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THE PHOTOGRAPH AND THE TICKET: REPRESENTATIONS OF TRAVEL IN THE WORKS OF DAVID GOLDBLATT, USHA SEEJARIM AND CAROUSCHKA STREIJFFERT

Usha Seejarim

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Fine Arts.

Johannesburg, 2006

ABSTRACT

The major theme of this research investigates artists' representations of journeys; the ritual activity of people's daily journeys along fixed routes, and long distance travel. Through specific projects by David Goldblatt, Usha Seejarim and Carouschka Streijffert, the differences between the experience of actual journeys and the visual codes and conventions used to represent these journeys in artwork is interrogated. In particular, this research is concerned with the presence and absence of the body within these representations of journeys, focussing on how journeys construct otherness. These concerns have been linked to my own practical work. The Putco bus service also appears in all three artists' works. Through qualitative research, this report shows how ordinary subject matter has been used by the three identified artists to produce interesting work.

List of keywords

Journey, photograph, Fietas, Lenasia, KwaNdebele, Putco, ordinariness, Goldblatt, Streijffert, Seejarim

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Fine Art in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Usha Seejarim

_____day of _____, 2006.

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Bengt Asplund was invaluable in translating information that I found in Swedish, specifically since I was unable to make contact with the Swedish artist Carouschka Streijffert, and found little published information available. I would also like to thank Stanley Govenden, the Environmental Health Officer of Region 11, Johannesburg, who very willingly provided me with statistical information on Lenasia not easily accessible elsewhere.

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INTRODUCTION

Travel, specifically daily travel along fixed routes, has long been a preocupation I have explored in my practical artmaking. Previous work included photographs taken from a Putco bus in which I commuted daily between Lenasia and Johannesburg, and a large work using bus tickets I collected from Putco over a period of two years. The discovery of the coincidental occurence of this transport company in the works of David Goldblatt and Carouschka Streijffert prompted further exploration, as did these artists' investigations of the activity of commuting daily. This kind of travel, a considerable aspect of the lives of most urban dwellers, is a result of socio-political agency, and provides a rich area of investigation.

The aim of this reseach is to investigate representations of journey with particular reference to specific projects by David Goldblatt and Carouschka Streijffert and my own work, with the common appearance of Putco buses in the respective works as a linking motif. This research proposes to explore the differences between the experience of actual journeys travelled, and the visual codes and conventions used to represent these journeys in artwork by the three identified artists.

The subject matter of each of the artists' work is the ordinary, the mundane experience of travel. Through the process of unpacking their work, however, this research aims to show how their use of this subject matter is not so ordinary. This is demonstrated through descriptions of the artworks; considerations of representations of journey in relation to their subjects' literal journeys; discussion of the relationship between the artists and their subjects; and explorations of metaphorical ideas of journey as artmaking process. This research is also concerned with the presence and absence of the body within these representations of journeys, and the process by which journeys construct

otherness. These ideas have been linked to an understanding of journey within my own practical work.

Regarding methodology, various types of materials were consulted during the research process including books; newspaper, magazine, and web based articles; the Internet; government documents, a video documentary and interviews.

Especially useful for material covered in the first chapter was Nazir Carrim's (1990) book on Fietas and early Lenasia, *Fietas: A Social history of Pageview: 1948-1988* as it provided key information about Fietas as well as the relocation to Lenasia. A number of newspaper and magazine articles about early Lenasia were found at the Lenasia library. Unfortunately many of the reference details of author, date, page numbers are not recorded. Attempts to find the original texts in which the articles appeared were unsuccessful. The content of the articles was however important to the research and these sources have therefore been retained. Two government documents (2003) the *Environmental Health Reporting Systems* of Region 11, Johannesburg and the *Regional Profile* of Region 11, Johannesburg were especially useful in providing statistical information about Lenasia and its development which was not easily accessible elsewhere. A general text, *Illustrated History of South Africa – The Real Story* provided a reference for South African history and was used to contextualise the material presented in this research.

Specific theories of Marc Augé (1995) from his book *Non-Places, Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* and Marcel de Certeau (1984) in his book *The practice of everyday life* have been referenced throughout the chapters, particularly in Chapters Five and Six.

The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey (1989) formed the basis of my consideration of David Goldblatt's work. The publication includes

reproduced images of his work, essays by the artist, Phillip van Niekerk, Alex Harris and a series of statements based on interviews by Brenda Goldblatt. An important further source was an interview held with David Goldblatt, in August 2002, about his KwaNdebele series in particular as well as generally about his work. A transcript of the interview appears as an appendix in this research. A number of newspaper articles were also referenced regarding Goldblatt's work. G. H. Pirie's article (1992) in the book *Travelling under apartheid* and de Certeau's (1984) chapter titled Railway Navigation and Incarceration in his book *The practice of everyday life* provided the basis for a brief discussion on train travel and incarceration in Chapter Two.

Carouschka Streijffert's work was accessed through her book *Carouschka's Tickets* (1998) and her website. Regrettably all attempts to contact her directly were unsuccessful and I therefore had to rely on the above-mentioned sources and a few web-based Swedish articles that I later got translated. The activity of collecting as a key aspect of Streijffert's artmaking practice is explored briefly in Chapter Three and compared with Walter Benjamin's (1973) text on book collecting titled Unpacking My Library – A talk about book collecting.

Ten sets of subjects were interviewed about their lives for the production of **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** (Fig 4.3:75)*,* one of the video artworks presented for the practical submission, detailed in Chapter Four. Segments of the individual interviews were arranged and edited to create a new narrative in video format, the final product being the artwork **Two Rooms and a Kitchen***.* A transcript of the artwork has been attached at the end of this document as an appendix. All the quotes referenced are from the artwork and not from the original interviews.

The book *travellers' tales, narratives of home and displacement* (Bird *et al.,* 1994) offered a number of critiques on various aspects of travel that were useful in considering theories relating to journey. Especially noteworthy for this research were those referenced in Chapters Five and Six, by Barry Curtis and Claire

Pajaczkowska, Madan Sarup, and Trinh. T Minh-ha. A number of additional commentaries on travel in *Touring Cultures, Transformations of Travel and Theory* (Rojek, C., Urry, J. (eds) :1997) were consulted, specifically chapters by Jokinen and Veijola, and Rojek and Urry.

Language choices often convey specific attitudes and assumptions and the terminology used in this research report therefore requires some explanation. The forced removals and relocation processes that are referenced in the artworks were results of apartheid's segregation policies. Where the word is referred to in the text I have opted to use a small 'a' in line with common practice.

The use of racially classificatory terminology in the research focuses on distinctions drawn between 'Indian' and 'Asian', and 'Black' and 'African'. The word Indian denotes a citizen of India, or an individual whose place of origin is the country India, in the subcontinent of Asia. Many people immigrated to South Africa from Asian countries other than India such as Pakistan and Malaysia. I have therefore preferred the use of the word Asian over Indian, with the exception of direct quotes included, in which the term Indian is retained as it was used.

Since most of the South Africans of Indian and other Asian heritage referred to in the report are of South African nationality, it does not make sense to refer to them as Indian, or Asian, for that matter. But for the purposes of this report, some form of racial classification is required to identify the group referred to. The term Asian is also used in the demographics of the country to refer to South Africans of Asian descent. Again, where cited directly, the term Indian has been kept.

My understanding of the word 'African', is that it denotes a sense of belonging to Africa, be it residentially, nationally or otherwise, and includes people who have emigrated from other continents and who now live on the continent of Africa. It therefore includes people of other races; White, Coloured and Asian. As a result,

I have opted for using the term ‘Black’ rather than African when referring specifically to Black people.

Words from other languages like Afrikaans have been explained briefly in the text. Where longer explanations are required, they feature in the glossary of terms at the end of this research. It has been inserted after the appendices because it includes many words from the appendices.

The inclusion in this research of information from anonymous sources requires comment. In one of the main texts consulted, David Goldblatt’s *The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey*, the subjects interviewed by Brenda Goldblatt elected to remain anonymous for reasons of fear of the authorities. Goldblatt (1989:9) explains in the introduction to his book that to protect those who did speak, their names have not been given and “*identifying circumstances have been changed*”.

Likewise, in a newspaper article by Anne Sacks (1981) interviewees have been described as “*a father of six*”, or “*an estate agent*”, or “*a clerk who works for an insurance agency*”, but are unnamed. A possible reason for anonymity could be fear of reprisal by those who were in favor of the move to Lenasia. Quotes or references to this article and Goldblatt’s interviews necessarily follow the original anonymous format.

David Goldblatt’s daughter Brenda Goldblatt, an accomplished writer, and film and documentary director and producer, contributed the accounts of the interviews with commuters traveling on the KwaNdebele buses in *The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey*. Her name has been referenced in full so as not to confuse her with her father.

Chapter One begins with a consideration of specific communities’ experience of daily travel, namely those of Fietas and Lenasia. Fietas as an area, the forced

removal, and the relocation of the inhabitants to Lenasia, are described. This series of events is briefly embedded in the South African historical context. Chapter One also features a brief section on the naming of places, including a discussion of the importance of origins of places and place names, and the impact of a name on the local inhabitants. The chapter concludes with an account of the daily travel experience necessitated by the move from Fietas to Lenasia.

Chapter Two introduces an exploration of another daily route that resulted from apartheid's plan; that between KwaNdebele and Pretoria, as documented by David Goldblatt in his photographic essay titled *The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey*. Goldblatt has addressed the theme of exposing the impact of apartheid through daily activities of ordinary people in a number of other works including photographs of people in places like Soweto, Transkei and Boksburg and miners and workers in the gold mines of the Witwatersrand. More recently, Goldblatt produced *South Africa, the structure of things then* (1998) documenting architectural buildings in South Africa as ideological structures in the construction of the South African society.

Goldblatt is perhaps one of South Africa's most successful and established artists, having exhibited extensively both locally and internationally, produced a number of books and whose work features in numerous public and private collections. Goldblatt also founded the Market Photography Workshop in Johannesburg, teaching visual literacy and photographic skills to young people, specifically those previously disadvantaged, many of who qualify to work as professional photographers.

Chapter Two establishes a historical context of apartheid, and through the interviews by Brenda Goldblatt and David Goldblatt's images, the prominence and compulsory need for daily commuting and the role of Putco in the lives of their subjects is highlighted. Through the common theme of limited choices and

dependence on the system, a section that compares commuting with incarceration has been included.

Chapter Three discusses Swedish artist Carouschka Streijffert's work relating to journeys. Streijffert is an interior and graphic designer. She has produced backdrops for a number of opera and ballet performances and has had a few exhibitions, but is known mostly for her collection of tickets. Streijffert assembled tickets collected from the 1970s to 1990s in collaged works, which she exhibited and reproduced in a book called ***Carouschka's Tickets***. The book contains reproductions of the tickets and an essay, interspersed with the images, by Peter Kihlgard, who is an established Swedish author. He also wrote the lyrics for the music component of Streijffert's exhibition.

Chapter Three also includes a discussion of the act of collecting through a consideration of Walter Benjamin's text on book collecting. The ordinary activity of daily commuting, presented as mundane, common and involuntary in Chapters One and Two is contrasted in Chapter Three with alternative forms of travel that include long distance travel for pleasure. This type of travel is explored specifically through Streijffert's work and foregrounds the discussion of the difference between the routine of commuting and other kinds of travel that is dealt with in more detail in later chapters. A brief section introduces the concept of actual journey versus its representation through theories by Marc Augé (1995) and Marcel de Certeau (1984).

Chapter Four presents my own practical work. I initially discuss previous work that is relevant to this research before proceeding to the practical work submitted for this degree. Due to the extended time taken to complete this research, which resulted from a number of interruptions and other career opportunities, the process of completion has been organic and unorthodox and the body of work presented was therefore extensive. The practical work had to be submitted twice, in 2002 and 2004. The previous works made in 1999 are included in this report

as they form the backbone of this research due to their use of Putco bus service. They are described in this chapter.

The first practical submission in 2002 comprised two video installations and a physical journey travelled by the assessors. One of the videos, **Eight to Four**, comments on the mundaneness of daily commuting. This theme is extensively explored in this research paper, particularly with regards to the work of Goldblatt and myself. The second video **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** presents edited interviews with inhabitants of Lenasia and includes their descriptions of Fietas, early Lenasia, apartheid, immigration, exile and daily commuting. These are major themes in this research report. Quotes from this work and from the interview conducted with David Goldblatt have been used throughout the document and transcripts of them have been attached as appendices.

The second submission for practical assessment was presented two years later as a solo exhibition. **in place** explored domesticity as subject matter and also took the experience of journey further, from that of daily travel to the domain of long distance travel, particularly its relationship to a state of being at home. Detailed descriptions of each work are included as well as illustrations of the practical submissions.

Chapter Five explores the journey and its representation through the identified artists' works: those of Goldblatt, Streijffert and myself. A brief discussion on the construction of otherness is presented through the relationship between the artists and their respective travelling subjects. The idea of home and daily travel is depicted as ordinary and involuntary with its counterpart, travel for pleasure, as one in which freedom, adventure and choice are exercised. Goldblatt's work is highlighted as an example of the use of the ordinary to communicate the underbelly of apartheid's workings. The idea of home is also presented as a place not always associated with comfort and security. Other forms of involuntary travel are introduced in this chapter, for example travel due to exile and

immigration. The construction of one's identity is defined through the place where one comes from and home and travel are further explored in terms of feminine and masculine constructs.

Chapter Six focuses on understanding a theoretical approach to the presence and absence of body in the representation of journey through definitions of place, non-place and space by Augé and de Certeau. Imperative to their classification of non-places are not only the presence of the body but their interaction with place. One of the means of interaction is through the mediation of text. This is explored through a discussion on the specific use of titles and text in works by each of the three artists. Notions of time in the context of daily and long distance travel are mentioned and related again to all three artists' work.

The conclusion summarises the discussions presented in the chapters and concludes that the seemingly ordinary investigations by the identified artists, through the representation of journey in their work, are of significant interest and relevance.

CHAPTER 1

Fietas

In this chapter I explore the history of a specific community, Fietas, that was relocated as a result of apartheid's Group Areas Act. I briefly situate this in an historical context before considering Lenasia, the place to which some of the Fietas inhabitants were relocated. A short consideration of place names follows after which I address the phenomenon of daily travel. The relationship of this material to my practical body of work is discussed in Chapter Four.

There are conflicting accounts of the founding date of what became known as Fietas. Nazir Carrim (1990) in his comprehensive account of the history of the area states that from 1893, the areas in Johannesburg of Pageview, and adjacent Vrededorp, had been home to Asian, Coloured, Black and a few Chinese and White residents. A newspaper article by Michael Schmidt, (2003) however, states that Fietas was founded three years later in 1896. According to Carrim (ibid), the Kruger Government of the South African Republic in 1893 established separate areas within and surrounding Pageview that were known as "Coolie Location", "Kaffir Location", and "Malay Location", occupied by Asian, Black, and Coloured people respectively. From 1903, Asians increasingly became stand holders and by 1934 Pageview, although racially mixed, had a distinctly Asian character. This was identifiable through the mosques, temples and churches in the area, and more specifically, through the vibrant character of Fourteenth Street, 'the shopper's mecca', where most of the businesses were owned by Asians. Fourteenth Street had a dynamic, lively, atmosphere; the well-stocked shops spilled out into the street creating a long narrow passage of goods at good prices, attracting customers of all races and classes from all over Johannesburg. International tourists too came to shop in Fourteenth Street, where one could get almost anything and everything.

Used affectionately by its residents, the origin of the name 'Fietas' is unclear. Lucille Davie (2002:1) in her article *There's life yet behind the scars of Fietas*, identifies it as "*a name whose origins no one can recall*". Situated on the western side of Johannesburg between the Braamfontein and Brixton cemeteries, Fietas was comprised of the small suburb Pageview, which consisted of twenty-four streets, and part of Vrededorp. Carrim (1990:20) describes the area thus;

> "*Until 1962, there were 177 shops in the area. There were two mosques, four churches, two cinemas, four Islamic schools, one Hindu school, one Tamil school / temple / hall, one "Indian" Girls school, one "Coloured" Junior school, one "Coloured" college, one "Indian" Junior school, a communal hall and social clubs in the area*".

At that stage, the population was approximately 8 500 – 10 000, including Asian, Malay, Coloured, Chinese, Black and White residents.

The streets of Fietas were formed by a number of stands or plots next to each other. Every stand had four cottages, consisting of two rooms and a kitchen each and each cottage had an average of six to ten residents. Occupants of all four cottages on every stand shared a communal toilet and bathroom. Coal stoves were used and no electricity was provided. The crowded living conditions contributed towards a socially and literally close-knit community, with a very strong sense of unity, solidarity and belonging. Carrim (ibid:26) describes them as one big family in their comfort with each other and their ability to move into each other's homes and share their toilets and bathrooms. He states further "*despite the appalling conditions that they were subjected to, the togetherness that was 'forced' onto them through such conditions, managed to let them thoroughly enjoy their lives and be fiercely patriotic and proud of their area*".

Characterised by non-racialism, Fietas along with Sophiatown and Alexandra were amongst the only places in Johannesburg where a non-white person or family could legally reside. Fietas was identified by a strong sense of communal

sharing, belonging and togetherness, which did not however exclude an awareness of race. For example, in an interview conducted for **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**, Mr Parshotam (Fig 4.3.1:75) mentions that he did not really have friends of other races as he "kept to the Indians" and Carrim (ibid:38) states there were no inter-racial marriages. He further describes how cricket was very popular in Fietas and everybody got involved, but that the Black people rarely played. The Fietas cricket teams included a Malay team, a Hindu team and a Muslim team; indicating that the differences between residents of the area were maintained in the sporting bodies.

The soccer teams however were racially mixed. It is interesting to speculate why this should be so. Perhaps this has to do with the origins of cricket being in England, and its introduction to British colonies such as Australia, Zimbabwe, West Indies, South Africa, Pakistan and India, who ironically are among the leading teams in international cricket now. In South Africa, cricket was adopted primarily by the English speaking Whites and was developed through sporting facilities and training at schools, sport clubs etc. Contemporary South African Asians' love for cricket seems to have originated in immigrant Asians' enthusiasm for the sport. Black people have historically been excluded from cricket and the sport was strongly associated with apartheid's segregation policies; however the South African Cricket Board is currently working towards introducing cricket in Black areas in an attempt to make the sport more inclusive. Soccer on the other hand has always been part of the lives of most South African communities. In this respect, Fietas mirrored the rest of South Africa. Despite the lack of sporting facilities in the area, and the implementation of international sporting sanctions against South Africa, Fietas enjoyed cricket and soccer at both professional and social levels. Inter-street tournaments provided much entertainment.

Schooling was not considered a priority among Fietas families. Education was seen as a privilege and it was considered more important to obtain a well paying

job to supplement the family's income. Most girls did not attend school, or left at a young age. This was the case in most working class communities in South Africa at the time.

Despite life in Fietas being described as "hard" by Mrs Thandrand in the transcript of **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** (Fig 4.3.8:78) with few material luxuries, the people of Fietas seemed to have felt an affection for the place. Carrim (ibid) states that "*each race, religion and culture, however disparate and different they may be, claim "Fietas" as their's, (sic) and, in claiming "Fietas" as their's, (sic) they do so explicitly in a way that includes all those who belong to it. "Fietas" was not a singular group's. It was everybody's*."

Forced Removal

Apartheid's segregationist policies brought an end to the community of Fietas. In order to understand the impact of these policies a brief history of the pertinent legislation is provided.

The idea of segregation and biased conditions began prior to apartheid, in the 1650s when White settlers conquered land from indigenous people. Later the Natives/Black Land Act of 1913 prevented Blacks from buying land outside reserves set aside for them. (BBC News 2006). In 1948 the right wing National Party won the general elections in South Africa, and the system of legislated racism known as apartheid came into being. The government promulgated of a series of laws ensuring separation between different race groups.

The Population Registration Act of 1950 insisted upon the classification of every South African into one of four racial categories; Bantu (Black African), White, Coloured (of mixed race) or Asian (Indians and Pakistanis). Chinese people were classified as honorary Whites. The Group Areas Act also of 1950 divided the entire country into zones for exclusive occupation by designated race groups.

The Land Acts of 1954 and 1955 restricted non-white (Black, Coloured and Asian) residents to specific areas and limited the right of Black Africans to own land, thus entrenching the White minority's control over eighty percent of South African land. The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 and the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 created ten South African "homelands", which were largely arid and undeveloped. The Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970 made every black South African a citizen of one of the homelands, effectively excluding Blacks from South African politics, economics, education, and other resources. The Separate Amenities Act of 1953 designated all public amenities such as parks, libraries, public toilets, benches, buses, sports grounds and swimming pools for the exclusive use of specific racial groups. Black people had access to very few facilities, and those provided were vastly inferior to those provided for Whites. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act in 1949 and the Immorality Amendment Act in 1950 prohibited inter-racial marriages and sexual contact. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 laid the foundation for an inferior education system for Black people.

The implementation of the Group Areas Act resulted in many Coloured, Asian and Black communities being forcibly removed and relocated far away from the city centre. Perhaps the most well known example is the destruction and demolition of District Six (1965) in Cape Town. The predominantly Coloured residents were moved to the areas now known as the Cape Flats, far from the centre of Cape Town. Another example is Sophiatown, in Johannesburg, affectionately known by its inhabitants as Kofifi. In both cases, a previously vibrant creative community was ruthlessly destroyed in the process. In 1956, Pageview too was declared a 'White' area, to be occupied only by Whites. The non-white residents, virtually the total population of the area, were labelled 'disqualified persons' and were to leave. Eviction notices were issued from 1957, but many residents heard the news first via the radio rather than being notified officially, as Mr Modi of Fietas says in a video documentary called *Part of the*

process (SA Institute of Race Relations 198-?), dismally explaining "*Pageview will be declared an area for other communities*".

Most Asians in South Africa are descendents from indentured Indian labourers who were brought from India by the British from 1860 onwards, mostly to work in the sugar cane fields of what is now the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Subsequently, Asian traders migrated to South Africa from India and other parts of Asia and settled in KwaZulu-Natal and other parts of the country, and some eventually became very successful businessmen. The traders in Fietas, many of who owned their homes and businesses were an example of the success of Asian businessmen as seen throughout South Africa. This economic success and racial harmony prevalent in the area was in contradiction of the apartheid plan (Gandhi 1989).

In *Part of the process* (SA Institute of Race Relations 198-?) Cassim Saloojee says that the promulgation of The Group Areas Act was seen by the non-white race groups as a device intended by the government to destroy the existing unity between the different non-white race groups in areas such as Fietas. This tactic was at least partially successful. Many of the Black and Coloured residents were relocated first, because they were not owners of property or business. As Carrim (1990:126) explains, legally home and business owners could not be moved out until suitable accommodation was provided, compensation for the expropriated property was paid and an alternative trading site was supplied.

This legislation resulted in a number of residents being able to defy eviction orders and stay in the area, some until 1976 and a very few managed never to be evicted (Fig 1.1:26). In 1974, The Oriental Plaza was established by the government in Fordsburg, an area of Johannesburg near Fietas, as an alternative trading site for the Pageview shop-owners. Schmidt (2003:10) describes the sequence of the implementation of the eviction from Fietas: the declaration as a 'White area' in 1956, eviction notices served on the residents

from 1957 to the end of the 1960s, and the bulk of removals, especially the Fourteenth Street merchants, in 1977. The new White residents moved into state-provided housing in 1982. Twenty-three Asian families from Pageview however refused to move, resisted arrest and managed to hold on their properties. During the 1990s they finally won the case against the state in the Supreme Court and they still reside in Pageview.



(Fig 1.1) Fietas during forced removals (Schmidt 2003:10)

The forced removal fragmented the communities of Fietas. People held different views on the subject. Some regarded the relocation as an opportunity to obtain better living conditions, while others resisted vigorously because of their affinity for the place, and also because of political convictions, the loss of proximity to work, and the fact that it was an imposed act over which they had no say. This dissent eroded the spirit of harmony and unity. The forced removal also physically separated the people of Fietas, according to their race. Black people were moved to Soweto, Coloured people to Western Area and Eldorado Park, and the Asians to Lenasia.

In the Township of Lenasia, (as it was then known) there was further segregation of people in economic terms. The area was divided into zones or extensions based on income and each extension contained only houses of one classification type: sub-economic, economic, semi-luxury, luxury, and super-luxury. There were both houses that were privately owned and those that were council built and rented out. Lower income families were thus physically separated from middle class or wealthy families, unlike in Fietas where different income groups lived alongside each other.

Carrim (1990:112) quotes Mr Abrahams 'Boeta Brakkie', a former Fietas resident, who sums up the effects of the forced removal thus: "*The Group Areas Act ruined our lives. In Fietas we lived, now we only exist*".

Relocation to Lenasia

Lenasia is situated thirty kilometres south west of central Johannesburg. There is contradictory information about its history. According to an article titled Progress in Lenasia (Anon 1979:12) in the local publication *Fiat Lux*, a private township company had begun developing the area in 1954. The Group Areas Development Board expropriated the area from them and declared Lenasia an Asian Group Area in 1966. An article in the *Indicator of Lenasia* (Anon 2002:1) conversely dates the establishment of Lenasia in 1955, and the move of the first Asians to the area in 1957. At that time however people had to live in army barracks provided as temporary accommodation for 'displaced Asians'. Mrs Naidoo (Fig 4.3.7:77) describes the facilities in the transcript of **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** (2002) as having no toilets, bathrooms, rooms or anything. She describes a big hall where curtains and wardrobes were used to demarcate living areas. The area was undeveloped with large spaces of open veld, untarred roads, no electricity in most streets, and badly constructed government houses, even the so-called 'luxury' houses. Some of these were built on dolomite that caused sinkholes, endangering residents' homes and their lives. Lenasia had

very few shops and there was insufficient provision for transport. The rent charged for accommodation was much higher in Lenasia than in Fietas: During the 1960s, in Pageview the highest rent was R40 per month for government owned houses, compared with the minimum rent of R100 per month in Lenasia.

Most residents of Lenasia had to travel to Johannesburg for work and residents also had to travel substantial distances within Lenasia to meet their basic needs. Julie Slater explains in *Part of the process* (198-?) that in the early 1960s she had to pay 60c for a bus ride in order to buy a loaf of bread that cost 40c. Some residents enjoyed the sense of space; many for the first time had their own room and many were also first time homeowners. This sense of space, though, was accompanied for many by a sense of isolation, and a life that was as dry as its surroundings. A resident of Lenasia quoted in an article by Anne Sacks (1981) complained that she would look forward to visits from family and friends on Sundays in the past, but now is not even aware of where they are.

