the death of a subject that he would need to move on from. Yet, what or who was the subject of death in his image? Was Amy? Was it the subject of his family that Cedric had figured in his photography? Amy's death would be for him more than a death of a family member, it would also be a creative loss. Yet, there appears more to mourn. The excess of which could only be felt as an absence or an imprint in the wake of Amy's death. The empty bed above which the family wall was arranged evoked this loss that was beyond memorialisation because it was un-visualised, it could not be seen, nor could it be framed or displayed. It could only be felt in the imprint left by the weight of a body that once was there and that now, will always remain an absent body that would not rest, but that instead would only leave an impression.

"Blackness on my Mind"

[Ezekiel Mphahlele][503]

[503] Mphahlele, Es'kia. The African Image. New and Rev. Ed.]. ed. London: Faber, 1974.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1. On the Photo-Biographical



There I am at the gates of Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town. Maybe sometime in March 1990. My father is somewhere in the middle of that gathering. He had been suspended from his position as a prison warden, about six months before, for being one of the founding members of the first trade union in South Africa's security services: the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU). That day about seventy warders had thrown themselves behind POPCRU's founding demands for 'Justice for All' and my father was called on to negotiate with Pollsmoor's senior management. Why was I there? I cannot say for certain. I was not yet in school. But there I am, thigh-high with history, just a month before my fifth birthday when I would ask for 'n AK-47 om die Boere te skiet'[504].

[504] "An AK-47 to shoot white people"

I do not remember saying this; but I have been told this story all my life. I see it as me coming to political consciousness; knowing myself as Black. I have been passing for 'coloured' ever since. Growing up in our household, 'coloureds' were other people. The term was used perjoratively for those who were proud to be an apartheid fiction, to be better than "Africans", or to not vote for the ANC. Of course, as I entered schooling, knowing myself as Black did not make sense. I grew up in a 'coloured' group area, had 'coloured' family, I went to a 'coloured' primary school before admission into a 'model C' school in which there were only three "Africans" in my cohort and one 'coloured' teacher. Whites were still in the majority. I was a prickly teenager, who would rebel against my teachers. In Grade 11, I got into more serious trouble and my parents had to see the principal because I was acting out in Geography class. I refused to submit to my teacher's authority. How could I listen to a man who called me stupid because I had included 'apartheid' as a factor that influenced town planning? It was not an answer provided in our textbooks. Maybe that was what he meant. In high school, being obedient, having the right hair texture, skin tone, being from the middle class pockets of 'coloured areas', and speaking English got you ahead. You could pass for 'prefect material' and be part of the cool kids, who also had white friends. I learnt that it did not matter that I thought I was Black. The world saw me as 'coloured'.

Even though I was accepted into the University of Cape Town, I wanted to attend "Rhodes University " and become a journalist. I had read a lot of journalism. Our household was not filled with many books, it always was filled with newspapers. My father used to buy at least two newspapers everyday and on Sunday, both the Afrikaans and English weeklies. "Rhodes" was known in part because of its journalism department, where in my second year, I ended up specialising in Photography. It was a happy accident, a wild idea since I knew nothing about cameras. I used to cut out photographs that spoke to me from newspapers and

make things with them like CD covers. I remember the Sunday Times Lifestyle section once had written something about David Lurie's photographs of Manenberg, and those images left a difficult impression on me. I wrote my final essay on Paul Weinberg's *In Search of the San* (1997). I remember finding the book on our University library shelf, after I went looking through photography books to find a subject to write about. Weinberg's book again impressed upon me a certain difficulty with representation in photography that helped clarify my photographic attention. I saw that it was as much about the people in the images as it was about me. I was not simply seeing subjects photographed. I had found myself identifying *with* them.