The lack of access to shops and services in Lenasia contrasted starkly with life in Fietas, for example Twentieth Street in Pageview, which Carrim (1990:31) describes having

> "*a doctor, a lawyer, a butcher, teachers, an accountant, many gangsters, of course, shebeens, a general dealer, cafés, a clothing shop, a toy shop, a "muti" shop, a motor spares shop, a panel beater, an 'Indian Qawali' singer, a fruit shop, a place that sold live chickens, a dressmaker, a midwife, a 'madressa' (Islamic school), a bus driver, a barber, a dairy, and, even a motorbike gang, of the 'hells angels' sort*."

The geographic isolation of people, the lack of community spirit and inadequate provision of basic services and infrastructure in Lenasia inevitably had tragic consequences, as illustrated in an article titled Town of no-hopers (Anon 1975), which reports the death of a five year old boy, who had a seizure in the middle of the night. His parents were unable to get any assistance as neither the family nor

the neighbours owned a car. In Lenasia no provision had been made for a police station, hospital, or fire station. Neither were there any telephone lines installed. Doctors refused to make house calls unless they were collected in a car, because of the likelihood of muggings in the dimly lit streets. The article further criticises the housing shortage and states that many pay excessive rentals for back rooms or garages.

It is noteworthy that these conditions of deprivation were still in place in Lenasia in 1975, approximately twenty years after it was first established, and by which stage the population was about 55 000.

At the time of the forced removals, the government justified the destruction of Fietas and other areas such as Sophiatown as 'slum clearances'. In contrast, Carrim (1990) states that most residents of Lenasia seemed to regard their new houses as 'slums'.

Currently (2006) substantial development has occurred within Lenasia and the infrastructure is significantly improved. The business sector in particular has grown considerably. The regional profile of Region 11 (2003), an official document drawn up by the Regional Director, Mazibuko Sibongile, provides pertinent statistical information (Region 11 is the southern part of Greater Johannesburg bordered by the municipal areas of the Lekoa Vaal Council, Walkerville LAC, Westonaria and Soweto covering an area of approximately 225km^2 – and including a large part of Lenasia). Lenasia's current statistics are as follows: Lenasia comprises thirteen extensions and has an approximate population of 41 000 people. This figure includes Tembelihle, an informal settlement in Extension 10 of Lenasia. There are three council clinics and one private clinic, two council libraries and a civic centre. There are also three public swimming pools in Lenasia, a recreation centre and a cricket and sports stadium. Educational centres include eight secondary schools and thirteen primary schools. All the roads in the residential areas of Lenasia are tarred, electricity is

provided by City Power and water by Rand Water. Regarding transport, Metro Rail (a national transport facility) operates within the Region with a station in Lenasia. No municipal transport operates within Region 11. Private bus services in the Region include Putco, Verwes, and Lenasia Bus Service. Approximately sixty five percent of commuters in Region 11 use taxi services and/or their own cars.

The Environmental Health Reporting Systems of Region 11 (2003) states that places of care in Lenasia include one village for the aged, one police station, one Regional Magistrate's Court and forty-three doctors. There are four hundred and one formal business premises, four hundred and seventy one informal business premises in Lenasia, and twenty-two factories. In October 2004, a shopping complex called Signet Terrace opened in the centre of the Lenasia Business Area and a three billion Rand regional shopping centre, Trade Route Shopping Mall, opened in April 2006.

This mall services residents of Lenasia, Lenasia South and neighbouring areas of Soweto, Eldorado Park and Enerdale. The current developments establish Lenasia, which began in the 1950s with very few public services and poor infrastructure, as a major centre that services not only its own community but that of nearby areas as well. These changes can be attributed to new government policies post 1994, and an identification of Lenasia as an area for economic investment.

Names of Places

The area that became Lenasia was originally called Lenz Military Camp and according to an article in the *Indicator of Lenasia* (2002:1,8) was named after Sir Colonel Lenz. Anna Smith (1971:294) quotes the Johannesburg Non-European Affairs Department explaining that the name 'Lenasia' was derived from 'Len', the

first three letters of the former name, combined with ‘Asia’, a reference to the continent from which the forefathers of the residents came.

This derivation has a logical link to Lenasia’s history and occupants. Other names given to parts of the area are more arbitrary. Sacks (1981) comments on the inappropriate street names

> “*One of the main routes – called Nirvana Drive – winds into streets named after birds, flowers, fish, in fact just about anything that bears no relevance to the life of the community. There’s Protea Road, Flamingo Street, Hummingbird Street, Gemsbok, and Giraffe*”.

The dry open ‘veld’ and flat landscape of Lenasia was hardly lush or adventurous, as is suggested by the names, which must have seemed by the residents to be almost mocking, wishful thinking at the best. Mrs Sali (Fig 4.3.5:77) in the transcript of **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** shares her initial dislike for Lenasia, stating that she cried for three months and wanted to return to the place she came from. She describes the place like a jungle with very few houses. “*It was only ‘bundus’, like you know grasses and that.*”

The irrelevance of street names seems to be a common phenomenon in many other parts of the world too. French theorists Marc Augé (1995) and Marcel de Certeau (1984) explore this disjunction between naming and experience in their seminal texts *non-places* and *the practice of everyday life*. Parisian streets, together with monuments, are named after historical heroes, and Augé (1995:69) describes people’s experience in that city thus; “*a gap is opened up between the landscape’s present and the past to which it alludes*”. De Certeau (1984:104) implies that we as pedestrians, or inhabitants, are controlled by these names, that by naming places we give meaning to them and in so doing create a kind of absence of that place. “*These words* [proper nouns; names of streets, places etc] *slowly lose …the value engraved on them, but their ability to signify outlives its first definition*”.

The disjuncture in naming in Lenasia is common in many parts of South Africa, and this disparity is especially pronounced in areas designated for township use. For example in KwaNdebele, a homeland north of Pretoria, as Phillip Van Niekerk (1989:64) describes, a series of shanty towns that bear Afrikaans farm names such as Vlaklaagte and Kwaggafontein which refer to extinct wild animals, mountain wells, and geographic features. Augé and de Certeau refer to a collapse in time, while in Lenasia and KwaNdebele the naming implies a collapse of place instead. For the resident, this disjuncture could be seen to reflect a painful gap between real experience and wishful fantasy.

Pageview, the name of one of the areas comprising Fietas, was named after Mr J.J. Page, the mayor of Johannesburg in 1943. There are no indications as to the origins of the name Fietas, which was used by its residents mostly between 1940 and 1965, when the area was the most active. The disappearance of the name mirrors the disappearance of the atmosphere that characterised the area. Carrim (1990:10) describes Fietas as "*a dead area*" stating that once the traders moved to the Oriental Plaza in Fordsburg in 1978, the vibrancy of the place was destroyed "*There were absolutely no traces of the place that was compassionately known by all as 'Fietas'*". The term 'Pageview' was used more regularly than Fietas in discussions about the place between 1978 and 1988, officially and casually, and still used today.

Informally, Lenasia has for some time been known as Lenz, although there is no record of the first use of this term. Most of the occupants of Lenasia who use the term 'Lenz' are not really aware of its origins. It is used casually as a nickname, with a degree of affection. Both Lenz and Lenasia however refer to the same place and the same time. They are synonyms, unlike Pageview and Fietas, which reference the same place, but not the same time. The use of 'Fietas' is specific to the period before the forced removal and was used almost exclusively by its inhabitants. The familiarity and affection attached to the name was aligned to the sense of community shared by the occupants.

A recent article in the local newspaper, the *Indicator of Lenasia* (2002:1,8) invites readers' opinions about getting the name of Lenasia changed, "*to reflect the new order*", and further explains that a name change would have repercussions on the names of businesses incorporating Lenasia in their title. It asks if it would be "*worth the trouble having the change, simply to move with the times? Or do we need to drop the apartheid tag?*" Later editions of the paper do not reflect any responses. It is interesting to note that the *Indicator of Lenasia* raises economic considerations for the change of the name Lenasia. In contrast the name Fietas was attached to an affection for the place.

A number of name changes have taken place in post democratic South Africa. Provinces have changed, for example what was 'Transvaal' is now named 'Gauteng'. Many city names have also changed, like the city Pretoria is now called the city of Tshwane and a number of streets have been renamed. Many cities now have a Nelson Mandela road or street for example.

Despite many people's nostalgia for the past and their extreme sense of loss expressed as a yearning for Fietas, time has inevitably moved on. Even twenty-five years ago Sacks (1981) articulated "*Lenasia is also an irreversible fact of life. Even if Pageview were returned to the Indian community, only about 20 000 would be able to be accommodated there. So Lenasia will live on like an aberration long after the Group Areas Act has become history*." Furthermore, another generation has grown up in Lenasia who have their own emotional ties to this area. Attempts have been made to reclaim land in Pageview, which, according to a web article by Davie (2002:5), is currently owned by the national Department of Public Works. Land claims are handled on their behalf by the Gauteng Department of Housing. Prior to 1998, the date by which claims concerning land lost "due to racially discriminatory measures" since 1913 had to be lodged under the "property clause," of the new constitution (1996), (Lehrer 2004) approximately 313 land claims were submitted to the national Land Claims

Commission. The process of settling claims has been delayed due to the lengthy procedures of verifying claims, tracing descendents of the original owners, dividing equitably between heirs and difficulties experienced in communicating with the claimants. Many have opted for financial compensation instead of relocating, and in November 2000 Fietas claimants were offered R40 000 per plot.

Similarly, after the Group Areas Act was repealed in 1991, there has been an ongoing attempt to reclaim District Six for its original inhabitants. Although this has considerable symbolic value, the District Six of today can never be the same District Six as before. The past cannot be undone.

The relationship between loss, place and memory is explored by writers Barry Curtis and Claire Pajaczkowska (1994:199) who state "*the search for a place in which happiness may be found is always a metaphor for the search to recover a memory of happiness*". This "search to recover a memory of happiness" is connected to community initiatives such as the District Six Museum, and the "Fietas Festival", held annually since 2002. For a period of three or four days Fietas is recreated through the showing of old movies and documentaries, gathering of original inhabitants and the holding of poetry sessions and walking tours of landmarks in Fietas. Between *koeksisters*, *lang-arm* dances and slide shows of their previous home, original inhabitants reminisce and educate younger generations about the lives that they shared. In future this history will be accessible at a museum which will be established in the area by the Fietas Heritage Trust (Davie 2002). De Certeau (1984:108) notes of similar situations, "*It is striking here that the places people live in are like the presences of diverse absences. What can be seen designates what is no longer there*". Augé (1995:55,56) elaborates "*What they see projected at a distance is the place where they used to believe they lived from day to day, but which they are now being invited to see as a fragment of history*".

Daily Travel

When Lenasia was first established, one of the biggest grievances expressed by the residents concerned as expressed by the interviewees of **Two rooms and a Kitchen** was the travelling, necessitated by the geographical distance to Johannesburg. This is in contrast to the claims made in *Fiat Lux* (1971:6) that "*with modern transport conveniences available, business men (sic) are able to travel to and from their homes while their families live in restful urban living conditions*". Ten years later people interviewed by Sack (1981) express a different view:

"*"The shops are too far to walk, and we are not on the bus route," she says. . . . " I've shortened by (sic) life by 10 years by having to travel two hours to work everyday," complained an estate agent. "I really resent that." Another laments: "By the time I get to my job in the centre of the city, I feel as if I've achieved a day's work already." A father of six says: "I have a bigger home than the one I had in Pageview, and because of this I am happier in Lenasia, but the travelling gets me down." . . . "By the time I climb on the bus it is already crammed and I have to stand all the way," she says*."

Mr Thandrand, (Fig 4.3.8:78) in the transcript of **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** (2002) says of the early days in Lenasia that if you missed the morning train, you might as well stay at home as there were no other trains to get to work. Mrs Naidoo (Fig 4.3.7:77) also in the transcript of **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** describes the sense of community on the train, making friends, men playing cards and women gossiping. Due to her inexperience of train and tram travel she explains that her brother accompanied her for an entire week to show her how to get to Doornfontein and back.

Nowadays many have taken the option to relocate from Lenasia to suburbs closer to Johannesburg that were previously designated for Whites only. This applies particularly to the younger generation. A large number however continue to commute between Lenasia and Johannesburg, either by public or private transport. They remain in Lenasia for a variety of reasons, perhaps because of family ties, a strong sense of community, or a feeling of rootedness and comfort. Many may be constrained by the economic inaffordibility of moving to Johannesburg suburbs. The sense of community spirit in Lenasia is highlighted through a notice board at the local Spar supermarket, which advertises persons seeking and offering lifts to specific destinations in Johannesburg.

CHAPTER 2

David Goldblatt

This chapter comprises an exploration of a body of work by artist David Goldblatt, *The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey.* I begin by providing an historical context for the subject of this work, describe the photographs and comment on the particular type of travel featured in Goldblatt's work.

The circumstances of daily travel between Lenasia and Johannesburg, brought about by the forced relocation from Fietas as a result of apartheid space legislation, has a counterpoint in the movement of people between their South African places of work and their homeland residencies, also caused by apartheid space legislation.

Although not directly comparable, commonalities can be established between the conditions of travel between KwaNdebele (an apartheid-era homeland east of Pretoria) and Pretoria, and those between Lenasia and Johannesburg. In both situations the need to travel for work was caused by restrictions regarding forced residential location either through relocation (in the case of Lenasia commuters) or economic and legislative factors (through The Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970 which applied to KwaNdebele). The provision by the state of Putco (Public Utility Transport Corporation) buses as means of transport was likewise common to both, as was the routine of being transported daily on a fixed route.

The racial segregation institutionalized by the apartheid government forced vast numbers of Black South Africans to live in homelands away from the urban centres. Those few who were able to obtain permission to stay overnight in 'White' areas were required to carry permits issued by the police, and to observe curfews. The deliberate policy of enforced economic hardship resulted in workers

having to commute daily between the homelands and urban areas to earn a living (Fig 2.4:49). In 1983 South African artist David Goldblatt (b 1930) began photographing the workers travelling for three to four hours on a bus from KwaNdebele to their places of work in the suburban and industrial areas of Pretoria. His friend Joe Lelyveld, who was a correspondent for the *New York Times* at the time, accompanied him and subsequently published the book on the subject of the KwaNdebele commuters titled *Move Your Shadow* (1987).

Goldblatt took more photographs in 1984. Some of them were exhibited that year in conjunction with the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, and were published in its associated book *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart* (Badsha 1986). After reviewing these images four years later, Goldblatt realised that these conditions of travel for the people of KwaNdebele had not changed and he wanted to re-tell this story. In 1987, Brenda Goldblatt (David Goldblatt's daughter and established journalist) interviewed unnamed bus passengers to record their stories, and South African journalist Phillip van Niekerk wrote a history of KwaNdebele. The book that materialized from the project had the same name as the photographic essay. *The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey* contains the photographs and an introduction by David Goldblatt, a series of statements based on the interviews with five bus riders by Brenda Goldblatt, an essay titled The bus stop republic by Phillip van Niekerk and an afterword by Alex Harris. The book was published in 1989 and coincided with an exhibition of the photographs at the Market Theatre Gallery in central Johannesburg.

In compiling the photographic essay of 1983 and 1984, Goldblatt joined the commuters for a few days and recorded their journey. The distance covered on the return journey was close to 300km, beginning very early in the morning and ending late at night. Goldblatt used a 35mm camera with paltry available light, and as Neville Dubow (1998:26) comments, the dim lighting was "*consistent with the nature of the journey itself*". Almost all of the photographs were taken in

relative darkness using long exposure times, which resulted in murky, grainy, slightly blurred images that "*add to the oppressive yet somnolent vagueness which Goldblatt has so eloquently recreated*", as described by Ivor Powell (1989:25,26)

The black and white images and captions by David Goldblatt tell the narrative of the journey: the first buses leave KwaNdebele at 02:40 every morning, when there is already a line of passengers waiting. On the bus, many cover their heads with cloths, rugs or caps or try to cushion their heads with a piece of plastic foam (Fig 2.1:46). As the bus continues its route through KwaNdebele, more passengers are collected and by 03:45 there is only standing room left. The bus is licensed to carry sixty-two sitting and twenty-nine standing passengers (Fig 2.2:47). The bus soon fills to capacity and the standing passengers sprawl to the floor of the bus. Goldblatt does not explain why they "*sprawl to the floor*", perhaps the passenger numbers exceed the licensed amount or because they are too tired to stand for the long journey. Goldblatt (1989:30) describes in one of the titles of the photographs "*strangers often become intertwined in their sleep*". Lelyveld (1986:120) describes

> "*the centre aisle was packed with bodies wound around themselves like anchovies in a can. The motion of the bus threw some happenstance couples, men and women who got on at different stops, into intimate contact. A young woman's head slumped on the shoulder of the man seated next to her, who was too far gone to recognize his good fortune*."

A domestic worker interviewed by Brenda Goldblatt (1989:54) explains the need for a twenty-minute brisk walk to the first bus stop to ensure a seat because, (Fig 2.2, 2.3:47,48)

> "*if the seats are full, we must stand in the aisle so tightly packed. You sleep, you stand, you sleep. You fall on the one in front of you, and he falls on the next one and we fall, we fall, we fall. And you wake up, and*

you must hold on, the bus goes on. There is nothing you can do…..I think that I have been catching such full buses for nine years".

They arrive at Marabastad at 05:40. Many now join further queues for local buses into Pretoria to their places of work.

David Goldblatt (1989:38) explains that after a long day at work the journey begins all over again from Pretoria back to KwaNdebele, the last bus leaving Pretoria at 19:00, reaching KwaNdebele at 22:00. A businessman and father of four interviewed by Brenda Goldblatt (1989:59) never sees his family except on weekends because they are still asleep when he leaves in the morning and they are already in bed when he returns. Lelyveld (1986:114) also explains that if a commuter left at four in the morning and returned seventeen hours later, at nine at night, he would get five hours of sleep if he ate quickly and went straight to bed.

Van Niekerk (1989:70) explains that many mothers' own children grew up in the shantytowns without parental guidance, while they were caring for the children of White families as domestics in Pretoria. Lelyveld (1986:117) articulates that these buses took workers to "*factories where they worked, in areas where they were forbidden to live*".

The conditions of the transport service were awful. The salesman commuter interviewed by Brenda Goldblatt (1989:50) states that the buses were uncomfortable and had no ventilation. However, he fears that the fares would be more expensive should the company improve its conditions. The domestic worker interviewed (ibid:56) declares that the bulk of her salary pays Putco, with very little left for herself. A 23-year-old truck driver (ibid:53) concurs that if he does not accept the conditions he will not be able to get to work and therefore starve. He states "***That's where life starts and ends***. ***On the bus***. *Maybe it is abnormal, but I am used to it, so I say it is normal.*" [my emphasis]

This statement emphasises the prominence of the bus in the lives of these people. The importance of bus transport is evidenced by development priorities in areas like KwaNdebele where, as van Niekerk (1989:70) explains, the bus stops were erected before taps and latrines. Interestingly law enforcement was also high on the list of infrastructural priorities in the homelands. A truck driver interviewed by Brenda Goldblatt (1989:54) notes that KwaNdebele has many police stations and no hospitals.

In 1985 the South African government announced that KwaNdebele was to become independent and would incorporate the neighbouring areas of Moutse. This decision was strongly opposed: it would exclude its citizens from South African politics, economy and resources and it would also mean a loss of South African citizenship and attendant opportunities to work in South Africa. The proposed independence was encouraged by a group of Ndebele vigilantes known as the Mbokodo who supported the apartheid government, and were described by Van Niekerk (1989:66) as; "*politically unsophisticated tribal chiefs who stood to benefit materially by playing along with the* [apartheid] *plan*". Van Niekerk (ibid) further explains that the Mbokodo's role was to eradicate opposition to independence and this they attempted to do through the use of violence and ruthless violation of human rights. This led to war, which ultimately resulted in the loss of more than two hundred lives. This is an unofficial statistic as the authorities and the courts appeared to turn a blind eye. At the end of the war the Mbokodo no longer existed as a political entity and they were subsequently outlawed by the KwaNdebele Legislative Assembly, whose decision to accept KwaNdebele's independence was reversed in August 1986.

Van Niekerk (ibid) notes that throughout the period of extreme conflict the bus service continued running, despite over six hundred buses being hijacked by 'comrades' who rerouted the buses, thus lengthening the journey for the already tired passengers.

The Putco buses played other roles too. Ironically, Putco provided free transport to attend a meeting protesting against the proposed independence. The truck driver interviewed by Brenda Goldblatt (1989:52) explains that thirty thousand protesters gathered on May 12th 1986. Despite its peaceful nature however the meeting was broken up by police who shot tear-gas canisters into the buses. People broke the windows of the buses as they attempted to escape, and in the process a child was run over by an out-of-control bus. This incident heralded a period of much unrest and grave violence.

Putco buses were also used by the Mbokodo during the conflict period as a way of finding their enemies. Travelling by bus was a predictable and unavoidable activity. The salesman interviewed by Brenda Goldblatt (ibid:51) was opposed to the Mbokodo authority and explained that he had not slept at home for two years, as he was afraid of getting caught by the Mbokodo. He slept over at the homes of his family or even strangers, people who understood his predicament. However, he comments that he still has to catch the bus regardless of where he sleeps. He boarded the bus at different stops to avoid a noticeable routine and thereby escape detection. He tells the story of a well-known activist who was taken off the bus and shot by the Mbokodo who he was on.

Goldblatt (1989:9) states, "*Those lucky enough to find work beyond the meagre economy of the homeland are the transported of KwaNdebele*". In an interview with Joyce Ozynski (1990:12), Goldblatt elaborates that "*the transported*" as a title refers to the bussing of workers of KwaNdebele to and from work in Pretoria. Metaphorically, the forced removal of people in South Africa from their homes to resettlement camps is analogous to the transporting of convicts and slaves into banishment. He explicates that another meaning of the word transported is enraptured, which for him was an ironic reference "*to the abandon with which the workers of KwaNdebele surrender to sleep on their interminable journeys*".

De Certeau (1984:111) compares the state of being a passenger in a train to incarceration; in both there is immobility, coupled with externally imposed control and order, and nothing to do; "*a closed and autonomous insularity*". He further describes the outside sights as being detached. They are immobile, "*they do not change their place any more than I do; vision alone continually undoes and remakes the relationship between these fixed elements.*" He identifies two simultaneous modes of separation. First there is the glass of the windowpane which allows the spectator to see, but not touch that which is outside. There is a sense of being able to touch less as the view gets wider or bigger. The second mode of separation is the iron of the rail tracks, which allow the train and thus the passenger to move through space. He explains how the single but endless line of the track seems to push the passenger to move on and not be at home. This idea of incarceration and train travel contrasts markedly with the state of being at home, which as Trinh T. Minh-ha (1994:13) elaborates, is not a prison but a place associated with stability and happiness. The contrast between home and travel is explored further in Chapter Five.

Although de Certeau does not extend his analogy of train travel and incarceration to buses and other modes of transport, Goldblatt's description of the bus commuters and his comments on the term "transported" seem aligned to de Certeau's theory.

Interestingly, Goldblatt explains to David Sandison (1980) in an interview that he preferred to avoid journeying by car and instead use a bicycle and then later a motorbike as a means of transport when travelling to places that he wished to photograph. During the 1970s and 1980s he used to cycle forty to eighty kilometres a day as he found the steel and glass structure of the car confining, preferring "*a much rawer method of getting around . . . the closeness the elements, the discomfort of the rain or wind*". In this respect Goldblatt seems to concur with the parallel de Certeau draws between trains and incarceration, specifically in his mention of "*closeness to the elements*" in the absence of

"*glass*" and "*steel*". Although Goldblatt refers to a car, and de Certeau to train travel, both comment on the separation from the elements through the mode of vision (glass/window pane) and the fact of movement.

Lecturer in Geography at the University of Witwatersrand, G.H. Pierie (2001:174) presents his investigation into travelling in apartheid South Africa. He quotes E. Preston-Whyte (1982), the author of the article, Segregation and interpersonal relationships: a case study of domestic services in Durban who states that apartheid geography necessitated a vast need for public transport by limiting pedestrian and cycle access to work in impoverished communities. Because of the low levels of car ownership in these areas, large numbers of people relied on public transport to commute to work and back. Pierie (2001:177) explains that for decades the state-operated trains and the subsidised buses were a daily reminder to Black people of their exclusion from white residential areas. He goes on to quote author J.P. Kiernan (1977) from his article Public Transport and private risk: Zionism and the black commuter in South Africa stating that "*public transport symbolized oppression and subservience*".

Pierie (2001:177) states further that because of the large workforce using public transport, it was an obvious target for protestors during apartheid. Taxis, buses, and trains were often stoned. Taxi ranks, bus depots, and railway station entrances were often blocked during stay-aways, forcing commuters to stay at home. Trains also had positive associations however, and were a place for various positive empowering activities; plays, songs, church services and more significantly for the political activists, political recruitment and education. During the States of Emergency in the late 1980s when outdoor political gatherings were banned, commuters gathered to express their political feelings and solidarity. Carriages on the Witwatersrand trains used for political purposes acquired the name 'Emzabalazweni', which means "in the struggle". These carriages were characterised by strategic discussions by trade unionists, youth activists waving posters, numerous speeches, the reverberation of revolutionary songs, plays,

dancing and the chanting of political slogans. Unlike de Certeau's analysis of the train experience, the trains associated with positive activities Pirie describes were buzzing with activity and mobility, a site of optimism and political confidence at a time in which Nelson Mandela and others were incarcerated.

The role and mode of transport changes with the context. Regardless of the specificity of experience, commuting has been identified as a key element in the description of our social and day-to-day lives. Goldblatt underlines this central relevance through his photographic essay, Pierie in his historical and socio-economic analysis and de Certeau through his theory.



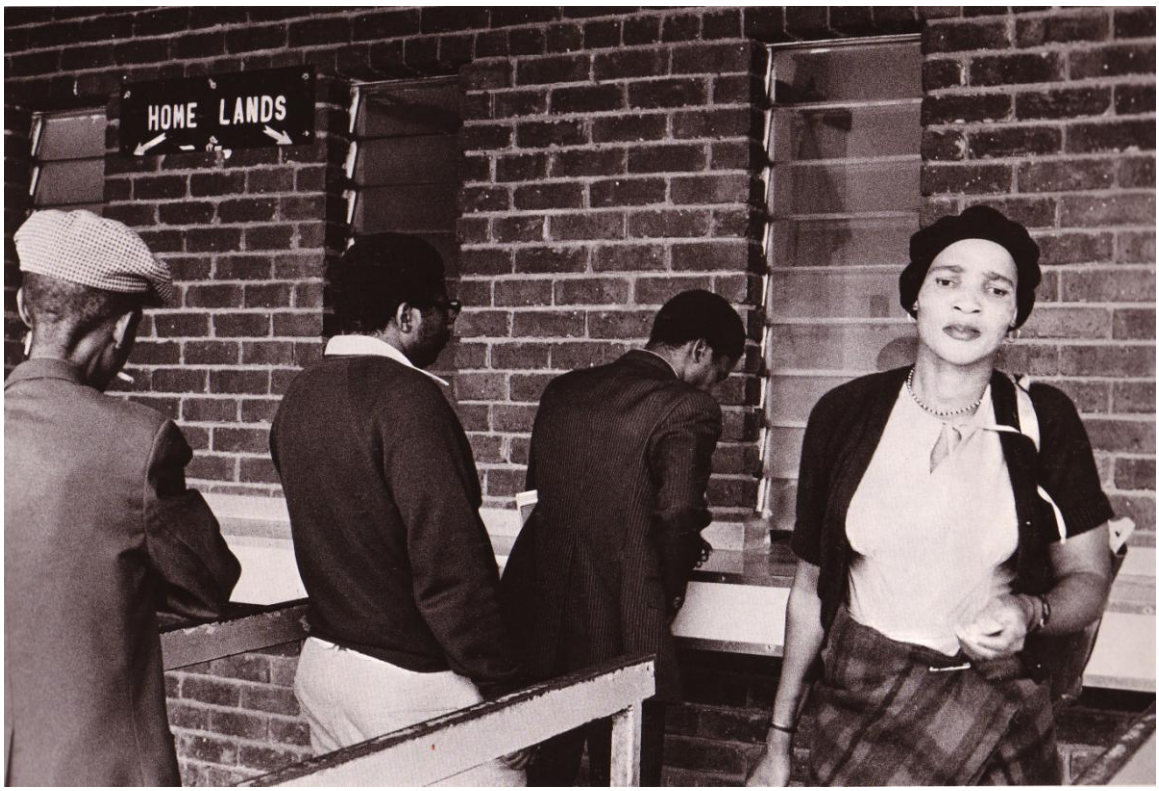
(Fig 2.1) David Goldblatt, **3:00 A.M.:Early passengers on the Wolwekraal – Marabastad bus.** (Goldblatt 1989:20)



(Fig 2.2) David Goldblatt, **Standing Room only now, on the Wolwekraal – Marabastad bus. The bus is licensed to carry 62 sitting and 29 standing passengers.** (Goldblatt 1989:24)



(Fig 2.3) David Goldblatt, **Wolwekraal –Marabastad bus at about 4:00 A.M.: More than an hour and a half still to go. This bus took on its first passenger at about 2:50 A.M. and will reach its destination in Pretoria at 5:35 A.M.** (Goldblatt 1989:32)



(Fig 2.4) David Goldblatt, **Travelers from KwaNdebele buying their weekly season tickets at the PUTCO depot in Pretoria.** (Goldblatt 1989:36)

CHAPTER 3

Carouschka Streijffert

In this chapter I discuss the work of Carouschka Streijffert, particularly one body of work published in ***Carouschka's Tickets***. I consider the centrality of tickets, evidence of journey, in relation to the act of collecting and refer to Walter Benjamin's text on the subject. I go on to relate Streijffert's practice to Augé's theory on the substitution of experience, and comment on Streijffert's translation of travel into artwork.

Carouschka Streijffert (b1955), a Swedish interior and graphic designer, and artist, has been collecting and cataloguing tickets from around the world for three decades, from the 1970s until the end of the 1990s. In 1998 she presented the tickets at the Stockholm Cultural Centre in an exhibition she describes on her website (Streijffert n.d.) as "*48 collage works* [Fig 3.4:59] *in an 800m^2 open labyrinth, where the tickets (sic) codes and graphic designs are proof that something has actually happened*". The exhibition was accompanied by especially composed music by Pia Högberg, Patrik Thomgren, and Peter Erikson. Further description of the installation and illustrated labyrinth are not possible as they are not documented on her website or in her book, and because I have been unable to contact the artist and source any additional information.

Streijffert also produced a four hundred page publication independent of but accompanying the exhibition. ***Carouschka's Tickets*** (1998) contains reproductions of tickets from seventy countries and an essay by Peter Kihlgard, who also wrote the lyrics for the music during the exhibition. The essay provides narratives that embed fragmented thoughts, constructing personal tales for the traveller. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The book also contains a short forward by Streijffert, which appears on her website as well.

The tickets in the book relate to bus, train, ferry, ship, and plane journeys (both domestic and international), boarding passes, baggage tickets, museum visits and other tourist destination tickets. There are single-trip, weekly, fifteen-trip, monthly, and twenty day tickets, pensioners' tickets, short hop tickets, transit cards, and travel coupons (Fig 3.3:58). All these documents relate in some way to travelling. None are from recreational events or places that do not necessarily speak of travel, such as the theatre, cinema, fêtes, fairs or circuses. The museum tickets are presumably included because these sites are known as tourist destinations and therefore relate to the artist's broad framework of travel.

The tickets have all been used and they bear the signs of that use: printed dates from their time of issue, 'expired' stamp markings, conductors' signatures, punched holes, stains, dirt and evidence of the general wear and tear that is expected on a ticket. Some of the tickets are evidence of Streijffert's own journeys and have her name on them. Others are not identified as having been issued to anyone specific. Some seem to have been collected by other people and submitted for her project in response to the request on her website (n.d.) which read "*TICKETS WANTED – I'm searching for tickets and numbers for my next project, so if you have anything of my interest (sic) please send them to me or contact me on the following address . . .* ". Streijffert (1998) also collected tickets by picking them up when she found them on the street. She describes the elation she experiences in her book, "*A find on the shining surface of a wet street can take my breath away, make me fall to my knees before it; my curiosity draws me to this ticket, which I shall soon pick up, joining its destiny to mine*". The excitement Streijffert describes brings to mind Walter Benjamin's (1973:62,63) seminal text about book collecting, Unpacking My Library – A talk about book collecting. Benjamin identifies "*the thrill of acquisition*", which for him is linked to owning the object. "*For him (the collector), not only books but also copies of books have their fates. And in this sense, the most important fate of a copy is its encounter with him, with his own collection*." Streijffert too, expresses her

enthusiasm in finding her tickets and ascribes an element of inevitability to the "*joining*" of the tickets' fate to hers. The title of Streijffert's book, *Carouschka's Tickets* claims her ownership of the tickets, even though many of the journeys were travelled by others.

Benjamin (ibid:62) further elaborates how collectors become "interpreters of fate". He describes how a collector is inspired by his objects of collection and identifies with their history through handling them in his glass case. Streijffert's (1998:9) text describes a similar compulsion in handling her collection. She states that she has been searching, collecting and filling her pockets with tickets for thirty years. "*For countless nights I have sat cataloguing, arranging and studying my finds: so full of expression, almost consolingly beautiful as they lie, still as the grave, in my hand. Irretrievably finished and done with, they look entreatingly into me*."

Streijffert's obsession with finding order, arranging and structuring these objects is similar to the collector's trait identified by Benjamin (1973:62). He says "*for what else is this collection but a disorder to which habit has accommodated itself to such an extent that it can appear as order?*"

Benjamin (ibid:63-66) further explains his theory that the passion for collecting has very little to do with the object's functional, utilitarian value. In fact he points out that a characteristic of book collectors should be that they don't actually read the books. For the collector, the practice of collecting is about ownership, the item's history prior to acquisition is acknowledged and the act of acquiring it liberates it. Benjamin describes how he often found books "*lonely*" and "*abandoned*" in marketplaces and by his acquisition has rescued and freed them. The discarded tickets Streijffert collected have already served their purpose of providing proof of purchase and no longer have any utilitarian value. With their clearly defined expiry dates and times, these short-lived consumables are sometimes the only evidence of the journey undertaken. The lack of any long-

term role for used tickets is further expressed in Streijffert's (1998:9) fear of tickets becoming obsolete due to future digitalization.

Benjamin's (1973:64) most memorable purchases of books were made on his trips "*as a transient*". Tickets are perhaps the most distilled representations of transience. Streijffert obtains her tickets through different means; her own travels, by picking them up from the street and by asking others to collect tickets for her. Her attraction to the ticket as a tangible object specifically for collection makes her, as Benjamin defines, a collector with "*tactical instinct*". This phrase suggests a sense of strategising and planning. The deliberate process of searching, finding, intensive sorting and cataloguing, and the making of planned collages is testament to Streijffert's "*tactical instinct*".

On her website (n.d.) Streijffert explains that "*people think aloud for us in their native languages through the writer Peter Kihlgard*", whose essay is interspersed with images of tickets throughout Streijffert's book. A few sentences appear with the reproductions of the tickets on most of the pages. The "essay" does not conform to an academic style of writing; rather it pursues a creative route. It illustrates a free flowing style, some of which is quite obscure and seems to be unrelated to the country of origin of the tickets. No text is included on the page that depicts tickets from South Africa (Fig 3.1:56, 3.2:57). Other countries from Africa that are represented include Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Egypt and Morocco. The narcissistic impulse on the part of the South African reader inevitably attracts curiosity as to the reason for omission of text on pages representing South Africa. Much of the text on other pages is not linked to the tickets or the country represented. Book critic Juliette Cezzar (2005), in her web review of Streijffert's book depicts the essay by Kihlgard thus:

> "*travelers' thoughts and overheard comments are translated and interspersed between the tickets alongside their original-language versions, comments that range from the banal ("tea?") to the personal*

("his wife is bound to notice something soon") to the profound ("alas, my spirit, your wanderings have been my home in this life")".

These observations can be extended as the comments include also the obscene (Kihlgard 1998:131) "*how do you get a lady to scream twice? …. Well first you poke her in the butt then you wipe your dick on her curtains*".

Although these texts may originate from conversations Streijffert and/or Kihlgard have overheard while travelling, descriptions of travellers' thoughts can only be speculative. Many tickets were assembled in random fashion without access to details about their origin and Kihlgard seems instead to be inventing uninformed rambling sets of associations, perhaps relating to the kind of thoughts he imagines passengers would have on a journey. In the previous chapter, de Certeau's theories relating to the boredom a train passenger could experience are described. De Certeau (1984) describes the passenger's isolation in this kind of context that causes a sense of privacy and anonymity which could explain the very personal, crude and sometimes obscene nature of Kihlgard's text. The unstructured nature of these texts is similar to Streijffert's collecting impulse in that both seem spontaneous and effortless.

In his text walking in the city, de Certeau (1984:103) identifies a map as the remains of a walked journey; all that is left once the journey is complete. A ticket too can be viewed as the remnant of a journey. De Certeau compares "*pedestrian processes*" in a city to "*linguistic formations*" and he explains that the act of walking is a practice, indicative of lived experience, which is the converse of a graphic representation such as a map. The movement of pedestrians on a walked journey can be traced on city maps and transcribed through points and lines. But the lines on a map refer only to the absence of what has passed by and miss the act itself. For him (ibid: 97) the map is a trace left behind and is a poor substitute for the practice of walking. This transformation of action (walking) into graphic representation (map) *"causes a way of being in the world to be*

forgotten". For de Certeau, the map represents the absence of lived experience, or perhaps the memory thereof.

De Certeau's observations about walking can be applied to Streijffert's collecting in that Streijffert's tickets as graphic representations of those journeys are not articulations of the experience of the journey, but rather are the remainder thereof. The act (of the experience of the journey) has been transformed into a trace (ticket).

In considering the process of abstraction that has developed since the advent of highways, Augé (1995:98) explains that the signboards of names of places marking the route to those places on the motorway have replaced the experience of driving through those places themselves. Thus the driver on the motorway passes by these places (whose names appear on the motorway) without really experiencing the places themselves. Streijffert's book with its collection of relics of journeys (tickets) has translated the experience of her exhibition installation, which in itself is a remnant of the actual journeys travelled. The tickets representing the journeys can be compared to the names on the motorway; flipping the pages of Streijffert's book and seeing the "*relics*" of the journeys travelled is like driving past the signage of names of places. In neither case is the lived experience undertaken.

Streijffert is captivated by the physicality and materiality of the tickets, and the journey that they represent. The journey undertaken is of importance to her and it is not necessary that the journey be one she herself has taken. Streijffert is not claiming to substitute the journey with the ticket. In fact, she seems to be intrigued by the unknown details of the journeys that these tickets represent.



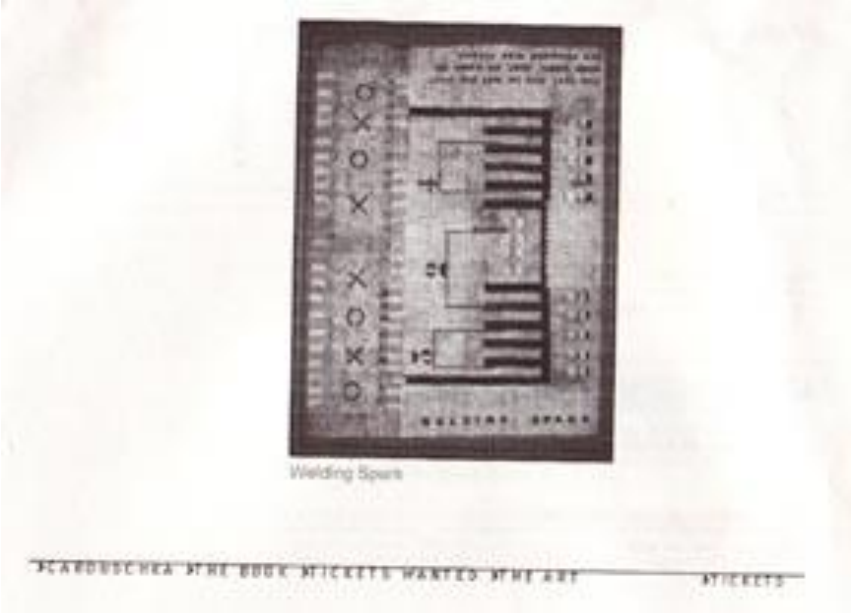
(Fig 3.1) Putco bus Tickets in *Carouschka's Tickets.* (Streijffert 1998:119)



(Fig 3.2) Putco bus Tickets in *Carouschka's Tickets.* (Streijffert 1998:118)



(Fig 3.3) Tickets from Japan in ***Carouschka's Tickets.*** (Streijffert 1998:127)



(Fig 3.4) Carouschka Streijffert, **Welding Spark.** Collaged tickets (Streijffert n.d.)

CHAPTER 4

Usha Seejarim

This chapter comprises a discussion of my practical work. I introduce this section by establishing points of connection between the bodies of work by Goldblatt and Streijffert already discussed and my own work. I then go on to discuss two contextualising works that predate this submission. The specific journey experienced in the making of the work is discussed to explore the routine involved. I detail my choices of media, material, titles of work, and conceptual underpinning of each choice.

The first body of practical work submitted for this degree is then presented. This comprised two video installations and a physical journey travelled by the assessors. In the first video installation, **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** (2002) (Fig 4.3:75), the importance of oral history and the gathering of narratives of communities are discussed. Next, the journey travelled by the assessors is described, followed by **Eight to Four** (2001) (Fig 4.4:84,85), the video work that resulted from the same physical route. In this second video piece, shadows of cars are presented as symbolic markers of contemplations of the passing of time and distance.

The second body of work submitted for this degree, **in place**, is then discussed. **in place** extends the exploration of journeys to travel beyond fixed routes. The works discuss the familiar and the foreign, a set of ideas about what constitutes ‘home’, domestic routines, gender stereotypes, and identifies modes of transport as rich areas of investigation. I then briefly explore connections between the two bodies of work.

There are points of similarity between the works of Goldblatt and Streijffert, discussed in the preceding two chapters, and my own work. A preoccupation with recording journeys undertaken and with shaping evidence of the journeys into artworks provides a shared referential framework. Within that structure, there are additional commonalities such as the occurrence of the Putco bus service. The subjects in Goldblatt's work travelled in Putco buses. Streijffert's tickets from South Africa are all Putco bus tickets, and two of my works produced before my practical submission for degree purposes have made reference to this mode of government supplied public transport.

Putco's appearance in all three artists work occurs over different periods. Goldblatt's photographs were taken during 1983 and 1984 and again in 1987, my tickets were collected from 1995 until late 1999 and also included tickets from as far back as the middle 1980s, and all seven of Streijffert's Putco tickets from South Africa are dated April or May 1998, the same year as the publication of her book. Tickets from other countries in Streijffert's book range from the early 1970s to 1998.

My two previous artworks are important to locate the practical submission within a broader context. The first, **Cash Ticket / Ash Ticket** (1999) (Fig 4.1:66) is a work made up of Putco bus tickets collected during my daily return bus journeys between Lenasia and Johannesburg over a period of approximately two years. The tickets are collaged into patterns informed mostly by the design on the actual ticket and are pinned through their corners to the soft board support. The work is approximately 3m x 1.5m in size. The tickets are densely packed and cover the entire surface of the board. None of the tickets are cut, they overlap each other in different configurations to create a variety of patterns.

The words 'cash ticket' used in the title appear on the ticket itself. Through the process of layering the tickets to form the collage, some of the uppermost tickets concealed the letter 'c' from the words 'cash ticket' on the underneath tickets thus

creating the words ‘ash ticket’. In previous works, I had used ash as a symbolic reference to cremation, a customary funerary practice in Hindu culture, which serves as a reminder of our mortality as human beings. The word ‘cash’ speaks of the commercial material world, while ‘ash’ alludes to the ethereal. The title therefore refers to the tension between the material and spiritual journey, or perhaps to the simultaneous existence of the two; a spiritual journey within a material world.

Many of the tickets bear testimony to passenger contact, with oily stains, phone numbers and other note scribbling, torn corners, etc, each narrating their evidence of their own journey. Some are weekly and others are monthly tickets, and have therefore been carried around in the pocket, purse or wallet of a particular passenger for that period. The resulting materiality of the tickets is an embodiment of their history. The physicality of the tickets appeals to me, a characteristic in common with Streijffert.

Cash Ticket / Ash Ticket is made of a combination of my own tickets and those that I requested other passengers to donate to me. I also befriended the worker at the Lenasia bus depot responsible for cleaning the buses, and at the end of every week, he presented me with a stack of discarded tickets that he had kept. My interest, again in common with Streijffert’s, was not that the tickets arose only from my own journeys, but that they represented a journey undertaken regardless of who the passenger was. The tickets included in **Cash Ticket / Ash Ticket** were restricted to the same journey I travelled from Lenasia to Johannesburg and back, and I only collected Putco bus tickets. Streijffert assembled her tickets from all over the world and from many modes of transport.

Details of the bus journey itself are useful to establish the notion of the journey as a routine activity. The rapport many of the passengers on this route developed with each other was a result of the routine. There are significant differences between this daily journey and that of the passengers on the KwaNdebele /

Pretoria Putco bus featured in Goldblatt's work. The route was much shorter, lasting approximately ninety minutes each way, and conditions of travel much better. The conditions of living in Lenasia were also significantly better than in KwaNdebele and Lenasia was devoid of the violence prevalent in KwaNdebele.

Operating somewhat like a big 'lift-club', the same people commuted regularly, at the same time everyday. On the 07:15 bus from Lenasia to Doornfontein in Johannesburg, the same expected pattern of events unfolded. Certain individuals were already on the bus when I embarked; the driver was the same as had been for the past year, a pair of women on the first double-seater on the right side were engaged in deep conversation, a younger woman waited further back for her friend to alight at the next stop. The remainder of the seats were mostly empty with a few single occupants including an elderly man who chewed some kind of tobacco. In winter, the right side of the bus filled up first, because this was the warmer sun-facing side, and in summer, the left was filled first because it was cooler. As I made my way to the rear of the bus, I knew that a seat would have been reserved for me near a group of elderly men and some students at the back of the bus, who would already have been playing a card game called 'thani'. The game was a significant part of the journey as it provided something to do for those playing, including myself, and entertainment for those watching. The game involved two sets of partners who play a strategic, fast paced game of calculations, counting card values, and tactical communication. When twelve sets are won, the game is complete and the winners would be challenged by the next set of partners. A passenger's briefcase or student's hard cover book usually provided the surface on which to play the game. Both those playing and those observing were usually engrossed in the process of the game and were oblivious to their surrounding environment, both within and without the bus. Only on a route as familiar as this could the passengers disregard the stops and halts in this way.

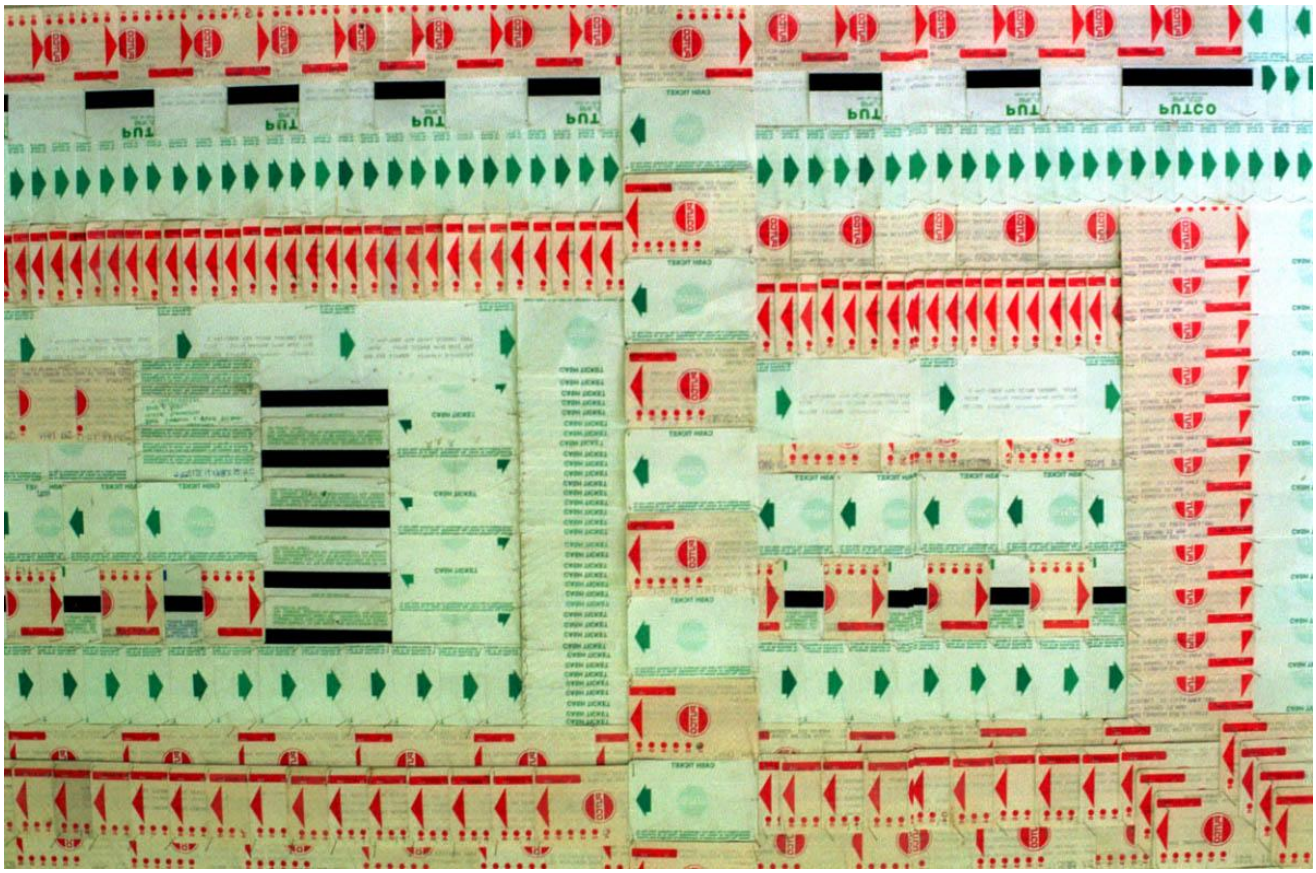
Many of these bus commuters travelled by bus because they were unable to afford taxis or their own cars. Many of the men on the Doornfontein bus worked as diamond cutters while others worked as salespersons. A number of students at the then Wits Technikon (now called the University of Johannesburg) also travelled by bus. The return journey was different in that I did not catch the bus home at the same time everyday, so I met different sets of passengers on different days, developing a unique relationship with each.

A second work made around the same time as ***Cash Ticket / Ash Ticket*** also grew out of my daily bus commute and explored the idea of routine journeys. The untitled work (1999) (Fig 4.2:67) comprised a series of photographs that were bound into a concertina book. When the book is opened or extended, the photographs are on one side and a map outlining the journey from Lenasia to Johannesburg appears on the other side. The pages of the book are the same dimensions as postcard-sized photographs. Each morning for a month I photographed from inside the bus the reflection of the bus in a specific shop window outside. The shop was located at the first stop in Doornfontein, after the journey from Lenasia, about an hour into the ninety-minute journey. The multiple layering of image and reality in the reflection was compelling: The image of the bus reflected on the shop window, fixed in a photograph of the reflection, which itself contains my image in the window of the bus, taking a photograph of the reflection of the bus outside in the shop reflective surface. This layered imaging and capturing relates to the particular condition that permeates the experience of commuting; the sense of stillness and movement, suspended time and distance traversed.