During this time at University, I also discovered the form of the political biography. I was also a Political Studies major and for one class, we were required to write a short biography. I decided to write about my father at the height of his career. He withdrew from standing for a second term as POPCRU's national president, more concerned about prison reform and decided to take the appointment of Head of the Maximum Security Prison at Pollsmoor. 'Maximum' as it was known before being renamed, Admission Centre, remains one of the most notorious prisons in the Western Cape, the province with the highest number of prisons in the country. All prisoners must come through this facility before they are sentenced and dispersed to smaller correctional centres accordingly. There were no human rights at 'Maximum' during apartheid. Wardens and prisoners were at war with one another. Running that prison seemed an impossible task, but my father took up the challenge and made reforms at Maximum that was unprecedented. The writer, Jonny Steinberg, was one of the civil society agents that my father brought into Maximum for the purposes of documenting reform. Steinberg has documented some of this transformation for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and in his award-winning book, *The Number* (2004).

But this four year period of change that could have spread throughout South Africa's prisons came to an abrupt end. My father suffered his own political betrayal. False allegations that he was involved with corruption surfaced, which set off a series of events in which he was suspended without a salary and medical benefits. Our family was evicted from our home in Pollsmoor, and my father eventually was dismissed. There was nowhere for him to turn. The trade union he started looked away. His comrades abandoned him. He spoke out. It was 1989 all over again in 2002, when leveling critique against the state was not in vogue. These hard brushstrokes paint a very long and painful family story that is also in part a story about the failure of South Africa to become something new.

Coloured Black comes out of this need to speak about that which cannot be spoken of and to dwell in the quiet of the Black intermural. It is about the life worlds of Cedric Nunn and Ernest Kole, but it is also about me. But I am not all that compelling as a biographical subject. Instead, I turned the story of my family into an archival logic through which to ask questions of the visual activism of Ernest and Cedric. *Coloured Black thus* brings photographers into critical concern along side photography. Black photographers are as significant as Black subjects in photography and within photographic discourse in South Africa, historic Black photographers are rarely voices of authority or sites of inquiry. Yet, their photographs proliferate in scholarly works and museums. What does a photographic life bring to bear upon a photographic work? Biographies of photographers are often mere context for image histories.

Coloured Black attempts to deepen such a notion as 'photographic practice' to think beyond race as representation and look outside of the image for photographic meaning. Santu

Mofokeng writes of producing "metaphorical biography" with his serialised look at Soweto, which was what Ernest did twenty-years before in *House of Bondage* and what *Blood Relatives* and *Madlhawu* also performed. What differs between Cedric and Ernest's metaphor is the sense of time in which the self is located. *House of Bondage* writes Ernest into a present that needed to be history and Cedric's family photographs writes him into a history that cannot be present. The racialised self, the past, and the present are all political constructs that complicate the ontology of photography as an event. Being classified as 'coloured' and self-identifying as Black is as much a photographic practice as it is a politics of vision. *Coloured Black* therefore thinks with Ernest and Cedric as visual intellectuals rather than just about the visions that they produced.

Cedric and Ernest worked both biographically and geneolgically. They produced complex geneological visions: Ernest on Black life during apartheid, and Cedric about 'coloured family' over the transition period. 'Coloured' classification ruptures biographically and geneolgically and Ernest and Cedric managed to deploy this rupture as political practice and photographic exposure. Along the way, they also figure untraceable biographies and geneologies in their photographs manifested through the captive maternals who help Ernest and Cedric stage the exposure of apartheid.'Nested' would best describe the kinds of enfoldment and impossibilities that Cedric and Ernest pose in their photography. *Coloured Black* conjures these "textures of memory"[505] as life worlds through a narrational tactic that evoke feeling as well as analysis surfaces. Cedric and Ernest pose difficulties for the photographic archive that does not personify crisis. They rather materialise Blackness as an archival predicament that I wished to stage through the photographic form of the contact sheet and the family photograph. The Dunn family history for instance, is one of those

[505] Abel, E. (2010). *Signs of the times: The visual politics of Jim Crow*. (5)

archives that surface the photographic forms for which a language to begin its consideration does not yet exist.