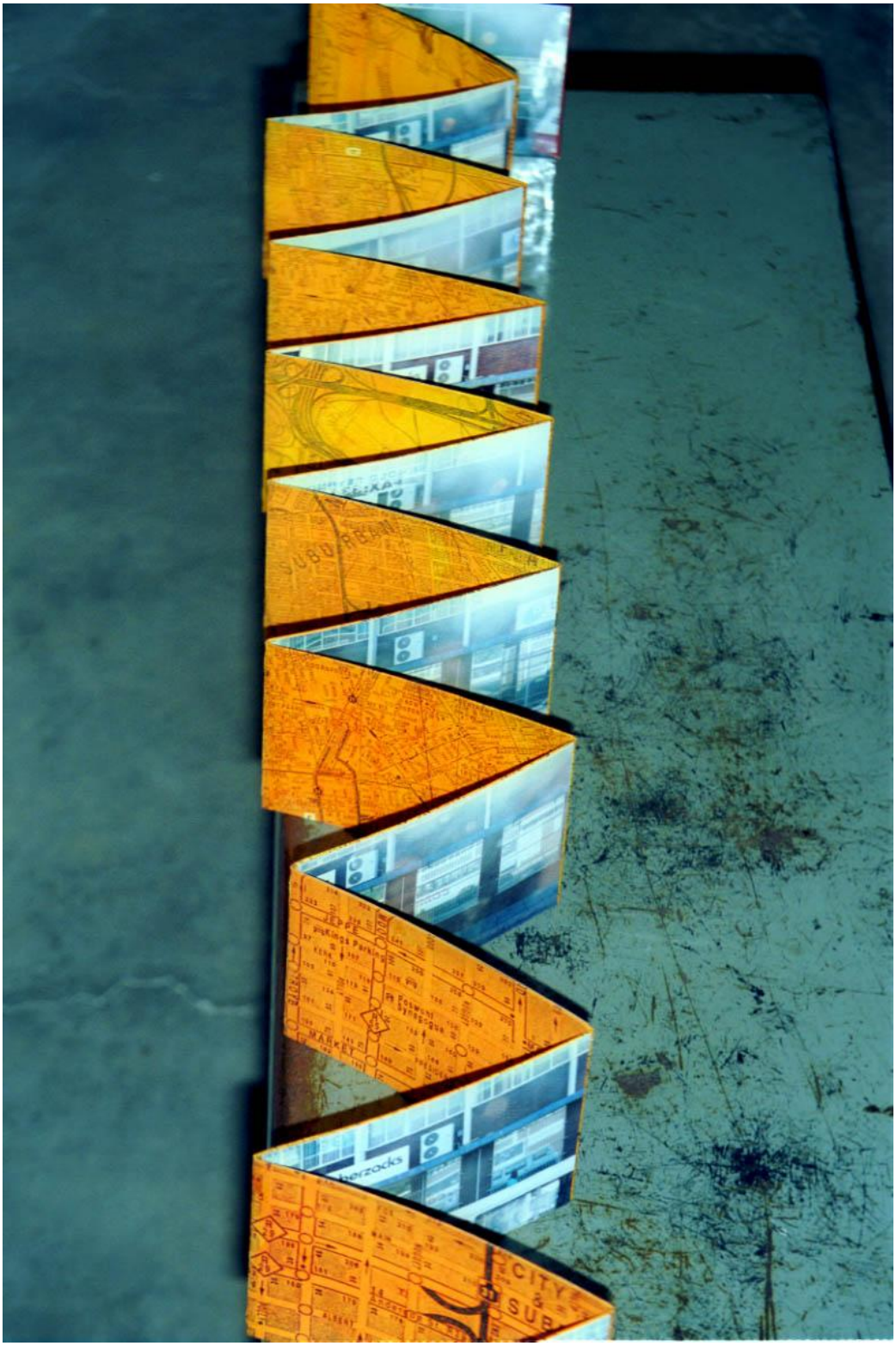
Unlike Goldblatt, I photographed the same scene everyday for a month and did not return to the subject once this period was complete. My focus was likewise defined. I did not take pictures of others on the bus, or of anything else outside. The recurrent singular sight, day after day is of important in this work. The notion that a place remains the same everyday because of its physical location is

challenged, by its being demonstrably different. The passing of time alters both the place and the experience of that place; events have occurred, history has changed, the weather has changed, each person has moved a day forward.

Themes of time and space occur in Streijffert, Goldblatt and my own works. The Putco bus company also appears in these works. Goldblatt and I further share the medium of photography and Streijffert and I have collected tickets. The resulting works of each artist differ substantially and these differences and commonalities are explored further in Chapter Five.



(Fig 4.1) Usha Seejarim, **Cash Ticket / Ash Ticket**, bus tickets, pins, soft board, 1999, size: 3m x 1.5m (detail)



(Fig 4.2) Usha Seejarim, untitled, artists book, photographs and map, dimensions folded: 150 x 100 x 80mm extended: 150 x 100 x 1000mm. 1999

Practical work

The practical work submitted for assessment includes two distinct bodies of work. The first comprises two video-based installation works with a physical journey between the two installations (August 2002). Assessors first viewed **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** (2002) (Fig 4.3:75) at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg, travelled to Lenasia to view **Eight to Four** (2001) (Fig 4.4:84,85) and then travelled back to Johannesburg. The second body of work was titled **in place** and was shown at Gallery Momo in Johannesburg in October 2004.

Two Rooms and a Kitchen

Two Rooms and a Kitchen (Fig 4.3:75) is made up of three screened video projections installed in a small space that simulates a room, with a decorative *tapyt* (cheap plastic-like, vinyl mat or decorative flooring) and a couch. The three-seater couch belongs to my mother and is intended to contribute a sense of a personal home environment to the work. Whenever **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** was exhibited, my mother's lounge was missing a couch. Thus the suggestion of home in one space necessitated a physical absence in another.

The video installation comprises ten sets of interviews configured so that they "converse" with each other. The interviewees make up ten groups of South Africans of Asian heritage; seven individuals, two couples, and one group of three. (Fig 4.3.1–4.3.10:75-78) All currently live in Lenasia except for one, Mrs Ratanjee (Fig 4.3.4:76), a Durban resident who was visiting Lenasia at the time. Two are my immediate neighbours, two others live nearby in the neighbourhood and the rest live at the JISS (Johannesburg Institute of Social Services) Centre for the Aged, the local home for the aged in Lenasia. I identified the people in my community over the age of seventy-five, who had witnessed the beginnings of Lenasia as my participants. All those I approached to request their involvement consented and were extremely willing and hospitable. Most enjoyed the

opportunity to tell their stories and were excited by the interest being expressed in their lives. The oldest subject, Mr Navrotam Parshotam (Fig 4.3.1:75), was ninety-three at the time, and coincidently, we share a birthday.

Each group was interviewed for approximately an hour. Relevant bits of footage were then extracted from each interview and edited to create a fifty-two minute narrative presented in the form of **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**.

Two Rooms and a Kitchen documents a little known part of South African history and contributes a narrative that informs awareness and challenges stereotypes. Widely held misconceptions are contradicted, for example the assumption that all Indians in South Africa own businesses and make *samoosas*. The interviewees worked in factories as labourers, as waiters in restaurants, in sales positions for other business owners or were housewives. The artwork that resulted from the interviews is participative in nature and is intended to assert the power of oral history, here literally passed down from an older generation to a much younger one. The narrative foregrounds different constituents of identity through the discussion of issues of belonging. A sense of community as in Fietas is described by the interviewees, or the lack thereof as during the early days of Lenasia. Race and access to work, facilities, housing and transport are considered, as are the position of Asians in South Africa and their conditions during apartheid. Issues of gender are brought forward through mention of education privileges for boys for example, or the role of women as housewives and mothers. Class issues surface through discussions on demarcated living areas in Lenasia, as well as the different degrees of access to transport due to affordability.

Despite different areas of overlap such as common culture and environment, as a third generation South African of Asian descent and as an adult in post-apartheid South Africa, the construction of my identity as a South African is very different from those interviewed. They have witnessed in their lifetime major

political change, unrest, immigration, the advent and demise of apartheid and the achievement of democracy. The considerable difference of experience between older and younger generations reinforces the value of the contribution of these individuals and the generation they represent. Their experiences and insights constitute a resource potentially forgotten if not preserved. It is important to recognise this generation as mentors, living archives of a recent and significant time in the history of South Africa. The inter-generational investigation reflected in **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** raises questions of family; my grandparents were not available to me and they have not lived in Lenasia. Since I do live in Lenasia, I was interested in the construction of the place and the history of its residents. These factors influenced my choice of subjects.

Part of the intention of producing this artwork was archive building, and the "historical evidence" gathered has been presented as an artwork. As the maker of this piece, I have made a number of artistic decisions such as the presentation of the work in the form of an installation, editorial decisions regarding the video footage, and the sequencing and flow of conversation created. The process of making this work was inspiring, mentor building and rewarding. All the participants welcomed me openly, generously sharing their memories, views and thoughts with me. This warmth was central to the construction of the work both in practical terms and in determining the formal resolution. For this reason I have included still images from the video of each participant, both in this section as well as in the transcript of the work attached as Appendix Two.

The physical installation in the art gallery was assembled to suggest the same kind of comfort and hospitality expressed by the interviewees. These considerations informed the inclusion of furnishings like the three-seater couch, and decorative vinyl flooring typical of many working-class Indian homes in Lenasia (Fig 4.3:75). Viewers at the gallery were invited to enjoy the work in comfort, and the conversations between the subjects are presented in an

intimate way to engage the observer informally, almost as if they were part of the group.

Two Rooms and a Kitchen begins with Mr Parshotam's (Fig 4.3.1:75) story. He tells us about being born in India and arriving in South Africa by ship in April 1923 at the age of fourteen. He came to meet his father, and left behind both his mother and wife in India. Then Mrs Ratanjee (Fig 4.3.4:76) responds in Gujerati (her home language) describing the length of time that the ship took to get to South Africa from India, "*If today is Saturday, then only after the second and the third Saturday, then only do you arrive on a Monday*". Mrs Ratanjee is the only person who speaks in a language other than English, and her comments are therefore the only ones translated and subtitled in English.

The first Indians to arrive in South Africa in 1860 came predominantly from the provinces of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in north India, and Tamil / Telagu speaking areas in south India. They came as indentured labourers to work on the sugar cane fields in the then Natal. Later, others immigrated to South Africa as merchants and tradesman and moved into other areas of the country such as Johannesburg. Today South African Indians form about three percent of South Africa's total population, a minority group that maintains its strong cultural roots and combines a South African identity and an Indian heritage. In common with most diasporic communities, these are continually developing identities and are constantly challenged, renegotiated, and reassessed. Older generations tend to hold tightly onto inherited traditions, ceremonies, language and customs, while the youth explore external influences introduced through the multiplicity of South African identities and exposure to the mass media.

Other Asian people who became citizens of South Africa originated from different parts of India, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Mauritius. Mrs Baby Lutchemia (Fig 4.3.3:76) explains that one of her grandparents came from somewhere in Mauritius and that is the only lineage of her ancestors that she knows. Some

South African Indians have maintained contact with their families in India and other places of origin, particularly those that came to South Africa as merchants and who have had the financial resources to travel back and forth and keep in touch with their families. In contrast, the Indians who came as indentured labourers had little or no contact with their families in their countries of origin. Current generations often have no idea as to their specific places of origin.

The subjects in the videos then go on to discuss their childhood and describe what it was like in those times. Some were born in India, though most were born in South Africa. Many grew up in poverty, and speak of the difficult conditions in which they lived. None of the subjects interviewed finished school, as a job to help contribute financially towards the household expenses was considered more important. The women in particular either did not attend school at all, or left when very young. Mrs Abida Ahmed (Fig 4.3.2:76) says that she had to leave school since her grandfather thought that she was "*getting too big for my boots*". Mrs Ratanjee (Fig 4.3.4:76) never went to school because she was married at the age of five, in India, and lived with her parents-in-law, and her aunt, none of whom regarded schooling as necessary. As a result, she cannot read or write but states that she can count money.

Marriages were mostly arranged by parents and other elders within the family. Ms Lutchmee Moodley (Fig 4.3.6:77) states, "*Those days it was match-making, now it is love marriage*". Mrs Fatima Sali (Fig 4.3.5:77) explains in a matter of fact way that an arranged marriage meant that she "*never saw the guy, we never went out*", and neither did either party have a say in the matter. Arranged marriages were a commonly practiced tradition during the time described by the interviewees. In South Africa today they exist only within very conservative families and usually the couples do contribute to the decision-making.

Most of the participants in **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** lived in Fietas at some point in their lives. They describe women gossiping on the street corners,

children playing soccer and cricket in the streets, the busy shopping area of Fourteenth Street, the 'bio's' (bioscope), and the generally warm, active and energetic atmosphere. Mrs Savita Poonsamy (Fig 4.3.2:76) and Mrs Muthal Pillay (Fig 4.3.2:76) reminisce about their favourite hairstyles, the "*up switch and the down switch*", and Mrs Poonsamy asserts her passion for dancing, even now.

Mrs Sali (Fig 4.3.5:77) describes how she cried for three months when she and her family were moved to Lenasia after being forcibly removed from Fietas. The appalling conditions are described by many; the notorious bucket system for toilets, dirt roads and poor transport facilities. Mr Thandrind (Fig 4.3.8:78) remembers the lack of electricity and how his wife would have to leave a candle burning in the window for him to be able to recognise his home, as the area was pitch dark when he arrived from work.

Apart from the trauma of their relocation, many of the subjects interviewed described their experience under apartheid as one of inconvenience rather than deep distress. Compared to the experiences of Black people, Mrs Lutchemia (Fig 4.3.3:76) comments "a*partheid didn't really affect us (Asians)*". She describes its impact on her life as her knowing where she was allowed and not allowed to go. Mrs Anjilay Naidoo (known as Dolly) (Fig 4.3.7:77) echoes that perception and says that by standing, and not sitting on the whites-only benches, things were kept quite unproblematic. Mr and Mrs Thandrind (Fig 4.3.8:78) voice their frustration when going to the beach in Durban and not being able to bathe in the "*nice beach*" across from their hotel, having to travel a distance to the non-white beaches. They go on to describe their experiences during that holiday, when Asians and Coloureds were served food through the back door of restaurants, and Black customers had to go even further around the corner to a separate entrance.

For many like Mr and Mrs Thandrind (Fig 4.3.8:78), apartheid provoked humiliation and rage, for others like Mrs Lutchemia (Fig 4.3.3:76), an acceptance

of the system. Others interviewed were more actively involved in the struggle against apartheid. Mr Peter Moonsamy and Mrs Doreen Moonsamy (Fig 4.3.9:78) recount how Nelson Mandela would come to their home (in late 1950s and early 1960s) dressed in a large overcoat, "*like a security guard*", as their home was a kind of safe-house for anti-apartheid activists. Mr Moonsamy further describes how he aided his brother, then a Treason Trialist, and a few other political prisoners to escape from jail. He describes also some of the torture that these prisoners endured while in jail.

Two Rooms and a Kitchen ends with Mrs Zohrah Seedat's (Fig 4.3.10:78) observation that Asians did not suffer as much as the Black people, and Mr Parshotam's (Fig 4.3.1:75) prediction for a bright future for South Africa.



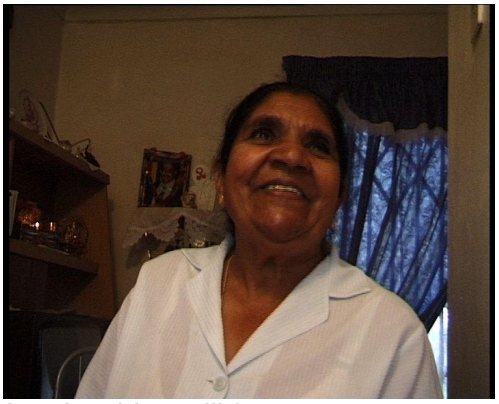
(Fig 4.3) Usha Seejarim, **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**, installation view as shown at the Goodman Gallery in August 2002, video projection, couch, vinyl floor, duration: 52 min. 2002



(Fig 4.3.1) Mr Navrotam Parshotam. video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



(Fig 4.3.2) Mrs Savita Moonsamy, Mrs Muthal Pillay, Mrs Abida Ahmed video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



(Fig 4.3.3) Mrs Baby Lutchemia, video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



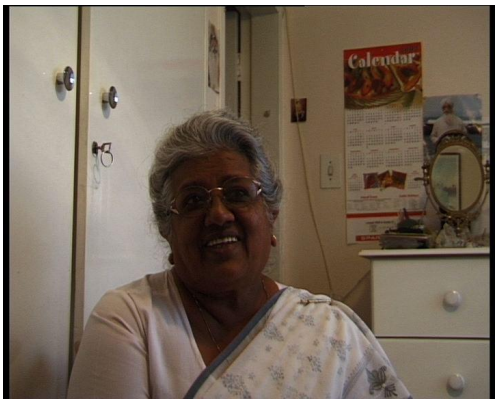
(Fig 4.3.4) Mrs Manibhen Manilal Ratanjee, video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



(Fig 4.3.5) Mrs Fatima Sali, video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



(Fig 4.3.6) Miss Lutchmee Moodley, video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



(Fig 4.3.7) Mrs Anjilay Naidoo (Dolly), video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



(Fig 4.3.8) Mr Annamala Thandrand, video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



(Fig 4.3.9) Mr Peter Moonsamy & Mrs Doreen Moonsamy, video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



(Fig 4.3.10) Mrs Zohra Seedat, video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.

Journey travelled by assessors

After experiencing **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** (Fig 4.3:75) at the Goodman Gallery, the assessors were requested to choose a means of transport to travel to the bus depot or taxi rank on Loveday Street in central Johannesburg. They then had to catch either a bus or taxi to the next venue in Lenasia. The intention behind structuring the assessors' experience of the work in this way was to provide an equivalent, albeit for one day only, of a journey on a fixed route.

What Lelyveld (1986:110) refers to in his analysis of David Goldblatt's KwaNdebele photographs as "*this term known euphemistically known as resettlement, bluntly as removal, and cynically as repatriation*" caused the birth of many new routes and roots. Due to relocation, many new routes from places of residence to places of work have had to be formed. Because of the emotional nature of people's attachments to their place of residence, relocation is experienced by many as an uprooting. Over time, these new locations become homes and new roots are formed. Many people have to travel daily from their home to their work. I too travel a fixed daily route, and I am aware that my journey results from a specific past history of forced relocation. My work is informed too by the awareness of the construction of new histories daily, as many commuters travel over the same tarred surface. Representations of these fixed routes have been an ongoing subject of exploration in my work.

In specifying the options for the assessor's means of travel I wished to stimulate an awareness of the different forms of transport available. Cognisance of the diverse experiences of commuters around Johannesburg even in basic activities like travelling to work and back was important. Although the transport choices I offered were ones that are considered routine and unavoidable for many, for this group of assessors the journey would be an unusual experience and would act as a referential framework through which to view the work presented for assessment.

The group opted to be driven by the Goodman Gallery driver to Loveday Street. They then travelled by taxi to Lenasia. The assessors experienced a typical taxi ride with its cramped conditions and specific taxi culture; for example the system of collecting and collating fares (starting with the passengers in the back row of the taxi and moving forward in an organised structured way) and the language used within the taxi (such as “short left” for “stop at the next left turn”). At the JISS Service Center for the Aged, the destination in Lenasia, the group of assessors viewed the second video titled **Eight to Four**. The venue was selected for its symbolic as well as practical value. Some of the JISS residents were the subjects of the video, **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**, as many of the interviews were conducted there. This venue also represents the Lenasia leg of the Johannesburg-Lenasia commute that was explored in **Eight to Four**.

Eight to Four

Eight to Four (Fig 4.4:84,85) was made along the route that the assessors travelled, between Lenasia and Johannesburg. I have been commuting between these two places for the past twelve years. My home was in Lenasia and my work and at that time study place was in Johannesburg. I videoed the shadows cast by the cars nearby the car I was in, on the left side of the road. The outward journey took place in peak-hour traffic at 08:00 and the return journey, also at rush hour, at 16:00. The title of the work thus refers to the time of day when the footage was shot. The mundane quality of the slow moving shadows of cars is emphasised by the careful lingering attention given to them, synchronised by the droning of slowed-down traffic sounds. Existing sound from the video footage was slowed down to correspond to the visuals.

The video is eight minutes and fourteen seconds long. The editing deliberately maintained the linear nature of the journey, and included recognisable landmarks along the route. Images of the shadows fade into the next scene in the sequence and editing in this regard was minimal. The camera was hand-held and the resulting unstable motion is evident in the rendition of the video.

The nature of time passing, the effect of light and the quality of movement are captured in the mesmerising play of shadows. Not only is the earth moving on its axis, changing the position of the sun, and therefore the length of the shadow, but the cars are also moving, and therefore the shadows themselves are mobile. Everything is in a state of flux; nothing is constant, as every moment becomes a memory at the very advent of the very next moment.

The ethereal qualities of shadows are of interest and my preoccupation with them as representation of illusion is longstanding. Tensions between reality and illusion are apparent in some other works as well. The shadows of the cars are present everyday, traversing the same journey daily with hundreds of commuters, literal projections of the commuters' ritual movement. A shadow is created when an object intercepts a source of light and projects its shape. Despite the simplicity of the physical formation of a shadow, it remains enigmatic, visible yet intangible.

The filming of the shadows was possible because I was a passenger in the car and not a driver. The passive role of a passenger allows the opportunity to observe "sights" along the route. The ability to film from a car was also easier as it did not require any permission from fellow passengers, as would have been necessary had I been commuting by public transport. Travelling by car is different to public commuting in that it is more private.

Like the passengers on the Putco buses of the KwaNdebele/Pretoria and Lenasia/Johannesburg commute, the sights on my daily route became ordinary and predictable. Unlike these passengers though, I am not bored by these mundane sights but am instead fascinated by their ability to go unnoticed by many. Drawing attention to this daily route by means of the shadows in the artwork changes the sights on the route from being unnoticed to being of interest. Many viewers of the artwork have commented that they had never noticed the

shadows before, and after seeing the work are very aware of them. **Eight to Four** however also points to the predictability and boredom of the daily commute.

After viewing **Eight to Four** the assessors were driven back to Johannesburg in a Mercedes Benz, back to their privately owned cars at the Goodman Gallery. They were then able to make their own journeys home. It was important for the assessors to experience difference forms of travel because many people who travel this daily route do so via different forms of transport. In fact, approximately seventy five percent of Lenasians travel by car to Johannesburg. Although the group was being driven by car during this leg of the journey, and despite the fact that this journey was more comfortable than the taxi ride and they were with someone familiar, it was still an involuntary activity. The position of assessor as one of power was subverted through my determining the details of the journey.

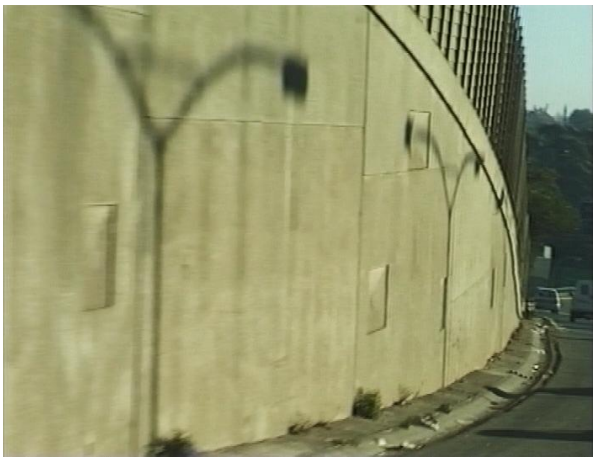
This group of assessors got a sense of the journey that Lenasia / Johannesburg commuters live daily. Perhaps this is similar to David Goldblatt's experience with the KwaNdebele commuters. The difference between once-off and routine journeys is one of novelty and excitement as opposed to one of mundanity and ordinariness. Being aware of and interested in one's surroundings during a journey is perhaps restricted to those who first experience a particular journey. For example, Lelyveld (1986:122) who accompanied Goldblatt on his venture on the KwaNdebele commute describes in detail in his article a jogger he sees as they enter the white suburbs, the contradiction in political posters on the lampposts seemingly mocking the commuters, and of course the blooming jacarandas. The author writes about what he notices during this journey whilst everyone else is literally asleep. The fact that he writes about these observations means that they stirred some interest for him. And possibly they did for the commuters as well when they first took this journey; any initial interest or impact is however lost in the boredom of seeing it day after day.

A thirty-year-old salesman travelling on the KwaNdebele bus is uninterested in his surroundings or environment on the bus. He describes in his interview with Brenda Goldblatt (1989:50) how he uses the bus journey to try and get some sleep. "*It's only at the bus stops that you wake up because the bus comes to a standstill. Then it pulls off, and you try and sleep again. That's how we get used to this journey. We never see it*."

The importance placed on the heightened awareness of the new sights that occurs when one is a visitor, a condition of the experience of a tourist and the difference between tourist travel and daily travel is discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

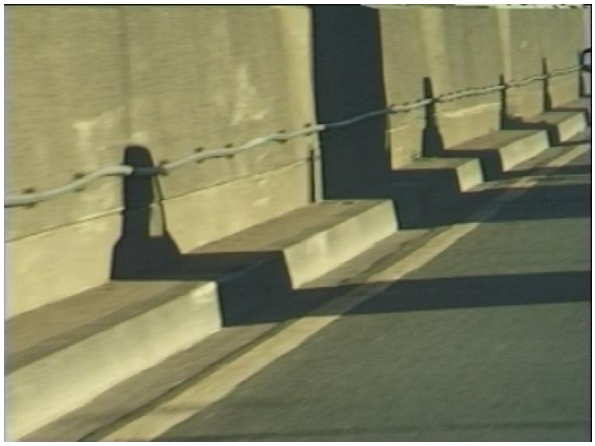












(Fig 4.4.) Usha Seejarim, **Eight to Four**, video stills, 2001.

in place

The second body of work submitted for assessment, **in place**, comprised a series of photographs, installation works, video installations, and other two-dimensional artworks.

The title **in place** is intended to be read in many ways. 'In' can refer to being at home as opposed to 'out'. The 'in place' is also the hot, new, fashionable location, and 'in place' also refers to being in position. A place that is 'in' is one that is internal, and inside. If 'place' is about location, and 'in' means inside then **in place** refers to a kind of location within a location, a place inside a place. A feeling of home even when away from home.

The aim of the exhibition was to explore the relationship between the familiar and the foreign with a particular focus on the idea of home, because home constitutes such a big part of travelling. This seeming contradiction is evident in the language used to describe the event. When travelling or going on vacation one often says, "I am going away" which prompts the question, away from what? Away from where? From home? Away from the familiar, and the routine. The whole motivation for travelling explores the need to experience something that is different from the familiar.

This idea underpinned many pieces on the exhibition, which showed works that have a particularly domestic quality, others that referenced travelling and a number of works with my childhood bicycle as subject matter.