Two discursive and material archives are suggested by *Coloured Black*. The first is what can be insufficiently termed, 'a coloured archive'. What is included and excluded in and out of such an archive is an unavoidable difficulty. Perhaps the word, 'archive or even 'coloured' is not appropriate. Never-the-less, this category of life in South Africa needs more critical attention. The category is as old the Union. Such a thing as 'the coloured vote' still exists in the electoral lexicon. With the recent 'colouredisation' of Khoesan peoples, along with the upsurge of 'coloured cultural production' as neither white nor Black in the last five years, coloured would appear to need a more critical vocabulary for its enforced future, lest it remains a blunt instrument of power.

Two anecdotes. The day after my first presentation on Cedric's work at WiSER, I ran into two faculty members at the copier machine. One had attended my presentation, and explained to the other, who had not, what the photographs in my presentation were of. Their well-intentioned description of Amy, left a sunken feeling in my gut. "A peasant woman, but *so light-skinned"* they described. I didn't say anything. What was there to say? Amy could never be read as Black, even if she was seen to live, not as 'a coloured'. My sunken horror at my colleague's description was not at what was said about Amy, but the sensuality with which it was said. The second anecdote: someone has asked a question to African-American poet, Claudia Rankine, who was on a panel with South African scholars and writers about decolonizing literature in 2017. Rankine's discourse on slavery and hybridity had struck a chord with the person who appeared to question its relevance to a 'Black African' South

African experience, by asking, 'so what do you mean, we all become 'coloured''? After the person asked the question, the room did not gasp, protest, or stay silent; it erupted in laughter.

These anecdotes stage the crucial insight that Frank Wilderson III makes about 'the coloured', a figure he brings up when asked about Afropessimism's relevance to the South African context. He notes that the '"bantu"' and the 'coloured' within the anti-Black psyche presents the difference between the negrophobic and the necrophilic object. The necrophilic object or 'the coloured' is "someone to possess with passion as opposed to [the '"bantu"' who is a object] to be afraid of and repel with violence"[506]. He argues that [t]he same dynamic is still there, the so-called colored or bi-racial person in the United States is as fungible as the very dark skinned person, they're just put to different uses"[507]. Wilderson echoes Jakes Gerwel[508] who points out that difference in threat between "die swartman" and "die kleurling"[509] in "Afrikanerwêreldbeskouing"[510] as the difference between an "onbetwiste fisies-militêre antagonis"[511] and a more symbolic, deeper threat, which to Gerwel explained the ambiguity with which 'coloured' characters appeared. He attributed this to Afrikaner society as being a society "trapped by its secret history" and that being history haunted by "bloedvermenging"[512]. How is an "African" intermural similarity haunted by mixture, the un-pure, by cultural appropriation, and the inauthentic? Perhaps because these questions are unthinkable, and laughter became the only release for its unthinkability.

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[506] Afro-pessimism and Friendship: An Interview with Frank B. Wilderson III' in Walsh, Shannon, and Jon Soske. Ties That Bind : Race and the Politics of Friendship in South Africa. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016 (85)
[507] Ibid (86).

[508] Translation: Literature and Apartheid: Representation of 'coloureds' in the Afrikaans novel up until 1948.
[509] Translation: "the black man" and "the coloured"
[510] Translation: Afrikaner world view
[511] An unequivocal physical military threat
[512] bloodmixture

How does ‘coloured’ figure itself into a future of a planetary Blackness? South African scholarship on ‘coloured identity’ is not asking this question. ‘Coloured’ is not written as Black. ‘Coloured’ is ‘mixed’. ‘Coloured’ is a Black African impossibility, but a future for “a transnational whiteness”[513] to stake its African claim. Categorical ground needs clearing in these muddy times of an anti-black world, where ‘colouredness’ is appropriated by racial capitalism as both a repetition and a critique of racial purity that keeps the 'european' superior and the '"bantu"', primitive. *Coloured Black* thus makes a Black critique of ‘coloured identity’, while using the difficulties of ‘coloured’ to offer alternative ways of constructing photographic meaning. ‘Coloured’ is therefore realized as a method, not cultural experience.

The second archive critically suggested by *Coloured Black* in need of reimagination is visual and one that can be called ‘anti-apartheid’. While finishing my dissertation, I discovered in the Stevenson Gallery’s 2019 Art Basel catalogue that the artist, Paulo Nazareth had appropriated one of Cedric’s images without Cedric’s knowledge or any credit given to him. The mixed media piece (pencil, crayon masking tape and rice paper), entitled, ‘IMAGES THAT ARE ALREADY IN WORLD [TRADITIONAL AFRICAN FUNERAL/ SOUTH AFRICA] is another incident in the ongoing debate of the use of photographs in art practice recently stirred by the artist Hank Willis Thomas’ use of iconic apartheid era imagery without the permission of the living photographers. I had considered weighing in on the debate to point to an intermural dynamic of how apartheid imagery is being used within South Africa to complicate the debate’s concern with international art markets. A few months before, I had spent time photographing the photographic exhibitions at Museum Africa, an important

[513] Williams, Quentin E., and Christopher Stroud. "Battling the Race: Stylizing Language and Coproducing Whiteness and colouredness in a Freestyle Rap Performance." 24, no. 3 (2014): 277.

institution for African photography that is in a state of grave concern. While doing my own cataloguing of what was presented, I came across five framed Ernest Cole photographs that were hung on a wall, without a label. Was this not an equal gesture of erasure staged on home ground? This archive of apartheid images that *Coloured Black* suggest elicits meanings that are far too overdetermined by Black and racialized bodies as mere signs, where things can be seen, believed or known, but not really ever looked at.

Coloured Black seeks to surface this difficulty which is not a direct vision of the white gaze, but also a legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle and its use of photography. Historians Ciraj Rassool, Leslie Witz, and Gary Minckley in *Unsettled History: Making South African Public Pasts* (2017) has a chapter on how the photographs of Leon Levenson became part of the political practice of anti-apartheid struggle, despite Levenson's images of Black life being part of an precursory history of 'native studies'. The political reframing of his oeuvre raises complicated questions about how and why photographs fall in and out of use across political time; about the vulnerability of the image as history, evidence and illustration, as well as the limits of photographic truth. The political practice of forgoing individual identity for the struggle and operating as 'cultural workers' uniquely affects the photographer post-apartheid. Unlike the poet or the musician, the photographer is not needed to perform her photographic work once an image was made and put to political or social use. This is why archives like the Bailey's African History Archive or the Mayibuye Archive are hamstrung by politics of attribution. It is why you can visit any South African museum today and be confronted with images attributed to institutional collections, not individual photographers.

Coloured Black contends that the familial is one mode of reading that could offer another way through which to apprehend the power of documentary images associated with

resistance, struggle, and propaganda. Even though the category of 'family' is heteronormative and colonial, it also performs the work of erasure within the context of Dunn family, who really are a clan that cannot be thought of as such. Never-the-less, the familial is about perhaps a contradictory relation or a relation that makes and unmakes the senses and the genre, and if we are lucky, apartheid itself.

Ending *Coloured Black* with a personal exposure that is both an image of resistance and a family photograph therefore makes sense. The familial calls upon hapticity, affect, touch and feeling, which are registers of photographic use that go amiss in the discourse of apartheid and photography that tends to fixate on defiance, spectacle, protest, and racial contrast between black and white. *Coloured Black* shows that politics of blood and bondage begin at home and with 'the coloured'. Domestic workers for instance, surfaced as the visual subjects that personified 'coloured' as medium and rendered the familial in the difficult terms in which whiteness makes a home for 'the coloured'.

Domestic workers become critical figures. They shaped my own experience of Black intermural life in terms of class and race. Both my grandmothers were domestic workers and I grew up with our family having a domestic worker, who I called 'Auntie Anna', a woman from Keimoes in the Northern Cape. Besides my biography and the domestic workers that Ernest photographed, there was the specter of domestic work also in Cedric's explication. His mother, Lily, was a domestic worker as was most of the women family members that he photographed. The domestic worker refused to be silenced in this project. *Coloured Black* therefore takes as a call for the urgency of domestic work, for working on the intermural, not as drawing of borders, but as a colouring within them.

7.2. **BIBLIGRPAHY & List of images**

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