The condition of travelling far from home prompts the need to locate a sense of comfort through the familiar, in finding something known when in unknown territory. Many tourists mob places like MacDonald's in foreign countries perhaps not so much to escape the local cuisine but to connect with a sense of consoling familiarity; that which is not foreign (Curtis & Pajaczkowska:1994:207). Many carry photographs of loved ones, so that amongst all the excitement of new

sights and sounds there is someone that is not strange, and not new, but rather familiar and known (ibid). These considerations gave rise to the series **Going Tokyo Missing Home** (2004), a series of eight photographs of images of my recent trip to Tokyo, double-exposed with regular scenes in my home.

Going Tokyo Missing Home (Fig 5.1.1:93, 5.1.2:94) explores the simultaneous existence of the familiar and the exotic. The double exposure of scenes from Tokyo and regular sights from my immediate physical environment at home in Lenasia creates unusual juxtapositions, like Buddhist shrines next to a garden hosepipe in my back yard, or a street scene in Tokyo juxtaposed with face lotion on my dressing table. The series also investigates the traveller's experience of being in more than one place at a time. This seemingly impossible state refers not to a physical dual presence but to a state of mindfulness. When I travel, I often miss home, and when home, I reminisce about being in the place from which I have just returned. The visual fusion of these two places is a reflection on the mobile and active state of our minds. Our minds are constantly wandering, and seldom fully present in the moment. When at home one might be thinking of something at work or visa versa. We are rarely fully aware of each present moment. The work also references many people's yearning to escape to an exotic place, a place unlike their visually ordinary place of home.

The exotic nature of "the other place" is explored in a photographic collage titled **Prolonging the view** (2004) (Fig 5.2:95). Cityscape scenes of New York taken from the top of the Empire State Building are collaged to create an unrealistic repetitive city image. The intention is to highlight our state of awareness when viewing a sight away from home. For example, the sun rises and sets everyday wherever we may be, however we rarely take the opportunity to admire the sunset in our everyday lives. But when away from home, we suddenly become aware of the magnificent beauty of the same sun that we could have enjoyed at home. During this time of admiration, we want to extend the enjoyment and savour the moment. We want to "prolong the view". While the New York

cityscape may be an exotic and adventurous sight for us, it is at the same time an ordinary sight for a New Yorker.

Attention is drawn to ordinary activities in a number of works included in the exhibition **in place** that explore daily domestic activities. In **Daily Dishes** (2004*)*, a video work, the act of washing dishes is highlighted. The dominance of this activity is emphasised through the jerking rendition of the video footage. The title simultaneously refers to food eaten everyday and the chore of washing dishes daily. The video is presented on a television monitor mounted on a shelf, almost like in a kitchen. The colour video documents the washing of a pile of dishes in a typical kitchen sink. Presenting this ordinary activity in the context of a gallery references the debates provoked originally by conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp who coined the term readymade in 1915 which includes the classification as art of an ordinary activity, object, or documentation thereof, when shown in a gallery.

The stereotype of a suburban husband mowing the lawn on a Sunday afternoon forms the subject of **Peace Job** (2004) (Fig 5.3:96). In this video my husband, Rajash Seejarim, mows the lawn in our yard in Lenasia. The colour video is presented on a television monitor, which is in a TV cabinet typical of many South African Asian and other South African working class homes (Fig 5.3.1:96). The cabinet is adorned with fake porcelain and other ‘kitsch’ ornaments (dogs, swans, bowl of fruit), doilies, plastic flowers in vases and an image of Lord Krishna with red lights that flicker on and off. The typical setup of an interior of a home contradicts the outdoor subject matter of the video itself. This play between inside and outside and traditionally female and male defined roles reinforces the word play in the title of the exhibition, **in place**. The title of the work **Peace Job** comments on the term “piece job”, which refers to temporary or once-off manual labour jobs like gardening, washing a car or cleaning a house. Many unemployed (usually Black) people walk from door to door in suburbs seeking “piece jobs”. The substitution of the word “peace” for “piece” alludes to the possibility of the job being a peaceful one regardless of it being an income-motivated activity. Many

people in the suburbs don't have the time or the desire to do gardening, and see it as a task that someone else, whom they can afford to hire, can fulfil. If they allowed themselves the opportunity, they might discover that it can be a pleasurable experience, which offers immense peace.

The video is shot with intermediate timings. Two seconds were recorded every thirty seconds. The footage is in 'pieces' of time. The video therefore compresses time and the entire afternoon's job is presented in seven minutes.

Domestic activities like washing the dishes, mowing the lawn, ironing, and cooking are presented as recognisable, traditional, gender-specific chores. These works are not intended to support these gender roles nor negate them. They simply reflect the way things are. The aim is not to advocate that all women should wash dishes and all men should mow the lawn, or that women cannot mow the lawn and men cannot wash dishes. In many cases these roles are reversed (as in my own home where my husband often washes the dishes, and I often work in the garden). The objective in this work is simply to present a typical, ordinary occurrence. Like my fascination with daily travel, the routine of washing dishes became the subject matter of my work, as that was what I was doing often at the time. This focus on 'normal' activity as subject matter for artmaking is perhaps an inversion of the traditional hierarchy of subject matter. This inversion is not presented as a new practice. It can be traced from as far back as the eighteenth century with genre paintings of scenes from everyday life right through to Duchamp, and movements like Pop Art and to Postmodernism (Bazin 1962).

Other activities reflected in the works submitted for assessment in this exhibition were cooking and ironing. These are evidenced in the **spilt milk** series. The heated surface of an iron and a stove were used to create burned markings on rice paper, which was treated with milk. These works are gender unspecific (Fig 5.4.1:97), except for one piece in the series (Fig 5.4.2:98), which depicts the

body of a woman, with the burned markings of two hot plates that reference breasts and the triangle of an iron denoting a pubic area. Although the title of this particular work, **a woman's place** (2004) (Fig 5.4.2:98) could be read as endorsing the suggestion that a woman's place is in the kitchen cooking, and ironing, this stereotype is contrary to my beliefs. The artwork is instead intended to be a reminder that such situations of enforced stereotyping are still very prevalent and that many women are not able to exercise free choice about their roles. The burned works could also reference abuse situations in the context of damaging gender stereotypes. The title **spilt milk** plays on the phrase "no use crying over spilt milk", which refers to the uncomplaining acceptance of women's lot in life. All three works described above (**Daily Dishes, Peace Job,** and **a women's place**) are intended to comment on and counteract stereotypes.

Old-fashioned coal irons together with bricks feature in another installation titled **The Modest Home Builder** (2004) (Fig 5.5:99). A number of irons and bricks are meticulously covered and hand-sewn with fabric. The fabric used is from 'saris' and 'shweshwe' cloth, referencing the Indian and South African components of my female identity. Both bricks and irons are physically heavy objects and have respective utilitarian functions. Their solid structure allows them to serve other functions as well. I recall my paternal grandmother's home, where she covered bricks in layers of 'sari' fabric and used them as doorstoppers for example. A few years ago, I noticed that my mother-in-law uses an old iron as a doorstopper. The common reuse of these objects prompted associations of women, ingenuity and strength. The title refers to women's inherent strength and power, their ability to create and sustain a home and their humility in doing so.

An aspect of my childhood that is associated with a sense of comfort, home and freedom is that of riding a bicycle. I have used different modes of transport (trucks, cars, subway trains, buses, taxis, even planes) as metaphors for the journey in previous works. The works on **in place** were inspired by my childhood bicycle because of its unsophisticated and familiar nature. In **bicycle** (2004) (Fig

5.6:100) the image of a bicycle is sewn into a rectangular piece of mosquito netting, using threads from the netting itself. The material was selected mostly for aesthetic reasons and its pliable nature, although associations to mosquito netting covered doors and windows in a domestic environment is also appropriate. In another work, my actual bicycle was used to create a life size image of the bicycle using a photographic technique called ‘van dyk brown’ (also known as ‘kallotype’) (Fig 5.8:102). This technique utilises the sun as a natural light source to expose a treated light-sensitive surface. Normally, a photographic negative is pressed against the surface and exposed in the sun. Instead of using a negative, I positioned the actual bicycle and exposed it onto a piece of treated canvas of the same size, resulting in a negative image of the bicycle. In two other works a tactile two-dimensional image of a bicycle was used to create ‘frottage’ (graphite rubbings) drawings (Fig 5.7:101).

I find images of bicycles attractive because of the liberating feeling of riding one. There is a sense of independence and the ability to go wherever one wants to on a bicycle. Riding a bicycle also conjures feelings of childhood for me, the innocence associated with being a child and the ability to enjoy simple things like riding a bicycle. As a child, riding on my bicycle was a daily activity, which further relates to my current fascination with routine activities.

Unlike many European and Asian countries, bicycles are not used by many South African adults as a chief means of getting around. This could be partly due to the fact that many live far away from their places of work and as Pierie (2001:174) stated earlier, apartheid geographically designed the location of places of homes far away from places of work, particularly in impoverished communities so that one had to utilise public transport “*minimising the possibilities for walking and cycling to work*”.

Links between two bodies of work.

The first body of work which included **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**, the journey travelled by the assessors and **Eight to Four**, focused on a local form of daily travel and how this activity was a result of a particular history. **Eight to Four** described the journey between Lenasia and Johannesburg (2001 - the time when the video was shot), and **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** offered a reason for the existence of the route and commuters among other details of historical, social, personal, and political narrative. The assessors travelled this route for one day as a compulsory activity for the sake of assessment. Both works and the assessment journey were positioned around the locality of Johannesburg, and the dominant theme of **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** was the notion of home. Conditions of travel other than daily commuting mentioned in the work included immigration, forced relocation and exile.

The second body of work, **in place** was presented two years later and while the preoccupation with travel remained a major component, it was extended from a previous focus on daily travel to that of long distance travel, specifically its relation to a state of being at home. Further, domestic activities associated with life in the home like ironing, washing the dishes, and mowing the lawn and riding a bicycle were explored in artmaking.

These two bodies of work continue a fascination with travel that began in 1995 through the collection of Putco bus tickets and represent a decade of exploring concerns relating to journey, routine, everyday, home and away as manifested in my artmaking practice.



(Fig 5.1.1) Usha Seejarim, Series: **Going Tokyo Missing Home**, Lambda print, edition of 5, series of 13, 2004



(Fig 5.1.2) Usha Seejarim, Series: **Going Tokyo Missing Home**, Lambda print, edition of 5, series of 13, 2004



(Fig 5.2) Usha Seejarim, **Prolonging the view**, Lambda print, 2004



(Fig 5.3.1) Usha Seejarim, **Peace Job**, installation view, 2004



(Fig 5.3.2) Usha Seejarim, **Peace Job**, video still, 2004



(Fig 5.4.1) Usha Seejarim, **Spilt Milk: Effervescent**, and **Pressed Flowers**, burned milk on rice paper, size A1. 2004



(Fig 5.4.2) Usha Seejarim, ***Spilt Milk: A Woman's Place***, burned milk on rice paper, size A1. 2004



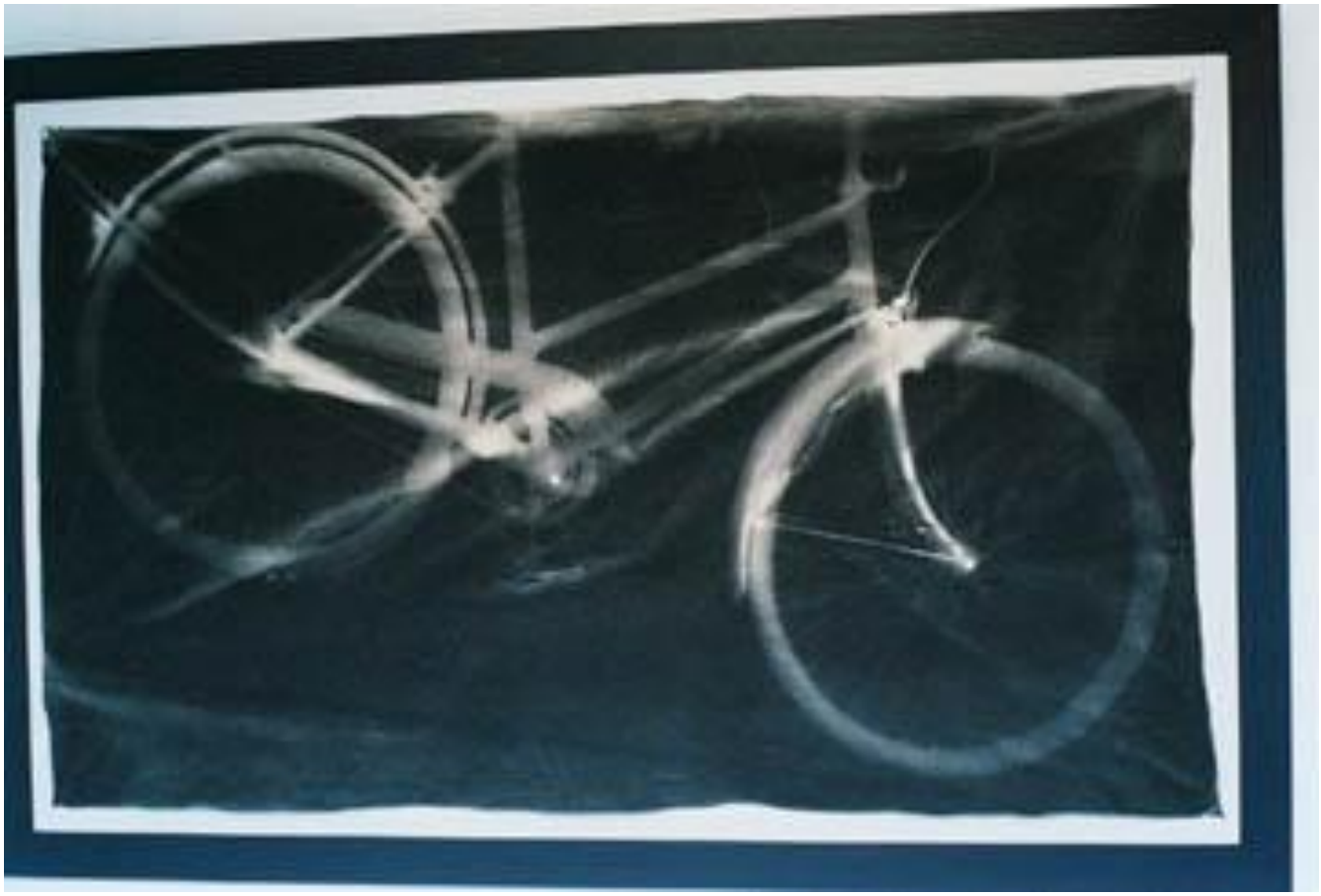
(Fig 5.5) Usha Seejarim, **The Modest Home Builder**, floor installation, bricks & irons covered in fabric 2004



(Fig 5.6) Usha Seejarim, **Bicycle**, mosquito netting, size 500 x 400 mm. 2004



(Fig 5.7) Usha Seejarim, **Ride**, frottage on tracing paper, 2004 (detail)



(Fig 5.8) Usha Seejarim, **Bicycle**, Van dyk brown print on canvas, 2004

CHAPTER 5

Representing the Journey

Following on from the detailed discussions in the preceeding chapters of the selected three artists' works, this section explores their representations of journey in relation to their subjects' literal journeys. I briefly discuss the notion of home and the construction of identity; the relationship between the artist and subjects travelling; and metaphorical ideas of journey as artmaking processes.

The subjects in Goldblatt's and my work commuted daily on a fixed route, on Putco buses, in South Africa. The conditions of travel were significantly better for the subjects who commuted between Lenasia and Johannesburg, than those of the subjects in Goldblatt's images who commuted between KwaNdebele and Pretoria under abject conditions. While the Putco tickets in Streijffert's book are similarly from daily journeys undertaken by passengers, the book contains many other kinds of tickets too. Over a thousand tickets from seventy countries include also numerous plane tickets, baggage tags, and boarding passes indicating a broader range of travel forms than only an involuntary daily journey. The sheer variety of tickets denotes an element of diversity that contrasts with the repitition of a fixed, daily routine journey.

In their account of travel and tourism Curtis and Pajaczkowska (1994:199) describe travelling as the opposite of daily routine. They see the journey as "*a symbol of narrative*" associated with "*development, growth and change*". For them "*The 'trip' constitutes a lapse in the regular rhythms of mundane existence, it leads to a place where time 'stands still' or is reversed into a utopian space of freedom, abundance and transparency*". They liken travel to a Carnival, where everyday order is inverted. Travel "*offers a vicarious participation in the pleasures associated with higher status, symbolically marked by exalted points of view, exclusive spaces and privileged services*".

They do not specifically include commuting in this analysis and their comparison is limited to that between vacation travel and the everyday "*mundane existence*". The association between commuting and everyday existence is so strong however that I have applied their analysis to this form of travel too. They also do consider the involuntary journey of the immigrant which is discussed later in this chapter.

Travelling differs from involuntary journeys in its association with pleasure, choice and freedom. If as Curtis and Pajaczkowska (ibid) explain, travel or journey is associated with growth, development, and movement, away from "*mundane existence*" into "*utopian spaces of freedom*", then by implication daily journeys on fixed routes such as commutes between Lenasia and Johannesburg, or KwaNdebele and Pretoria, must imply the opposite; a stagnant life, towards "*mundane existence*" into imperfect spaces of restriction. For the daily commuter, this form of travel offers participation in the (dis)pleasures associated with lower "*status*"', symbolically marked by low viewpoints, (in)clusive spaces and (un)privileged services. This is certainly the case with the KwaNdebele commuters and to a lesser degree with the Lenasia commuters.

The daily act of commuting is associated with the ordinary, boring, average and inferior while travelling in the form of touring, exploring and vacationing, and going on a trip is linked to excitement, discovery, "*abundance*", and the extra(ordinary). Curtis and Pajaczkowska (ibid) further ascribe a feeling of freedom with travel linking "*destination and destiny"*, providing a relationship between the visited place and fate. This differs fundamentally from the involuntary nature of daily commuting, evident particularly in Goldblatt's subjects, who undertake their arduous journey because of limited choices. Their circumstances provide little likelihood of improvement for the future.

Goldblatt uses exactly the ordinariness of the KwaNdebele commuters to tell their story, as Powell (1989:25) points out in his review, "*The story of the nightriders would be unbelievable if it were not so mundane, so chillingly and horrifically ordinary in the context of South Africa*". He further states,

> "*The nightriders are ordinary people with ordinary jobs. Only they, like millions of other South Africans, have been forced through National Party geographical engineering policies to live hundreds of miles away from the white cities which are the only places where they can find work*".

Van Niekerk (1989) quotes Hannah Arendt's phrase "*the utter banality of evil*" to describe Goldblatt's poignant and profound depiction of the ordinariness of these commuters' experience to expose their plight. The government at the time, known for confiscating or banning any artwork that revealed the atrocities of apartheid, were bewildered by the absence of gruesome and violent images. The book and exhibition were not banned. Alex Harris (ibid) in the book's afterword comments on the government's disinterest in Goldblatt's images "*they do not yet prohibit photographs that show people commuting and sleeping on buses. And why should they bother?. . . We rarely saw the news that pares South Africa down to its essentials; to the day to day experience of its people.*"

Goldblatt's remarkable ability to reveal the evil workings of apartheid through the banal and commonplace is apparent in many of his other works that span a few decades. Apart from *The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey* series, in the 1960s Goldblatt began photographing the gold mines of the Witwatersrand highlighting the conditions of white managers and black laborers. In the 1970s he photographed people living in places like Soweto and Transkei in an attempt to understand the daily lives of people from different racial categories. During the 1970s and 1980s he examined the lives of white, middle-class people of Boksburg, just outside of Johannesburg. More recently, Goldblatt produced *South Africa, the structure of things then* documenting architectural buildings in

South Africa as ideological structures in the construction of the South African society.

Goldblatt (pers. comm: 2002:A3) found the mundanity of the dreadful hardship experienced by the KwaNdebele commuters appalling. In an interview conducted for this research, he describes his response to the routine, lack of choices, and necessity of involuntary travel. The inclusion of this long quote emphasises the predicament of these commuters and demonstrates Goldblatt's empathy for their situation. Despite his extensive knowledge of the workings of apartheid,

> "*this was … the bleakest, the most destructive. It's difficult for me to find the words to describe the profundity of what one experiences there. Its not just that these people were tired, and they were catching this bus, and they had to get up at two three in the morning to catch a bus and then many of them couldn't find a seat by the time they got onto the bus and they would have to sit on the floor, and it was uncomfortable, it was a long ride… It was that they had to do this every fucking day. Every day, if they wanted to live. If they wanted to bring home a pay packet. There was no option, absolutely no option.*"

In contrast the Lenasia commuters I referenced in my work could choose which mode of transport to use between taxis, private cars, trains or buses. Most opted for the Putco bus because it was the most affordable. Also, there are temporal and context differences between the two bodies of work. My work was made more than a decade later than Goldblatt's, after the first democratic elections in 1994 and when conditions for the majority of people throughout South Africa had improved. Goldblatt's subjects commuted as a result of forced relocation, and as a means of economic survival. The subjects in my work travelled daily for work due to circumstances arising out of previous forced removal. Less is known about Streijffert's subjects, who could have travelled for a number of reasons including work and leisure. Streijffert (1998:9) seems to be more interested in the fact that a journey was undertaken rather than the form of or reason for travel,

seeming instead to value the evidence of the journey for its ability to provoke speculation. "*Has someone fled from somewhere? Was it by choice? For pleasure? Out of duty? Or perhaps the dream of becoming someone else, of starting a new life*". Conditions of travel that include both the existence of options and the lack thereof are referenced in this statement.

Travel associated with choice is also often positioned as the opposite of home, as discussed briefly in Chapter Four. A motivation when vacationing or touring for example is to "get away from home", and to experience something other than the familiar. The definition of home itself may not be as straightforward as the place where one lives. Madan Sarup (1994:94) in his essay titled Home and Identity questions the definition of the place called home. He asks if it is related to one's family or parent's place of burial. He introduces the question of displacement and asks if home is where one currently resides or where one came from. "*The children of many migrants are not sure where they belong*".

The physicality of home is not a fixed entity as many shift their place of home sometimes several times in their lives. This is evidenced in the lives of the KwaNdebele commuters and the subjects in **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. The title **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** refers to a description of a home, calling attention to the simplicity of basic needs. The concept of home however is not always associated with security and comfort. For many of the residents of KwaNdebele, the comfort of home was unavailable as many lived in fear of getting caught by the Mbokodo and therefore had to stay away from their places of residence. A twenty-three-year old truck driver and Putco commuter interviewed by Brenda Goldblatt (1989:53) describes his state of unease even when at home. After getting back from work very late at night he would have supper at his parents' home. This he would do standing outside and then find somewhere to sleep, like in the mountains. He would use the washing facilities at the factory where he worked. He explains that he has been living in this state of

apprehension since 1986 in fear of being held captive or killed by the Mbokodo if he was found at his home.

The notion of home being a place of comfort and safety in this example is overturned. This is also the case in situations in which people are deprived of material comforts.

For Curtis and Pajaczkowska (1994:202) "*the opposite of tourism is not 'staying at home', but rather the involuntary travel associated with the predicament of the immigrant*." Thus the immigrant like the commuter has limited choices as opposed to the tourist who has many. They explain (ibid) that while the tourist travels backward in time, through visiting historic sites, the immigrant, exile, or person from the diaspora travels forward without knowing what the future holds. The notion of time associated with travel will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

Most of the subjects on the Putco bus referenced in **Cash Ticket / Ash Ticket** and those in **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** are from the Asian diaspora. Descendants of immigrants and indentured labourers, their forefathers travelled without any real planned opportunities. Later the forced removal of the Fietas residents again resulted in a one-way journey where the future was uncertain. Although the Lenasia commuters travel back and forth daily between Lenasia and Johannesburg (as described in **Eight to Four)**, this journey is a result of a previous involuntary irreversible journey. Likewise the KwaNdebele commuters were relocated to a place they were told was their 'homeland' 'home'. A subject interviewed by Lelyveld (1986:109) describes the relocation thus: "*GG scoops you up when you least expect it and drops you somewhere you have never seen, leaving it to you to patch together the torn and ragged pattern of a life*." ("GG" is a reference to the initials on the license plates of the government trucks that were used in forced removals). The subject's statement describes the unpredictable nature of life and the unstable nature of our physical place of home. Although the

circumstances of the travellers whose tickets were included in *Carouschka's Tickets* are unknown, many of the tickets are one-way and single trip tickets, which could suggest the travel of an immigrant or exile.

Despite being forcibly removed to Lenasia and despising it at first, many residents now associate Lenasia with home. A large part of people's identity is constructed through their place of home, be it a region, country or city. Location has an influence on many facets of our lives, including our accent, mannerisms, dress and food. These constructs are fluid and shift through people's need to form attachments to place and to each other, and to belong.

Since the construction of one's identity is derived from one's place of origin, a logical link can be made between home and identity. For Minh-ha (1994:18) "*identity is largely constituted through the process of othering*". He establishes the concept of 'it' as the opposite of 'I'. Where 'I' represents the source, self, here and therefore home, 'it' embodies the story or tale, the other, there, abroad and being away (ibid). Home is therefore the familiar, the 'I', and the known while 'it' is associated with travel, the unknown, the foreign and other to oneself.

Curtis and Pajaczkowska (1994) take Minh-ha's 'I/it' notion further by associating home with the feminine, and journey or travel with the masculine. They perceive historical travel as territorial gain and read this as sexual conquering. They further associate conquest with fathering and insemination. Caren Kaplan (1996:45) in her book *Questions of Travel* echoes this with reference to exile and expatriation saying that the "*goal of such displacement may be expressed in sexual metaphors of conquest and seduction*". Conservative images of the wife and mother staying at home, while the man of the house sets off on voyages and expeditions exploring the world, (or going to work), are all too familiar. Even the word home has female, emotive and maternal connotations, with phrases like 'home cooked meal', or 'home-made'. Adults who have long lived on their own often still refer to their mothers' homes as 'home'. Gender stereotypes have been

explored in my own work through specific works like **Daily Dishes**, **The Modest Home Builder** and **Peace Job**.

Chris Rojek and John Urry (1997:16) in their account of the mobility of cultures, people and objects relate writings on travel with adventure and excitement, and home with the uninteresting, as seen in the masculine tradition in travel literature. Jokinen and Vejola (1997) also argue that travel literature "*is essentially based on the real and fantasised experience of men*." If literature on travelling is related to the exciting and masculine, then literature on the state of being at home (which includes commuting) is associated with the mundane and boring and suggests a sense of femininity.

In Streijffert's artwork and book, she does not make a distinction between the tickets representing daily commuting and those illustrating travel for other reasons. Neither is elevated over the other in terms of status and the uniform presentation of the tickets appears to equate the different forms of travel.

The construction of otherness can also be considered with regard to the relationship between the artist and his / her travelling subjects. I travelled the actual journey represented in **Cash Ticket / Ash Ticket** with my subjects for about two years. Like Streijffert I requested other commuters and industry workers to contribute their tickets to my project. Some of the tickets in Streijffert's book have her name on them proving them to be evidence of journeys undertaken herself and other tickets show that the journey has been travelled by other named individuals. Still others are types of tickets that do not include names. Thus both Streijffert and I have tickets from our own journeys as well from others' jouneys. I however collected the same type of ticket, only Putco bus tickets, and all contributors to my artwork travelled the same route from Lenasia to Johannesburg as I did. I was one of the passengers and strongly identify with the journey as part of the construction of my own identity. My relationship to my subjects is complicated, as artist and subject. In **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** the

subjects interviewed related to me as being from the same community. However, in terms of age, I represented the other, as I am of a different generation.

In contrast, Streijffert's tickets are from many parts of the world, and include representations of journeys she has not travelled. She may not even have met some of the people who sent their tickets to her in response to her request on her website (n.d.). Like myself, Streijffert plays a dual role both as the subject (through the inclusion of her own tickets) and as the artist, collector of other's journeys (through the representation of others' tickets). In the same way that she presents daily travel and other forms of travel equally, Streijffert does not distinguish between her own and others' journeys either. They are displayed with equal prominence in terms of design. The only criteria for cataloguing the tickets is the country of origin, regardless of the type of journey, who has embarked on the journey or for what reason.

Goldblatt shared his subjects' journey not more than four times (pers. comm: 2002:A2, A3). This journey was not a common daily practice for him. He was an outsider to this experience and for a few days he shared directly in others' experience of this daily route. His presence, particularly his camera, was of some concern to the passengers initially, but once his purpose was explained, and their permission obtained, there was no problem. He explains that the commuters were too tired to really notice him "*They were all absolutely dog-tired, and if I had taken off my clothes and stood there on my head, it would not have made much difference to them*". Lelyveld (1986:119), who accompanied Goldblatt describes their presence on the bus as follows "*At the place and that hour, the sight of a couple of whites on the bus was as much to be expected as that of a couple of commuting walruses."* He then states that this only disturbed the passengers out of their drowsiness for a moment and once their presence was explained it became possible to interact with them.

Although Goldblatt undertook the actual journey with his subjects for a few days, he remained an observer or a witness, who used his photographic skills to tell the world of the plight of these commuters. His short journey allowed him a glimpse into the lives of the KwaNdebele commuters. Streijffert and I were also observers but were simultaneously the subjects as well.

Goldblatt (pers. comm: 2002:A3) describes his journey with the passengers as "*very intense, and very brief*". He communicates the mood and atmosphere of the journey, through the medium of black and white photography. Powell (1989:26) describes Goldblatt's strategy of turning the limited available light in the buses into a stylistic key, using the slight blurring which resulted from the long exposures in the moving vehicle to "*add to the sense of oppressive yet somnolent vagueness*".

Goldblatt and I share the medium of photography. Goldblatt uses black and white grainy images to communicate the drowsy and repressive nature of the journey while I use colour images of the same daily sight for a period of a month to articulate the routine of my journey in my untitled book (1999). My photographs are presented in the form of pages of a book where image after image reveals the same scene with slight differences. Although my face is faintly visible in the reflection of the bus window, the images are about the routine activity of travelling on a route that becomes more and more familiar each day, until the passenger stops seeing anything because he/she believes that he/she has seen it all. In the images that appear in the untitled book, the dominant feature is the reflection of the bus in the shop window replicated. It is also about the world outside of the bus and its relationship to the daily presence of the Putco bus. In contrast Goldblatt's images are taken mostly inside the bus and are figurative, emphasising the people on the journey.

In **Eight to Four** the focus was also outside of the vehicle, in this case the car. Like the untitled book and **Cash Ticket / Ash Ticket** the routine nature of the

journey was of importance. In **Eight to Four** specifically the mundaneness, and drowsy repetitiveness of the daily journey is highlighted through the rendition of the video. While still images capture a single moment, video allows the capturing of a sequence of moments. Like still photography videos are both representations and imitations of reality. The shift from still image to moving image occurs with the addition of three new elements; movement, sound and time. The element of movement particularly is a dominant component in journey as well as video.

Thus while Goldblatt's concern lies with the passengers on the bus, the KwaNdebele commuters, in my pieces that deal with commuting I was interested in the routine nature of the journey traversed daily between Lenasia and Johannesburg. Streijffert is interested in the sheer occurence of a physical journey.

A physical journey can also be a metaphor for other processes, like personal growth, or spiritual journeys. A journey is essentially a movement from one point to another. The points and the movement need not necessarily be literal or physical. In my photographs for the untitled book, the repitition of the same view implies a fixed place. Each image however shows a slight change, such as the car that is parked daily in front of a shop in a slightly different position or is absent one day. Other images include a pedestrian sometimes. Each day, something has changed or moved. The earth has moved a full three hundred and sixty degrees, twenty four hours have passed, and each individual in the bus is a day older. Thus the daily journey, fixed on a set route with predetermined stops is not so fixed, in fact there is constant movement. My untitled book with the Putco bus as subject matter is about the seemingly mundane existence of daily life, which hints at the ordinary not being so dull, and commonplace. It speaks of change in every moment. **Eight to Four** on the other hand, emphasises the tedious monotony of the daily journey.

Goldblatt's images record the static nature of his subject's daily activity of commuting, which seems to bring no change in travel conditions. Even though days pass, the circumstances and life conditions of the KwaNdebele commuters do not improve. In this case the notion of a journey symbolising growth is ironic, as the journey proves to be one of immobility.

Going Tokyo Missing Home presents a shift in the monotony of the mundane. When one returns home after being away for even a short while, there is a renewal in the everyday experiece. For a short while even daily occurences seem more interesting. There is an element of awareness in the routine.

Many of the details on Streijffert's tickets are in foreign languages (Fig 3.3:58). Whatever nationality a viewer to the artwork may be, there will be tickets that are foreign to him and that suggest an element of exoticism, tourism, travel and the other. The tickets of daily journeys seem particularly exotic to foreign viewers. The exotic and the ordinary are therefore relative. One person's ordinary mundane experience can be an exotic or foreign experience for another. This was evident in the journey travelled by the assesors to Lenasia and Goldblatt with the KwaNdebele commuters. This is also apparent **in Prolonging the view**, where the ordinary sight for a New Yorker is highlighted through its appreciation as an outsider.

The notion of ordinary things appearing to be of more interest in a foreign environment is emphasised by Malcolm Cowley (1982:5) cited in Kaplan (1996:44) who states "*The poor might look exotic in foreign settings when the poor at home seem invisible, uninteresting and threatening*."

Jamica Kincaid (1988:18,19) also cited in Kaplan (1996:62) states further

> "*For every native of every place is a potential tourist, and every tourist is a native of somewhere. . . But some natives – most natives in the world – cannot go anywhere. . . They are too poor to escape the reality of their*

lives; and they are too poor to live properly in the place where they live, which is the very place you, the tourist want to go. . ."

The subjects who have contributed tickets to Streijffert, including herself, are ones who are 'natives' as well as 'tourists'. The works produced by Streijffert however have a diiferent sense of appeal to a viewer who can afford to travel and to one who cannot. For the former it offers a desire to travel or a sense of relatedness if he has travelled to those places. For the latter it is a kind of fantasy.

Interestingly, all three artists have made books although the primacy of books as artform are different in each. Goldblatt has made extensive use of this medium having published a number of other books including; *David Goldblatt: South African Intersections* (2005), *South Africa, the structure of things then*, *In Boksburg* (1982), and *On The Mines* (1973). *Carouschka's Tickets* is the only book published by Streijffert and I have also made only one artist's book which is not a substantial part of my presentation. Goldblatt and Streijffert have reproduced their work and published artwork in book form. My untitled book is not published and is made as a single artist's book, uneditioned. The journey as subject matter in the books of Streijffert and Goldblatt further travel to other parts of the world as the books travel. Easy access to these books is evident in the fact that they are both available from anywhere in the world on websites like Amazon.com.

CHAPTER 6

Defining the Journey: body, text, time

Common to the works of all three artists discussed is the notion of journey. It may be a specific journey in the case of Goldblatt (**The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey**), or in my own work, a routine journey as in **Eight to Four**, tourism as in **Going Tokyo Missing Home** and **Prolonging the view** or exile and immigration mentioned in **Two Rooms and a Kitchen***,* or a variety of physical journeys represented by Streijffert's tickets. The definition of the term journey includes a movement from one place to another, a shift in time and a subject undertaking this move. This chapter therefore explores the presence and absence of body in these considerations of movement, space, place and time

The presence of a body impacts on the nature of a place as is evident in the definitions of place, non-place and space by spatial theorists Augé and de Certeau. De Certeau makes a distinction between a place and a space. A place is often defined by a physical structure for example cities, supermarkets and apartment blocks. Author John Fiske (1992:160) in his inquiry into the culture of everyday life, explains that for de Certeau a place is an "*ordered structure provided by the dominant order through which its power to organise and control is exerted*". De Certeau (1984:117) elaborates that cities, for example, are built to organise and control the lives and movements of city users in the interest of the dominant, as are supermarkets, apartment blocks and universities. People transform these places into spaces through the "*practice of living*". Fiske (1992:160) explains de Certeau's theory by the example of renters who make an apartment belonging to a landlord into their space through the practice of living. De Certeau (1984:117) states that a street is geometrically defined as a place by urban planners and transformed into a space by pedestrians. The key element

therefore in the distinction between place and space for de Certeau is the presence and movement of the human body. Augé (1995:77-78) describes de Certeau's space as "*frequented place*" [by people], and "*an intersection of moving bodies*".

Augé (ibid:79) defines a non-place through an opposite understanding of the term place "*if a place can be defined as relational, historical, and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, historical, and concerned with identity will be a non-place*." He further explains that these non-places, which are the opposite of anthropological places, are a product of "*supermodernity*", where we live in a time of excess. Non-places are allied with the transitory, fast moving, ephemeral, and temporary. He cites examples of air, rail and motorway routes, aircraft, trains and road vehicles, airports and railway stations, hotel chains, leisure parks, and large retail outlets. These non-places relate to notions of travel typical of many of the tickets found in Streijffert's book. This theory can also be related to **Going Tokyo Missing Home** where an ethereal quality of image is presented as a metaphor for the state of mind. This work was also possible because of the advances in modern travel, where two different places across the globe were photographed on the same film within the space of two weeks.

Similarly, Augé's (ibid:94) definition of a non-place contains the interaction of the body. He states that a non-place has two complementary but distinct realities. First, they are spaces formed in relation to certain ends, for example, transport, transit, commerce or leisure. Second, it is the relations that individuals have with these spaces that is of importance. The relationship is formed through the overlap of individuals with the functions of these spaces; individuals travel, make purchases and relax.

For de Certeau however, it is not just the presence of the body, but the mode of human interaction that constructs a space. It is the liberty with which individuals

use a space that does not belong to them. Fiske (1992:160) states of de Certeau's theory "*space is practiced place, and space is produced by the creativity of the people using the resources of the other*". De Certeau (1984) describes in his text Walking in the City the movement of the pedestrian in the city of New York and how individuals construct their own routes and do not necessarily follow the maps and routes designed by the city planners. This theory can be related to the KwaNdebele commuters. The bus service is provided by "*the dominant order*", in this case the apartheid government. Commuters transform the place into space by the mere act of travelling but more so by the fact that they sleep and sit on the floor of the bus. The commuters are making the bus, which does not belong to them, their own space, by adapting to its level of comfort, or severe discomfort in this case. The same can be said of the commuters who travelled between Lenasia and Johannesburg, particularly those who play cards in the bus. The passengers in the train referred to in Chapter Two by Pierie were also "*creatively*" using the "*resources of the other*" by using the space of the train to promote the ideologies of anti-apartheid activism.

Therefore the terms non-place and space as defined by Augé and de Certeau respectively include more than the presence of the body. It is the movement and interaction of the human body with a place that creates non-places and spaces. This movement is tied to journeys, be they walking as pedestrians or using mechanised modes of travel, daily travel as well as longer journeys of travel.

Augé (1995:94) states further that the link between individuals and their surroundings in the space of non-places is established through the mediation of words or text. Both Streijffert and Goldblatt have used text to enhance their visual works. My intention in making this point is not to redefine the artworks as non-places, but to draw attention to the use of text in these works and to locate its purpose. In Streijffert's case, Peter Kihlgard wrote a few lines to accompany most pages of tickets in her book. Goldblatt's images are supported by explanatory titles sometimes as long as a few sentences each. He states (pers. comm:

2002:A8) in this regard that the photographs are about the specifics and should never be generalised, and the particular context and circumstances of each are important to him. He gives careful thought to the choice of words as a slight shift in titling can add more meaning to the description of his images. Similarly, the titling in my work is imperative as they form an entry point to the reading of the works. There is often a play of words, which could be read in a number of ways, like the title of my exhibition, **in place***,* or **Peace Job** discussed in Chapter Four. The tickets themselves, both in Streijffert's and my works, are filled with text and symbols.

Augé explains that the word or text as non-place is the opposite of de Certeau's definition of a non-place. For de Certeau, words, particularly as names of streets or places, create a gap between everyday functionality and lost myth. For Augé (1995:94-96) one of the characteristics of supermodernity in the creation of a non-place is an invasion of space by words. These words or "*codified ideograms*" (signs, symbols, maps, tourist guides) in their "*instructions for use*" may be prescriptive, prohibitive, or informative.

Goldblatt's use of titles explains the context of the photographs by producing specific details like the time of the journey and names of the various bus stops along the route. His use of text can therefore be described as informative. In contrast, the text in Streijffert's book is informative only in terms of the printed details of date, time and destination on the tickets, their context is not known. The essay by Kihlgard interspersed with the images is in itself a creative expression. Streijffert's tickets and those in **Cash Ticket / Ash Ticket** can be regarded as prescriptive that they specify seat numbers for example. The use of the word 'only' can also be seen as prohibitive, as can the words limiting the use of the ticket such as, 'single trip only', or 'ten trip only'. The use of text in each artist's work therefore complements the artworks in an explanatory, informative or supportive manner. As visual artworks, none of them are dependent on text but like the invasion of text in the navigation of a non-place, Streijffert, Goldblatt

and myself seem to require the use of text to supplement the reading or *"navigation"* of our works.

The importance of time is foregrounded in all three artists' works through the use of text. The entire focus of Goldblatt's essay is the long time spent on the journey and the fact that this long journey is repeated day after day. His descriptive titles give detailed accounts of the journey in actual time. For example, one of the titles in his book reads **Wolwekraal-Marabastad route about 3:45 a.m.: The bus is full. Those who regularly board at later stops almost never get a seat on the bus; first they stand, then they sit on the floor**. These titles are also written in the present tense, which allows the viewer to relate to the passengers in a compassionate way. The long journey is echoed in the long exposures that he used to create the atmosphere of the lengthy and weary nature of the journey.

In contrast, I used short exposures in the making of my work, across two different continents; one representing the exotic and the other home, to communicate a state of mental awareness, in **Going Tokyo Missing Home***.* In this work, place and time are conflated as two separate images taken in different places at different times and appear as double exposed single images.

Almost all of Streijffert's tickets are dated and have the time of purchase or expiry date on them. Central to the nature of a ticket is that it is valid only for a particular period of time, be that a day, a week, ten days, a month, or a single trip. Of relevance also is the fact that Streijffert collected these tickets for a period of thirty years.

I collected tickets for about two years. **Cash Ticket / Ash Ticket** deals with the routine of a daily journey on the same bus everyday at the same time, on the same physical route. In the untitled book routine time is presented through the daily site photographed at approximately the same time in the morning for a period of a month. **Eight to Four** also communicates the routines of the Lenasia

– Johannesburg commute, the identical journey referenced in the previous two works. The words themselves ‘eight’ and ‘four’ refer to the times of peak traffic; morning and afternoon, representing the working day, a routine most people abide by for at least five days of the week. The subject matter of shadows in this work are also a visible reminder of time and, like a sundial, refer to the precise position of time.

The relationship of time to travel is different when considered in the context of daily commuting or journey in the form of touring. In long distance travelling it is different also in the context of holidaying as opposed to working. Rojek and Urry (1997:3) state that outside of the world of work, tourism as a practice and discourse has clear specifications of space, as regards places to visit like tourist sites and accommodation, and time, in terms of the duration of the vacation; week, fortnight etc. Vacationing and the like are seen as the opposite of daily travel. While daily travel or commuting is concerned with the present Curtis and Pajaczkowska (1994:201) say that touring engages the past “*in most cases tourists from the West and North conceive travel as an escape from the present….an involved visiting the past is conceived as the real work of the tourist – experiencing of history.*”

For Goldblatt and myself, our journeys and representations thereof seem to be based in the present, informed by South African history specifically. Streijffert’s representations are also presented in the present.

Vacations are often referred to as a “time-out”, a break from the routine, out of the place (and time) that one is currently in. Holidays are also labelled as “get-aways”, again away from daily, mundane, work, and routine. Travelling is where time stands still (ibid:119), and as author Michael Leiris (cited by Clifford 1988 in Curtis and Pajaczkowska 1994:201) states, is a “*symbolic way to stop growing old*”.

In addition to visiting the past, travelling is about outrunning time, where vacations are "*a place where time is condensed and diffused*" (ibid). Rojek and Urry (1997:3) state that most organised tours are very controlled in terms of fixed meal times, and time-space synchronisations. This is evident in packaged tours that offer a visit to all the major sites and therefore experience the entire city in a day for example, where the tour guide says something like, "you have thirty minutes to visit the Louvre. The bus will depart at 3:30". Packaged tours boast a compression of experiences within a short time. "Visit twelve countries in a week". A condensed notion of time is evident in **Going Tokyo Missing Home**, where images taken over separate times across different continents have literally been compressed into one image as a metaphor for the state of mind that is unaware.

In contrast, Goldblatt's images and **Eight to Four** present a very long working day. Goldblatt, through his detailed descriptions of the entire journey detailed in time as the events occur emphasises the tedious nature of the journey. In **Eight to Four***,* the length of time is shown through the title and repetitive droning sound accompanying the shadows of the cars.

Streijffert, Goldblatt and my works are made in their respective times, but like most artworks, their significance is enduring and contemporary.

CONCLUSION

In considering artists' representations of journeys, especially the ritual activity of people's daily journeys, I chose to explore two bodies of work in relation to my own body of practical work. David Goldblatt's *The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey* and Carouschka Streijffert's *Carouschka's Tickets* are considered in terms of our similar concerns. My interest in the subject evolved from my own daily commute between Lenasia and Johannesburg.

Chapter One provides a brief description of Fietas, a multiracial community destroyed by apartheid's segregationist policies leading to the relocation of its inhabitants and the creation of Lenasia, where I currently reside. The historical circumstances of this displacement are described and the conditions of living explored, as is the evolution of the current route commuted between Lenasia and Johannesburg as a result of that specific history.

Theories concerning the naming of places are also briefly considered, as are the specific conditions of daily travel to and from work, commuting. One body of work I presented for assessment engaged specifically with this material. The history of the relocation of the people of Fietas and the move to Lenasia as experienced by the subjects interviewed has been addressed in **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. Another work, **Eight to Four** documented the journey resulting from the relocation, the commute between Lenasia and Johannesburg. The journey that the assessors made between Johannesburg and Lenasia in order to evaluate the work formed a literal physical link. Positioning the evaluation and justifying the route in this way, encompasses the vast history that has occurred between the time of the Fietas relocation and current journey.

Chapter One outlines one specific community's situation and how apartheid's law impacted on their conditions of daily travel. Chapter Two presents another community's circumstances of daily commute, conditions that involve significantly

more hardship. Both situations of daily commuting were caused by the implementation of apartheid policy as explored in this chapter. David Goldblatt's body of work titled **The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey** investigating the commute between KwaNdebele and Pretoria is discussed and the historical circumstances of this particular situation are briefly considered. Connections between conditions of daily commuting and aspects of incarceration and train travel are suggested, linked by an involuntary dependence on the system, and the availability of extremely limited choices. The theories of Pierie and de Certeau have been of special relevance in relation to this section, specifically with regard to the role of public transport.

Another body of work that is also concerned with representations of travel is investigated in Chapter Three. In contrast with those described in Chapters One and Two, work by Carouschka Streijffert references kinds of travel that present a range of options. The work comprises reproductions of a collection of tickets assembled by the artist and presented in book and exhibition form. The tickets relate to activities of daily commuting as well as other forms of travel, including voluntary travel for pleasure. The difference in circumstances of travel between a ritual daily activity and that of long distance travel for pleasure is further explored in this chapter. A number of themes resulting from a consideration of Streijffert's work are explored here, including artists' use of collaborative processes to assemble material, collectors and collection practice and theory, the relationship between text and image, creative partnerships and the nature of tickets as evidence of journeys undertaken.

Chapter Four presents a written theoretical contextualization and critical analysis of my practical work. I start by establishing a framework through two early works that were key to the development of my interest and investigation of artists' representation of journeys and the work of Goldblatt and Streijffert specifically. I then consider notions of commuting through two video works presented for assessment and an actual journey that had to be travelled by the assessors.

Detailed descriptions of the motivations, intentions, circumstances and material of this body of practical work are provided. The concept of actual journey versus the representation thereof is a theme explored also in Chapter Two. A second practical submission evolved ideas of journey from commuting to broader forms of travel. The relationship of travel to a state of being at home formed the focus of a number of works presented in a body of practical work called **in place***.* These concepts are reinforced through detailed descriptions of each artwork, the relevance of their titles, associations and gender roles, introducing considerations around the differences between daily travel and long journeys, home and away, the exotic and the other, and the adventurous versus the mundane, which are further explored in Chapters Five and Six.

Comparisons between the intentions and forms of Goldblatt, Streijffert and my own artworks are further discussed in Chapters Five and Six. The Putco bus leitmotif and the notion of commuting in each artist's works are explored, as are each artist's relationship with his/her respective travelling subjects. Relative positions of artist as artist and/or subject, metaphoric ideas of journey as artmaking and representations of journey in relation to the subjects' literal journeys are considered.

Chapter Five further explores themes of ordinariness, choice associated with travel, home as key element in the construction of identity, and the theory of travelling associated with male sexual conquering versus that of home as related to the ordinary and feminine.

De Certeau and Augé's similar but separate theories concerning the difference between the experience of the journey itself and the graphic representation thereof through maps or road signs, have been explored. The possible application of these theories to the artworks has been considered, particularly to the notion of tickets as representations of journeys in Streijffert's work, the photograph in Goldblatt's and tickets, photographs and video in a number of my

own works that deal directly with commuting. The representations of journey do not and cannot substitute for the experience of the journeys and make no claim to do so. The artworks produced are nonetheless informed by the respective journeys and would not exist were it not for the translation from experienced journey to representation. This relationship between the actual journey and the representation thereof through codes and conventions has been explored.

The definition of journey is further characterised by the presence and absence of the body. In Chapter Six I briefly examine how these characteristics define an understanding of movement by analysing Augé and de Certeau's classification of places, spaces and non-places. Text as a mediation of place has been explored with reference to the use of text in the three identified artists' work. Issues of time have also been discussed in this chapter.

The assumption that the ordinary is associated with the mundane and boring and is therefore uninteresting subject matter is challenged by all three artists' works. Streijffert collected used tickets that everyone else discarded and used them as material for artmaking, thereby ascribing new meaning to an ordinary, otherwise obsolete object. Goldblatt used the ordinary activity of daily commuting by people living far from their place of work to reveal the atrocities of apartheid. In fact, he escaped unwanted attention from the authorities precisely because the subject matter seemed insignificant. His selection of the hardships of an ordinary activity was particularly apt in revealing the horror inflicted by apartheid on the most mundane components of people's lives.

In my own work I have elected to use ordinary domestic activities like commuting, ironing, washing dishes and mowing the lawn to address stereotypes and the inherent value of routine daily activities. I am compelled by these activities for a number of reasons; the fact of them being shared by all regardless of individuals' particularities, their link to cycles of body and life and particularly their effect on our state of mind, usually being undertaken when unaware, in a state of virtual

unconsciousness. In doing so, I, like Goldblatt and Streijffert, have attempted to turn the ordinary into something extraordinary.

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APPENDIX A

Transcript of interview with David Goldblatt, conducted by Usha Seejarim August 2002

Tell me about black and white photography, have you worked in colour, because I have not seen any?
What is your question?

My question is; are you seduced by black and white photography; is there a reason why you work predominantly in that medium?
I have worked in black and white photography for my personal work until very recently. Exclusively in black and white, or almost exclusively. Professionally, I've worked in colour for very many years. A lot of my professional work is in colour. But black and white suited my personal work best because colour tends to be too sweet, it's very much like reality and yet its rendition of reality is somehow sweetened. So black and white for me was the medium of choice. I find it very exciting, it has a quality of being both of reality, it's very close to reality and yet it's abstracted from reality in a way that creates a tension in me, both as a viewer of photographs and as a photographer. So, I find it a much more exciting medium.

And then in 1998, I had an invitation to photograph in Western Australia, from the museum there. I decided to photograph a little town in which they had mined blue asbestos. Blue asbestos is what causes mesothelioma, which is what causes terrible cancer. I knew that if I wanted to render blue asbestos on film, I would have to use colour. And I had been using a new Kodak colour emulsion in my professional work, which I liked very much, and I had also been experimenting with the use of digital reproduction of colour images. So these things came together at the same time and I did those photographs in Australia in colour and reproduced them digitally, and I found it really quite exciting. So I'm working in that area now. I am working in colour.

And digital?
And digitally. When I say digitally, I am not photographing on a digital camera, I'm only using digital technology for the reproduction. Another disadvantage for me of colour, was that I don't do colour printing myself. I make my own black and white prints but I don't make my own colour prints. So I would have to go to a technician and explain what I wanted. The technician would disappear into the dark room and perhaps emerge a day or two or three days later with something that was perhaps near but not quite right. So it was very difficult for me to explain

exactly what I wanted and for the technician to come up with it, and eventually we would lose patience.

Working digitally in Photoshop, after we made a scan, I can sit with a technician and say I want it a bit darker here, a bit lighter here or let's take out some magenta, put in some yellow. And I find that the process is very much like working in the darkroom on black and white. But with the added advantage that there is immediate feedback because I can see on the screen exactly what we're doing. And although the printed image isn't always quite what you see on the screen, there's always a departure, it is pretty close. So this has made a great deal of difference to me, I can now work with colour in the confidence that what I see on the screen is pretty well what I am going to get. And that's made a big difference to me.

And what about your own Photoshop skills?
I haven't attempted to become skilled in Photoshop. Let me explain that; professionally I have done a lot of editing work. Working on *Leadership Magazine*, I used to sit with designers a great deal. So I've got a very good idea of what can and can't be done and what the flexible and inflexible characteristics of the process are. So although I don't myself execute it, I can direct it and I can see if we are getting there or not.

Specifically the *KwaNdebele* series, and also *Structures (*book*: South Africa, the structure of things then)***,* **do you see them as documentary, like documenting a social kind of history, or narrative? How do you see them? How much are they personalised?**
I don't myself use these terms. I find them very limiting; documentary, not documentary. To me, I am a photographer, and I work in photographs. I work in as straight a fashion as I can. My manipulations are basically technical, in the sense that I increase or decrease the exposure, or contrast or development, or whatever it is, to get the image that pleases me, or that I think is appropriate. But I don't really look at these things in the categories that have been set up by critics, and historians to describe the processes at work in photography. I think that if you are actually working in the field, it's irrelevant to you whether what you're doing is a document or a personal document.

It's just a name?
It's a name. So my concern is purely with trying to put into those photographs, as powerfully as I can, what I think it is that I am trying to convey. That's another question.
(Laugh) – ok we'll come back to that one!

When you went to KwaNdebele, how many bus rides did you take altogether?
Not many. I did the one bus ride initially; I think it was in October 1983. It was with Joe Lelyveld from the *New York Times* and that was a major event in my life,

quite honestly it was a very very moving experience. And it was only subsequently that I decided to go back, I think it was February the next year that I went back and I did another one or two rides. The thing is that when you are on these rides, the bus is very very full and you have to take the opportunity of doing as much as you can, while you can. So it is very intense, and very brief. I don't remember, I think I might have done in all perhaps three or four rides, but certainly not more than that.

You said in your introduction (to the book, *The Transported Of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey*) **that you didn't feel intimidated by the passengers. There was no kind of hostility between you, but what was their response? Were they curious to know what you were doing?**
I think frankly that they were all too down-beaten and tired for this to be of any interest to them at all. They were all absolutely dog-tired, and if I had taken off my clothes and stood there on my head, it would not have made much difference to them. Initially when the bus is empty, and they see that I am there with the camera, its obviously a cause for some concern, and so we explain to people, why we are there, what we are doing and I always take the precaution by asking, I mean in a bus that is crowded it is a bit difficult, but in the bus, is there anybody that does not want to be photographed? And nobody ever said anything contrary.

You say that it changed your life, that it was quite a moving experience, how?
I had certainly quite an extensive knowledge of the workings of apartheid, but this was perhaps the most, the, the most destructive. It's difficult for me to find the words to describe the profundity of what one experiences there. Its not just that these people were tired, and they were catching this bus, and they had to get up at two three in the morning to catch a bus and then many of them couldn't find a seat by the time they got onto the bus and they would have to sit on the floor, and it was uncomfortable, it was a long ride… It was that they had to do this every fucking day. Every day, if they wanted to live. If they wanted to bring home a pay packet. There was no option, absolutely no option. And all because of the apartheid dream, because this puppet state was set up in an area where the only employment (I photographed it actually at that time) that people were able to find at that time was the casting of the concrete blocks, concrete bases for the toilets, that were being built all around the resettlement camp. That was the only source of employment.

Gradually as these resettlement camps become resettled, and communities have developed and so on, there have been more opportunities for employment, but still, even today, these camps are simply remote suburbs, if you want to call them that to give them the dignity that they deserve. They are purely the creation of apartheid, of this mad dream. And then when that was compounded by the civil war, it was a nightmare, and people still had to catch the bus, they still had to go to work. They were being killed, tortured, beaten, their houses were being burned. So it was a nightmare.

Is Brenda your daughter?
Am hm. (affirming)

Whose idea was it to interview? (the passengers)
Brenda was doing a film at that time. She is a television film person. She did a film about KwaNdebele. It was about the initiation ceremony. So she got to know quite a lot about KwaNdebele. At that time she was doing film work about the security forces, and the death squads and things like that. So she got to know quite a lot about these things. And she became interested, and I think she suggested that she should interview some of the people who rode the buses. I don't remember whose idea that was.

I found that they complement each other quite well. (the photographs and the interviews). **A lot of information that is gained in the interviews is not visible in the photographs.**
Oh yes, I think for me those interviews were very important because they did exactly that, they gave you a solid sense of the lives of these people.

Do the subjects of the photographs get to see the end product at all?
No, I am ashamed to say they didn't. I am very bad at that. I have people all over South Africa waiting for their photographs.

Even the book, they never saw the book?
No. Not to my knowledge. In any case it would have been very difficult.

No, wait a minute, I'm sorry. Brenda made friends with some of the people there, and we went back there with the book, when it was published. I can't recall now, and she's not here. I think we went back there, and there was not a big gathering of people, but a small party and we met some of the people. I think we gave them books.

Were they quite positive about it?
If I remember rightly. I am sorry, I am very vague on this. I only remember going out there, and meeting some of the people again. It would be wrong of me to say that they were very pleased or anything like that, because I don't remember. But we did go back.

In the time that all this was happening, were your images ever banned or confiscated, were there any issues about them?
No, they were never banned, they were never confiscated.

Because, even the book, it reveals so much. And it's published in 1984, I think.
Actually, it was published at a very bad time, just before apartheid ended. In 1989.

I'm sorry, yes, 1989. that's correct.
It was a very interesting thing. You see most of my work about South Africa, was obliquely related to the regime. I didn't photograph people being beaten on the head, or being carted off to prison. I photographed the underlying belly of the society. I think that the authorities found it quite difficult to know how to deal with me. If I was at all the subject of their attention, and I think I was from time to time. When that book came out, and as I say, it was almost at the end of apartheid, they were already dismantling things. Had it come out in 1984, or 1985, it might have had a different reception. I'm not sure. But from time to time, I was questioned by Security Police, we had our encounters. Mostly though, they were in connection with work that I was doing for professional work. I did work in the Ciskei for example on forced removals and things like that. That was of great interest to the security police, so they took me in for questioning, and they trailed me, and generally harassed me. But you know, most people who worked in that field at that time had those experiences. None of my work was ever banned.

Its quite strange because I find the ordinariness of the images more telling, and more revealing.
This was the point you know.

Exactly! Besides that, the essays themselves talk about things quite openly.
When I published my book on Afrikaners, I was very very careful, not to say directly, but rather by inference and words, what I was concerned with. I think generally the authorities found it very difficult to know just how to deal with me. I think they planted somebody on me once. Somebody who pretended to be an apostle, who wanted to kneel at my feet and learn. And I am sure that he was a security police(man). He wanted to know if my pictures were political and things like that. And I said of course they're political, you know, they deal with life. Life is political. (laughter). So we had our encounters.

Were you ever detained?
No, they never detained me. They never banned my work. I was once prohibited from entering Alexandra Township, and that was actually illegal on their part because the law that they could use had been dismantled.

I was told to get out of part of Ciskei once, I was doing a story for the *New York Times*, and I was in a place called Mgwali. That was a very substantial 'black spot', it was a large farming community of black people and they were being forcibly moved to a place called Frankfurt, resettlement camp. I had photographed Charles Sebe, who was the brother of Lennox Sebe, the president of Ciskei. And he was the guy who was in charge of intelligence and security forces. I had photographed him in his full uniform, we had gotten on very well together, and I told him that I was going to be doing photographs around the Ciskei, and that I was a bit nervous because I didn't want to be stopped by

security police. So he took out his pen and a piece of paper and he wrote a letter. He had it typed actually; “to whom it may concern, David Goldblatt has my permission to photograph anything, anywhere in Ciskei, signed Charles Sebe, commander of the security forces and so on.”

Do you have that letter still?
I have it yes. Words to those effect. Anyway, I was in Mgwali, with a man who was the leader of the community. He was about 95 years old, very imposing man, we were on a hill, and he was showing me the farms, and the dams, and where they used grazing and so on. We could see a car raising a cloud of dust, speeding up the road, from way off, it came up and up and up, eventually jammed on brakes and out jumped two guys, obviously security police, and they said, what are you doing here. I said, I am taking photographs. And they said, with whose permission. I took out my letter, and the security policeman looked at that and he said, that’s worth shit! We have just arrested this man. (huge laughter)

Have you been back to KwaNdebele.
Yes. I haven’t done any more photography there, or have I? No, I don’t think that I’ve taken any more photographs, but I have been back there a couple of times. I have done a professional assignment there, about a year and a half ago.

And?
It’s pretty much what I say, the resettlement camps have become very settled. There are communities now, there are facilities, there’s shopping malls, and there is certainly some employment. But basically they are still stuck out in the middle of nowhere, and people still have to travel out to Pretoria, Witbank, and Middleburg to work.

Are the transport conditions still the same?
I think they have improved somewhat. The PUTCO buses are now more comfortable, more of the roads are tarred, and of course, now there are taxis, which they weren’t at that time, not in any number then. So I think that things have improved from that point of view, yes.

Comment on the whole issue of representation. A few years ago there was that *Grey Areas* book where there was a whole debate about who has the right to represent who, the white South African male representing the black South African female body and so on.
Frankly I find that debate rather sterile. I think that anybody who chooses to work in a medium and comments on any aspect of the world around him or her is to some extent guilty of presumption. I set myself up as a painter, and I decide to paint. I don’t like this garden so I go next door, and paint the garden next door. I am presuming then that I have got something worthwhile to say about that garden. I stop the street sweeper and I say, do you mind if I paint you. I am making a presumption, that I am entitled in some way to make this painting. I

think this applies whether you are black or white. And it applies whether you are a black person photographing a black person, or, in all degrees it applies. I think it depends very much on the attitude of the person doing whatever it is. I don't claim a right to represent somebody in my photographs. I don't believe that I have the right to do that. In the sense that it is more important than anybody else's right, or his right to privacy or anything like that. And I acknowledge that it is presumptuous on my part to do this, to make comments.

At the moment I am working on some stuff that is perhaps going to be quite contentious about the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg. And people will probably accuse me of being arrogant and superior, and they would be quite right, because I am making judgements about their value, or about our value. But that is what you do, when you do this. When I did that work in the 1980s and the 1970s on apartheid, I was presuming to make a judgement about apartheid, and about the values that underlay it. So it's a fact of life.

Writers do this all the time. I don't think that people question their right to do it. I suppose that every now and again, somebody steps out into an area that's more than simply presumptuous, you can easily find yourself in a situation where you go beyond what seems to me to be reasonable or appropriate. If I poke my camera, over this wall and photograph, my daughter might be here sunbathing, I think that's an invasion of privacy and things of that sort. You can pretty well suss out what's reasonable and what's not.

Tell me more about the new project?
Well, I'm photographing Johannesburg now. I have been photographing Johannesburg for the last forty odd years. This is a new series that I'm doing in colour, and I'm looking at things like the casino in the north, and these vastly expensive suburbs that have grown up and things like that. And I imagine, I don't know, I might just be ignored, that's the worst thing that could happen to anyone. But I imagine that its going to create a bit of a stir.

Do you carry your camera around with you all the time?
No, I only take out a camera when I know that I am going to go out to work. I find it very difficult to be a casual-snap shooter. Even when I am travelling, I find it very irritating if I have a camera around my neck and I'm not actually working. If I am working, then it's fine. I very very seldom carry a camera casually, on the off-chance of doing something.

And you don't find that you miss an opportunity.
Occasionally, but generally speaking, the kind of photographs that I am interested in are ones that I have to go out and look for. I'm sure that you've learned by now that you've got to be lucky, but part of the skill of a person working in this kind of a medium is knowing when there is luck with you. Recognising your luck. That's the real skill. I often miss photographs, but, so what! There are other photographs.

***KwaNdebele*, and *Structures* and some of the others are made as a series, as one narrative, yet they are sold individually?**
It true that almost all of the work that I've published has been a full essay. There are some images in separate collections.

And you don't have a problem with them being split up.
No, not generally speaking. I would have a problem if they took them right out of context, or put text with them that I didn't approve of. That, I have strong feelings about. I get very twitchy when people put text with my pictures that I didn't write.

Tell me about the labelling and titling of works. Most of them seem to have a text that accompanies them. Is it so that it's more contextualised?
It's very simple, I believe that photographs are always of particulars, they are never generalised. If I photograph you now, it's of you, sitting here, at this moment, in this garden, in this country. I think it's almost arrogant for a photographer, and I would certainly regard it arrogant on my part, that if I were to publish a photograph, or exhibit a photograph, that didn't tell you who, what, where and when, or basic journalistic facts. I don't feel shy about that. There are photographers who would simply say, its not relevant. To me its always relevant. I want to know as a viewer, just what were the circumstances. When was this taken? Where was it taken? Of whom? Why? The relevant things. So I spend a lot of energy on choosing the words that I put with the photographs. Quite often, one can just give a subtle shift to the words so that the viewer understands another dimension or gets a glimpse of another dimension, or is informed about something that isn't quite there, but is in the nature of the subject. There are all kinds of things that you can do with those words. I give a lot of thought to that.

You also put a lot of energy into getting more information about the place or about the person.
Sometimes, I am not a very good journalist. So generally speaking, when I'm taking photographs, I'm very forgetful, I don't take notes and so on. For instance, with the structures book, I had to go back to many of these subjects, and do a lot of research. I spent five years researching and writing on that book. That was a huge job. But in that particular case I had decided that not only was I going to provide the basic sort of where, when and what, but I was going to give context, I was going to give a background, because I felt that people weren't used to looking at our buildings at all and certainly they weren't used to looking at them in this particular way. As the evidence of values. I thought that it was necessary for me to provide as much background as possible to put it into context.

Hence also the essays in the books.
Correct. Ja.

From the photos that you take, how much editing takes place?

A lot, a lot. A great deal. Not that I shoot thousands and thousands of pictures, but that arriving at the final selection is a long, laborious, painful process. You become attached to something, everytime you put them out to look at them, you say, I have got to have that one. And then finally, you realise that it's actually not a very good work, or it's repetitive, or whatever the case maybe. It's a painful process.

I read in quite an old article that you used to cycle, and then you got a motorbike. Now, do you still cycle?
No unfortunately, I can't cycle now because, I may start again, but I found that I have arthritis in my knees, from cycling. Very recently I changed my diet, couple of weeks ago, in Cape Town, I changed my diet, and its made a big difference to my knees. So I may try again. The motorbike, I bought that because I wanted to break out of this steel, glass cage. I wanted to be able to stop without looking around for parking, and look and perhaps take photographs. So for a period of about four years I used a motorbike extensively for my work. Then I decided to do the *Structures* project, and for that I worked out that I couldn't possibly do it and stay in hotels. It would just be prohibitively expensive. So I bought a camper. Eventually I sold the motorbike, and used the camper.

Do you still have it? (the camper)
No I sold it, I sold it to a colleague, a photographer. But I am really sorry, because now I want to start another project where I would really like to have it.

It's amazing, because a lot of my own work is so dictated by how I travel.
Ja, sure, it's very important. It can make a huge difference.

I get someone to drive for me while I sit in the passenger's seat and shoot away. But on the motorbike, you can't photograph while you're moving (laugh).
No you can't photograph while you're moving but you can stop very easily.

And you can feel your environment.
Ja, a motorbike is quite physical. You know if there's a truck in front of you carrying gravel or something like that, it hits you.

I have never actually been on a motorbike.
It's a very nice thing to ride. Its great.

Well, I don't have any more questions?
Ok, that's fair enough. Would you like some tea?

APPENDIX B

Transcript of Two Rooms and a Kitchen

The text is transcribed from an artwork titled, **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** (2002). The work is a three-screened projection installed with flooring and a couch. **Two Rooms and a Kitchen** was created through editing ten sets of interviews conducted with residents from Lenasia except one. Some of the text has been edited to eradicate repetition and for clarity. Figures of speech and "grammatical errors" have been kept to communicate the accent or feeling of the person speaking.

People interviewed: (in order of appearance)


Mr Navrotam Parshotam (NP)


Mr Annamala Thandrand (AT) & Mrs Panjela Thandrand (PT)


Mr Peter Moonsamy (PM) & Mrs Dorren Moonsamy (DM)


Mrs Savita Moonsamy (SM), Mrs Muthal Pillay (MP), Mrs Abida Ahmed (AA), participant who was present but not videoed, preferring to be anonymous (Anon)


Mrs Zohra Seedat (ZS)


Mrs Baby Lutchemia (BL)


Mrs Manibhen Manilal Ratanjee (MMR)


Miss Lutchmee Moodley (LM)


Mrs Fatima Sali (FS)


Mrs Anjilay Naidoo (Dolly) (AN)

Interviewed by:

Usha Seejarim (US)

NP: I came in 1923, in April, to Johannesburg.

AT: My parents died. My father was married twice. He came direct from India, with his wife. His wife died in that big plague, I'm not sure what year it was. He was supposed to go back to India, but I don't know what happened. You know how the old people used to be, he found a wife to look after his first children, and then we all came!

DM They came as labourers.

PM But they were not indentured labourers, only your grandfather…

DM Yes, only my grandfather. They came as passengers.

PM They came by boat. They used to come in as passengers, where they would sleep on top, on the deck of the ship. They would pay a few pounds, like ten pounds or something.

DM My grandfather even went back to India afterwords. When they had…that fight…what was it?

PM That was Gandhi's time. The grandfather was with them, with Mahatma Gandhi.

DM That's why when they came back, then, things was not so good for them, Because he neglected his family by staying so long.

AA My grandfather was from a Coloured mother and Jewish father. He was like an outcast. They would deliver the mielies and flour and things in the vans, and he would get the horse-and-cart, because he was Coloured.

ZS My great-grandparents, I wouldn't know about them. I suppose they were all from Durban, which part, I don't know. But in South Africa.

BL My mother's father was from Mauritius. He came down and he got married to my granny. She was in Durban, so he married her and then brought her out here into Joburg. My mother was the only daughter, they didn't have (other) children.

NP I was eight years old.

US Did you come with your parents?

NP No I came alone. My father was here. He called me, to get my rights and my registration permit. I stayed for about six months and then went back to India. Then I got married in '29 and came with my father in 1930.

US And your wife?

NP No

US You left your wife in India?

NP Well, I was married in young age, you know. Age of fourteen.

MMR (translated from Gujerati) Three weeks. When it finishes, on the third week, then the ship arrives. That's how long it takes. So you know, if it is Saturday today, then one Saturday will go, then the second and third. Then it arrives.

NP It takes about twenty-two days, to land in Durban. From there you had to take a train and come to Johannesburg.

BL I was born in Doornfontein, in Sherwell Street. Then we moved to Dangor Street. That's where I grew up. First I went to school, then after school, we got married.

US Did you finish school?

BL No, not actually, because that time we couldn't finish school. I only finished at about six. That time it was in standards. So I finished standard six, then we had to go and work now, because our parents were very poor. I lost my father at a very young age. At sixteen, I was, so my father passed away. He used to work in Fordsburg for the Steyn Brothers. He used to do the candeling. So when he died I had to go and work in the factory.
I started to work and then made my younger sister get married. I had an older sister who used to live with us too. So both of us used to go to work in the morning and then come back and do our own work, in the house, because we had no maids. We had a very hard life. We did not have a very easy life. We used to go to school without shoes too.
With one cent, that time it was a penny, we would make farthings, and buy with those farthings, sweets and things.
Then I got married, I was twenty when I got married to a man from Vrededorp, from Nineteenth Street. You must know now from Doornfontein to Vrededorp. . . that time the sewerage and all used to stink (laugh) …with the smell and all, in any case I got married and we had to go and stay. But it was very small houses that we had. Two rooms and a kitchen.

ZS I was born in Durban. In a very poor family, they was more poverty in those days. I grew up with my granny, who looked after me. As time went on, I had to leave school early. Standard four, that's all I could do. I had to go back and get a job.

MP I wasn't born in Sophiatown actually, I was born in Lichtenburg. Then my parents shifted to Sophiatown. I lived in 77 Hilda Street. That was our

place. I went to school there, and I grewed up there, with my grandparents there. After that I became a young lady there. Then we shifted to Malay camp.

AA I was born in Sophiatown, 89 Grey Street. It was my granny 'thems' property. I also lived there, went to school in Sophiatown, from grade one until standard five. Then I was getting too big for my father to buy shoes for me so I had to leave school. They wanted to send me to become a midwife, but my grandfather didn't want that. He said that it was a dirty job, and my child can't do that.

LM I was born in Warmbaths. My father had a farm there. My father and mother was both from Natal. Anyhow, I was the youngest of eight children. They came with two children from Durban, and I was born the last. I was the baby. But everybody died now. I am alone.

DM I don't say we starved or what, but we battled. My mother was working in the laundry from six 'o clock in the morning till six at night. She used to come home at night, and I used to come home at night. Then only we start cooking and cleaning and seeing to the other children. We had other three brothers and sisters. That was a difficult life.
When we came to stay in Joburg, we had still a worse life in Joburg. Because then, we had one room first. And from the one room we stayed in a place called Kruses, Krusies, what?

PM Krusie, there in the graveyard man.

DM Kruses. We stayed there. We had one room only. I used to travel also with the train to come to work. I won't forget, there was one day when I got of the train and I only had one shoe on. Lucky slippers was very cheap that time. I had to buy a pair of slippers and put them on.

SM Well I was born in Pretoria, I lived there all the years, went to school there. My sister got married on the twelfth of November 1939. I had to leave school, and I went to stay with my sister in Denver.

AN I was born in Vrededorp. I stayed there all my life, until I got married. Actually, not till I got married. From Vrededorp we moved to Doornfontein, because my dad died when we were very small. I was about five when my dad died. My mother went to stay with her mother-in-law, so we stayed there. When my mom died, I was sixteen years old, we had to come back to Vrededorp to stay with my other granny. My father's mother. They were wealthy people.

LM We went to Warmbaths school. There wasn't an Indian school. We were eight Indian children. Some were Muslims, there was a Hindu family and we were the only Tamil family. We had African teachers. It was an African school,

full of Africans. But they were very well behaved. We had to walk a distance to get to school. If they see us in the street, in the farm road, and bushes, they would pick up their hat and greet us, not like today. Days are terrible now, rape cases are taking place and so on. But we really lived very happily on the farm. We had all kinds of fruits and things were so cheap. If anybody came to buy, my father would sell to them. For a tiki you would get a whole packet of tomatoes.

FS You know how the Indian old people were in those years. Children can't go further, their work is in the kitchen.

SM I went up to standard six. I had to leave school to come and help my mother. Do washing and ironing and cleaning up. In the olden time we had a table, you know a hard table that we had to scrub. We had to clean the black stove once a week. Our mothers used to tell us how to do the washing. Make a fire on the *bowla*, boil the white shirts. Blue soap, we used to use. We didn't use all this stay soft and jik and all this things like now. That how we was brought up in the olden times way.

MMR (translated from Gujerati) School, I saw it but never went. They never sent me. He never sent me, your grandfather.

AT I was born in Fordsburg, somewhere, I know in Fordsburg. After living there, we went to Denver. We went to school at Gold Street, here in Doornfontein. We lived in Denver for quite a while. From there we moved to Vrededorp. That time it was still all mixed together. Two or three years after that, then they came out with this Group Areas business, nonsense what *evertjies*. We stayed quite alright there, no lights, four families using one toilet.

DM When I started working, I found this place in Charles Lane. It's where I found Peter. He was selling paper.

PM aaah

DM (laugh)

PM Ja, I got caught.

(more laughter)

DM That was a street that wasn't even on the map.

PT I went 'till six. Cause then I had to go and work. We were ten children, my father couldn't afford to give all of us education. So when we left we had to go and work. From there it went on. Then I met this man. Then I got married to him. We lived in the same street, and we knew one another for very long before we got married. We lived there, it was very difficult. We lived in a

room and a kitchen. It was mostly for Malays. For us Indians it was. . . what they call it…this..

AT Group Areas

PT Group Areas. They came and told us that we can't live there. We have to have a permit to live. And we even went to court. They took us to court, why are we living there? We not supposed to live without a permit. The magistrate told us that it was ten Rands fine. He got ten Rand and I got ten Rand

AT It was Pounds that time.

BL This is in Fietas, in Nineteenth Street. So we had to all share it. My mother-in-law had nine children. We were all now big and small and we had to share that place. Finally when I was expecting my first baby, then I had to move to a flat opposite. Just a room. In that room we had everything, we had a kitchen. We had to do cooking and everything, and our toilet and bathroom was outside. We had to share it. We had to do our washing in the bathroom. It was a shower, not a bathroom too, just a shower. Then I was expecting my second baby. Then I couldn't take it anymore, because it was too small. In one room with two children. Then we moved to a bigger place. It was also a tin shanty. It wasn't so very nice. That was in Overton (later changed to Ophirton). When we went to stay there, then it was too far for my husband to travel now, because he used to be a hawker. He used to go out into the market and buy the vegetables and all. It was a bit far, so we came back to Fordsburg. We got a place in some Koovadia's yard. I stayed with the two children there. It was also just a big room with a kitchen, and a bathroom and toilet outside. I stayed there until we built a house here in Lenz.

MP My story is another story. My father was working with my husband, and my father always used to take a little drink, you know. He always used to send this little fellow and to go get him something. He used to run and he told him that one day I'll give you my daughter. He used to run, he never took note of what this old man used to say. Then one day his mother'en'them came there to come and propose me, there by my house. Now my father didn't know. He told my father that he was taking the day off because his mother was taking him somewhere. My father didn't know, all he knew was that some people were coming to propose to his daughter. So my father didn't know that it was the same person. When my father came from work, he pulled out his jacket, went to the bathroom to wash his face and all. He came to the dining room and looked at this fella and said, what are you doing here? And he is asking my father, what are YOU doing here? My father said, this is my house here and this is my daughter. He said I don't know, my aunty and mother and them all brought me here. I don't know for what are they all here. In the mean time it was a proposal. He is shaking his hand and saying, I told you I am going to give you my daughter. That's how the proposal went on, and that's how the wedding went on. It was real funny.

AA I got married when I was sixteen, fifteen and a half. The first boy that they caught me with, talking on the corner, I had to bring him home and ask for house permission. The next best thing, I was fifteen and a half and I got married.

FS Which means that I never went out with him. We never dated each other or saw each other or what have you. It was an arranged marriage.

LM That time it was match making. It's love marriage now. I had so many offers then. When I came here I got a offer also. I was already sixty something!

FS That time I couldn't say that I don't like him. You have to do what your parents say.

MMR (translated from Gujerati) I was not even five or six years of age, that's when I got married. I don't know. I was very small. When I got married, then there were five weddings all together.

AN I was nineteen when I got married and I was twenty when my daughter was born. When she was eight months old and I was married for a year and ten months, my husband was murdered by Africans at the station, while he was coming home from work. That was disastrous because it wasn't a very rosy life from the beginning.

ZS I enjoyed my married life. There were many problems, many ups and downs, but at the end, one has to understand that without that there would be no life. Anyway, later we came to Joburg. Unfortunately, my husband had a heart-attack and passed away. I was lucky because all of my children were married already.

AN But you know the way people mingled there, Fietas was like one big happy family. When it was *Diwali*, it was celebration for everybody. The Tamil people used to celebrate and with them everybody else would, because they used to help with the preparations and cooking and what have you. When it was *Ramadan* time, the same thing. The mosque was just on the top there.

NP Ja, racially mixed. Well from Seventeenth Street down, you'll find Africans, Coloureds and all mixed with the Indians. And from Seventeenth Street up, you'll find mostly Indians and some Malays.

AN De La Rey Street and Krouse Street had all the Indians staying with the number of parallel streets in between. But lower than De La Rey Street was all Afrikaans people and from Eighth Street upwards was all Afrikaans people. There used to be a bakery there, we used to be frightened to go the bakery because the children will hit us. Koolie, koolie, they'll say.

AA Very different ja. Vrededorp was mostly Coloureds and Malays and Indians there. But in Sophiatown we were a community. You can say communal.

BL But Fietas was very nice, we got on very well. We got on because there, all nations were together. Blacks, and Muslims, and Hindi and Tamil, all together we lived. That time there was no burglary and all this. They used to be in and out the houses. We used to sit outside, together all of us. We would have nice conversation and all. Weekends, we all used to get together, and gossip. Ooh but we really had a nice time that time. On Fourteenth Street, we used to do our buying. That was the main street in Vrededorp. It was our shopping area.

FS Very near. It was like one yard. About twenty houses in one yard. A big yard. Everybody got a house. One room and a kitchen, two room and a kitchen, three room and a kitchen, like that.

AT Four houses using one toilet. If you want to go to the toilet, you must queue. You want to wash in the mornings you must queue. Bathroom was there, but it was so filthy, you didn't want to go in there. We went on and life went on, we went to school and then high school. Then we started working. Of course I met this lady here, next to me.

PM She moved in because, the owner where she worked owned the property. She only paid about three pounds for four rooms. But there were about a hundred people staying there, in her family.

DM Ag, Peter man, now you're exaggerating.

PM (lauging), no, it was the truth man.

DM Ag, it was a cottage

PM Ja, but others were sleeping in the toilet, and others were sleeping in the yard.

DM He talks nonsense man.

PM You must talk the truth man.

DM When we were in Commissioner Street, New Court Chambers, then we only had two rooms, then we had to sleep like that. They slept on top of the wardrobe and we slept behind the wardrobe. (huge laughter)

NP Myself, in Turfontein, I had only two rooms and a kitchen, attached to the shop. All the childrens are born there.

ZS I only had a pair of sand shoes and that I used to keep like for main days. Go to school bare-feet. Those days it used to be sand shoes.

AA You were not dressed if you did not have gloves and a bag.

MP Don't talk about the hair with the up-switch and the down-switch.

SM And the waves you know. We used to put that wave clips here. Now I don't use it!

BL And even *Diwali*, when we were at home, we used to dress up and put the bags. And that time the satin dresses with the appliqué was now on. We used to put on our sling bag and go collect money at everybody's house. We enjoyed it.

AN Mixed race. And they used to be in and out. Like now, you must make arrangement. You must phone before you go, can I come and visit you? Or are you at home? It was like, if we were passing, this is Mrs Thambi's house, we'll go inside and say hello, or this is Dolly's house, we'll go and say hello. When we go to my aunty, we passing Fatima *bai*, Zakhina *bai*, Kesa *bai* is down on the bottom there, aunty Peeti and them used to be on this side. When it was Diwali time, then we would need our hair curled, then we would go to all of them, and they'd help to curl our hair, dress us…

AT Fourteenth Street was mostly Muslims. All the shops. It was just shops, any kind of a shop you wanted, it was on Fourteenth Street. The whole Johannesburg used to go to Fourteenth Street.

BL All, even the Dutch people used to come to Fourteenth Street too. When Christmas time come, then you must see how the Dutch people decorate their houses. It was all tin shanty places, but they got all the trimmings up, the band and all the balloons. It was too nice those years. Everything was celebrated. In fact they used to celebrate everybody's festival. The Eid, the Diwali, and what about the Guy Fawkes, don't talk about the Guy Fawkes. We used to dress up and walk in the street, collect money, dance and sing and all.

AT You know they used to make this KB, they used to call it the kaffir beer. I don't know why they called it that. They used to put it in the ground, and they used to have parties. All the Blacks. We used to stay next door to the Blacks. And when the police used to raid, they used to come with their big big

irons, dig into the ground. Take it out and dump it in the streets, in the gutter. There it goes, all their money is gone. And they couldn't do nothing. When the police is gone, then again, they brew it again.

AN There used to be a bioscope in Seventeenth Street. Avalon, and there used to be Star on Twentieth Street. We used to go see all the Indian movies, go and cry and come back. My uncle would give us money. It would be about one and six to go to bioscope. He would say, did I give you people money to go and cry over there? But it was nice there. It brought back old memories when I saw a movie this weekend, *Mother India*.

AT What movies we had? We had Star bioscope, there in Vrededorp, then we had another one, they used to call it, the Grand, Avalon, and the Royal Bioscope, which was on the corner, by us. Otherwise we would take a walk to Twentieth Street. It used to cost, twenty cents, two bob, and you sit right at the back.

MP One thing, in Sophiatown, you buy a box of tomatoes, and you put it in little plates. You buy a box of tomatoes for five cents in those days, for ten cents a box. You make about twenty five cents out of there. You send you little kids out there and say go sell it. Even if you make twenty-five cents out of it, you can buy your meat out of that, your oil, your rice, everything out of that twenty five cents.

AA With a shilling you could buy mince.

☐Anon That time we could but fresh, not now like how we buy and keep in the fridge.

AT You see the money was different. You had the shillings, which is now ten cents. You had a six pence which is now five cents. Then we used to have a tiki that was two and a half cents. (laughing in disbelief)

SM I started in advance, 1945 on the 2nd of October. I was getting one Pound eight a week. And it was a lot of money. My father said, why do you want to go and work, your sisters didn't work. I said I just wanted to go. Then I finished off with that after thirty-seven years.

BL At Christmas my father used to put all the things on the rickshaw and bring it down. From Fordsburg to Doornfontein, he would buy turkey and all, put it on the rickshaw, and bring it down to us. That's how we used to live. We would look forward to those big days. Because not everyday we used to get a very good meal. Now when there was a big day then we used to wait for it now. We used to enjoy it, really.

AT Sometimes, you think that if I was still staying in Vrededorp, and all that. But we wouldn't be where we are right now. If we were still staying in Vrededorp, the landlords were still exploiting the people. For a room like this I was paying ten Rand. Five pounds for one small room.

PT And yet we couldn't stay there 'cause we didn't have a permit.

AT At least here the government came, gave you a house, and you haven't got a problem. It was far, it was distant but we got used to it.

AN After I left Doorfontein, I came to Vrededorp, from Vrededorp we went to Sophiatown. (Gasping), That was a nightmare, because the estate agent took goodwill money, and gave us a shop. Because we had no place to stay at my in-laws, you know. We stayed there for three days and the Group Areas people came to move us out. Furniture and everything in the street. They said we had no rights to stay there. When we showed them the receipt, they said that they were not allowed to do that.

NP Well first of all, when we came we didn't like it because we stayed for so many years in Turfontein. All the circles and all that. But when time goes on we are used to it. And today I am more used to it than any other place. If somebody has to tell me to go anywhere else, I will not move.

FS Oh God, I didn't like it, I didn't like Lenz. I cried for three months when I came here. I wanted to go back from where I came. I didn't like this place at all. It was like a jungle, there wasn't much houses. There was this Greyville, Rainbow, Extension Three, and Township. All the other extensions came after we moved here. It was only bundus, like you know grasses and that.

PT 19…when was it?

AT Sixty

PT 1960, we shifted to Lenz. That's how we came and started our life here in Lenz.

ZS I don't know much about Lenz, because my only route is to the Top Shop [local shopping area in Lenasia] and to the village [home for the Aged]. Top shop and the village.

AT We had a toilet, it was the bucket.

PT Yes, the buckets

AT Every Monday, they come and we put the buckets outside. And if you swear the bucket fellow that empties it, then he will throw it in front of your door.

PT Ja. If you go outside, then the buckets are in a line.

BL And the sewerage too, we didn't have sewerages, we had to put that sceptic tank, and the buckets. They used to come and clean it out for us and all. After that then, slowly we got the sewerage and we started getting lights too. We used to use the gas stove to cook and all.

AN The camp was something hey. It was just like one big, long hall. A long long, hall, where people stayed. They divided it where two families would stay. There were no toilets, and bathrooms, or rooms or anything. It was just one big hall. They used to put curtains to divide, or their wardrobes in such ways that to divide between parents and children. And the kitchen was just like this, in the corner, at least here we got a wall to separate. It was a cement floor and people stayed, lots of people stayed. And they stayed for years, with these communal toilets, and communal bathrooms, like you know, these barracks.

☐Anon Then when we went for this houses here in Vulture [Street], then they said that we were not qualified because Supa [husband] was working in the handbag bag factory, and I was working.

AA Ja, you had to earn a certain amount

☐Anon Then we said, this was a cheaper house.

AA And that houses was only six thousand

☐Anon And ours was two thousand.

AA It was six thousand, and that time we bought it out cash. Then after that, when we had a problem with my in-laws, we got another house in Extension Three.

☐Anon No, I think ours was one thousand two hundred, then later it went to two thousand.

AT Ja, it was hard, transport was terrible. If you missed the one train in the morning, you can stay at home, there was no other train to go to work.

AN It was very nice 'cause it was compartments. We had our own group of people that was travelling to town [Johannesburg] everyday. So each group made friends, six or seven people. The men used to play cards, and the women used to gossip and carry on. It was nice, some used to sleep. Come to Joburg station and wake up. From Johannesburg station, you must take another train to Doornfontein. We were very scared, because we were not exposed to taking trains and trams and all. When I started work, my brother had to come for one whole week by tram to show me how to go to Doornfontein and back.

BL Only now they put up the highways. Those days the roads were quite long to go into town. Riiiiiight [word emphasised] around, we used to take the old road to go to town. It was about two hours' drive.

SM From town to Melville we used to travel by trams

MP We used to travel from Fereiratown to Newlands.

AA And they used to have the western bus service. We used to pay a tiki in the bus.

MP If you want to go to Vrededorp than you take a cab. You even pay five cents for the cab.

☐Anon Five pence

MP Yes, five pence.

SM With fifty cents, our mothers used to cook for us.

☐Anon You can buy meat for five pence.

AA We used to play doll house with five pence.

LM We used to travel by train from here. Winter time the trains were late. We used to wear high heel shoes. When we get to the station, we stand, there's no seats to sit, there's so much people. Some people, their heels would be off, the iron would be sticking out. They would tramp on us, you don't even feel it, because we're ice cold. We didn't have enough warm socks. Not like now, they make thick socks and everything. We used to wear pantyhose and high heels and so on. When we get to work, and we start getting warm, then we feel how sore is our feet. We used to wait and wait and the trains used to take their time and come. When it comes, the way they push in. then we get to Park Station, we have to push through the people to rush to work, we are late also, you know!

AN You are tired from work and standing waiting for the bus, so you go and sit on the seat. They would push you off and swear you. So rather than sitting there, we'll stand one side. We won't sit on those chairs.

BL You know what, apartheid didn't affect us. We were very happy with it, honestly. We knew where we must get on, and where we mustn't get off. We lived all our life like that. So it didn't affect us at all. Because we lived a very safe life too. In Doornfontein, we only used to put the nail on the door, and the next morning we are there. There was no burglar proof and all these things. It didn't worry us at all. In the trains, in the trams, apartheid was there, but we knew where we must now stand one side, or sit at the back. So we used to know that all. We didn't feel it.

AT If you go to town. You are now dog tired and you want to sit. There's no benches. All Whites only. You want to go to the toilet, Whites only. What must you do? So we just suffered and suffered.

NP Before, in our time, if you have to go out of Transvaal, you have to get the permit, from the immigration. You had to say how many weeks or how many days you are going to stay. Then they give you the permit. Otherwise you can't cross the border.

MMR [translated from gujerati] the Whites and Blacks were not here. They were in their own area. And with the Whites, there was not much where the Whites went. If we went, then, they didn't like it. No, and for the Black, they did not do anything for them, there's was different. It was not ours here. And you couldn't do anything. If we go to the beach, then yes, you do see some of our people, but we don't mix with them. They don't let anybody go there, not in their swimming pool or anywhere. And now all the African people go to swim. Children, so many children in their [the White people's] pool. [laughing]

AT We used to go to Durban. we used to walk in the street, on the pavement. The beach was this side, we couldn't cross that wall and go into the water. They say it was Whites only

PT Ja, it was Whites only

AT Imagine! Where we were staying, the Indian beach was twenty miles away, we had to go there. No hotels, no restaurants, no nothing.

PT You buy your fish and chips and whatever and sit there on the lawn.

AT They serve you in the back door, not the front door.

PT Yes.

AT Especially on the way to Durban. They had a small pigeon hole, where they used to serve the non-whites. And that also, the non-white was the Indian and the Coloured. The Black must go more around.

PM We used to sell a paper called the *New Age*. When it was banned also, the name changed several times. To overcome the banning, we changed it, because it was a Communist Party newspaper, but it supported the ANC. At that time it was up to cheap, up to six pence. It was a weekly paper that used to come out on Fridays. It was banned when the National Party came in to power. Everytime they banned that particular name, the paper's name changed. Until they banned it completely when they found all the loopholes. That time the only press was the *Daily Mail*, and *The Star* and they were very pro-white. Like the *Star* used to call Africans, Natives. First they were called Natives then Bantus

when apartheid came. Natives was used by General Smuts and the so-called liberals at that time.

US What was the content of this paper?

PM It was always about the poverty of the people, the struggles of the people, the wages. Whenever there were demonstrations, they went on strike, for a pound a day, which they couldn't get.

AN There used to be OK Bazaars, there used to be CTC Bazaars, there used to be Publics, they used to be the most famous places to go to. When you go, they won't even take a notice of you. You will be standing there, they will serve all the Whites first. Sometimes, you would get so irritable and say, you know I am standing here. "So what if you're standing here, you just have to wait". Then we would just stop going there, rather go to the Indian shops and buy what you need to. Sometimes they would have sales and things, and you know, you want to go and buy in town. It never used to be the same as buying from the Indian shops.

PM Everytime he tortured and got somebody, or somebody was killed, he was always promoted. The security police were always promoted when they broke the cell, or got information, or somebody in jail. They were always promoted higher and higher and higher. Van Tonder became a colonel and he was the one who shot during the Soweto uprising, he is the same one. Everyone was scared of him, he had big hands, he was like a bull, a rugby player. You know how these rugby players are, big.
They caught Mrs Moodley's son, from the East Rand. They caught him crossing the river. Before he could cross, they caught him and threw him to the crocodiles. I was told this. I wasn't there. Information used to come back.

PM My brother was a Treason Trialist. He was arrested with Nelson. Nelson used to come to the house. He used to wear an overall and a kieri, like a watchman. He slept one day there, in one of the small rooms. He used to come in from the gate side. Him and Paul [speaker's brother] used to have discussions. But not in the house, outside. He never come always. Once, or maybe twice. I never knew about it too. Nelson knew my mother and all of the family. His children would come and stay with my brother's children, for the weekend, they used to go and stay in Soweto.

AA After my grandfather died, my uncle insisted to my granny that he wanted my grandfather's papers. He took those papers and went to re-register himself as Jewish. He is White now, why? Because his boss wanted him to, so that he can pay him that top wage. Then he became a partner of the firm that he was working for. My father was working in the same factory. My father would now be under him. So my father said, no, it's not a problem, because my father's father was also White. He also had a white card. Now we all went to the offices to

go change all our cards. So they asked us all to stand backward and my father must go to the White side. My father said no, this is all my children this, they said “Wat gaan jy nou maak jong” (what are you going to do now?). So he says, “Nee, dis al my kinders” (These are all my children). So they said, “ok, gaan jy hier in, dan gee ek jou a wit kard. Los maar die kinders, ons sal hulle almal coloured kards gee” (ok, you go in from this side, and we will give you a white card. Leave the children, we will give them all coloured cards). So my father had two cards, a white card and a coloured card. He went to work with his white card.

DM But my son made a big blue. They went to his work, no. How did they find out?

PM That one security police, his name was Van Tonder. He was in charge of the Indian section, of the congress. The congress never worked under the ANC, the African National Congress, they worked as a separate organisation. But in support of the ANC. As she was saying, how that came to my part now. I never used to come, Walter never saw me there, and I never saw him. I only heard. Because if I had to go then somebody would follow me. I used to stay at my mother’s house. I was a waiter in a coffee bar. The police didn’t know where I was working. So one day, I was selling the *New Age*, *Guardian* and all that. I don’t remember the name at that particular time, it changed so many times. The police saw me, and they followed me. But they found the house, in Charles Lane. But they didn’t know where I worked. He went to the house, and they [speaker’s wife and children] were there. Tony [speaker’s son] was small. They asked, where am I working. She never told them. Tony was small and he said, mummy, mummy, I know where he works, here is the matches. The coffee bar used to have, just like the hotels and all, the matches with the name on it. He said, “his working here [pointing to the matches in his hand]”

ZS Apartheid, it didn’t …I feel that we didn’t suffer as much as the Blacks, really speaking. Because we could still go out. Its just that we couldn’t mix with the Blacks. We still had our freedom, that we can go here and go there. But the Blacks were the ones that suffered. I mean we could have gone out anytime of the night, anywhere. Even if we sat on a bench or something, they might tell us to go, which they did. I even used to go to the White bioscopes and sometimes, they used to look at you and say, no it for Whites only, but I used to go to the bioscopes. I think it’s just a chance that you got to take. Even in the bioscope. Many a time they would tell you that you’re not to sit over there, you have to go to the back, or upstairs. But I don’t think that we had it that bad, as the Blacks. But now, Usha, I just feel its apartheid in reverse. That’s my opinion. Its apartheid in reverse. But whatever happens will happen.

NP Today, it seems to me, there's nothing wrong so far with this country. Time to come, I think it will be alright. But only thing now days is the crime, you know. If the crime is not there, this is gold. Nothing wrong with this country, compared to all other countries.

BL That's all, my life story. That's my life story.



Mr Navrotam Parshotam (NP).

video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



Mr Annamala Thandrand (AT) & Mrs Panjela Thandrand (PT).

video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



Mr Peter Moonsamy (PM) & Mrs Dorren Moonsamy (DM)

video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**.2002.

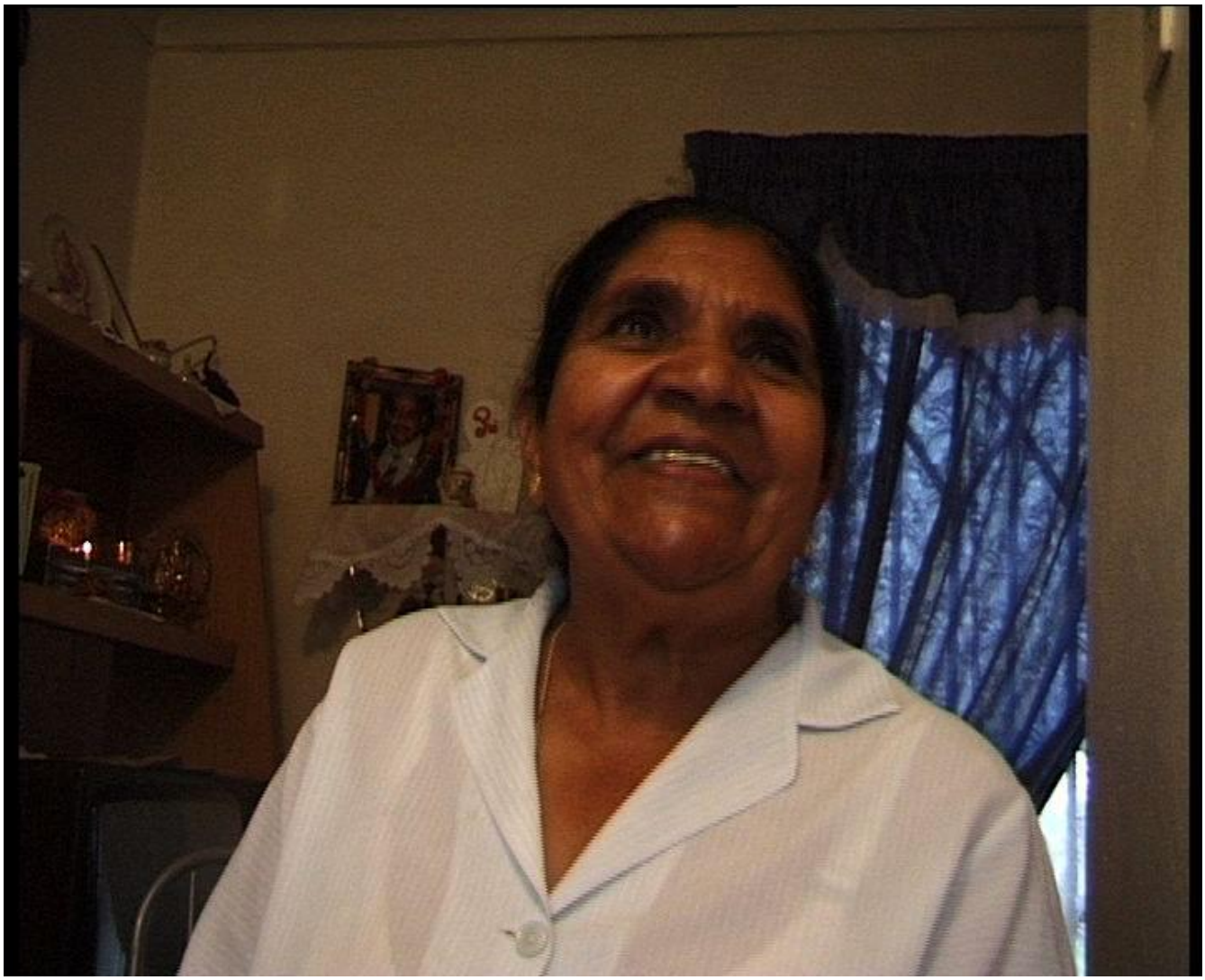


Mrs Savita Moonsamy (SM), Mrs Muthal Pillay (MP), Mrs Abida Ahmed (AA) video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



Mrs Zohra Seedat (ZS).

video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



Mrs Baby Lutchemia (BL).

video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



Mrs Manibhen Manilal Ratanjee (MMR).

video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



Miss Lutchmee Moodley (LM).

video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



Mrs Fatima Sali (FS).

video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.



Mrs Anjilay Naidoo (Dolly) (AN).

video still from **Two Rooms and a Kitchen**. 2002.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED

bai, as in Fatima bai:
: A respectful term of addressing an elderly female. Almost like an aunt.

bioscope:
: The term originates from a kind of early movie projector, but is used in reference to a movie theater or cinema.

bowla:
: A brazier: a large metal container in which coal or charcoal is burned for warmth.

bundus:
: A slang word, referring to a wild environment, almost jungle like. Or away from civilisation.

comrade:
: A term meaning friend, colleague, or ally. The term originally carried a strong military connotation, a "roommate". After the Russian Revolution, the Russian version of this term (товарищ, tovarishch) was championed by communists as an egalitarian alternative to terms like "Mister", "Miss", or "Missis". It was used by members of the Communist Party to refer to fellow members.

diwali:
: A Hindu festivals, also known as the Festival of Lights. It is held in October/November and marks the victory of good over evil. It is celebrated through the lighting of lamps and bursting of fireworks on a moonless night.

dolomite:
: A sedimentary rock consisting mainly of the mineral dolomite comprising a calcium and magnesium carbonate. It is unsuitable for building as the ground sinks over time.

eid:
: One of the two annual Islamic festivals celebrating the birth of the prophet Muhammed (Big Eid, at the end of Ramadan), or requiring a ritual sacrifice (bakri-eid).

Guy Fawkes:
: An English soldier and member of a group of Roman Catholic conspirators who attempted to assassinate King James I of England, by blowing up

Westminister Palace using gunpowder on November 5, 1605. His attempt failed and together with his conspirators he was executed for treason and attempted murder. His unsuccessful effort is remembered on November 5, through the bursting of fireworks.

kaffir beer:

In rural South African areas, traditional beer was prepared by women, had a low alcohol content, and used for the many celebrations, such as harvesting, births, weddings, and initiation ceremonies.
In towns and cities, many women began to brew beer as a way of supplementing the family income. This beer became stronger and because it had to be hidden from the police, quicker methods of preparation had to be found, resulting in a variety of 'conconctions'.

(Adapted from P. la Hausse, Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts: A history of Liquor in South Africa, p. 47)

kieri:

A short club with one knobbed end, used originally as a weapon by warriors of certain South African tribes. Also known as a knopkierie in Afrikaans.

koeksisters:

A South African syrup-coated doughnut in a twisted or braided shape, prepared by deep-frying in oil then dipping into cold sugar syrup.

koolie:

Originally used to define indentured labourers from Asia (e.g. Chinese railway workers in the U.S. & Canada, or East Indian sugarcane workers in Guyana and South Africa). Now used in the Caribbean (primarily Guyana & Trinidad) to refer to anyone of East Indian origin. Used in India to refer to a porter, and in South Africa it is considered a derogatory term to refer to people of Asian origin.

lang-arm dances:

A South African type of “ball room” dancing practiced mostly by Afrikaans people.

ramadan:

Muslim period of daytime fasting, lasting for a lunar month of about 28 days which takes place in the ninth month of the Arabic calender. It commemorates the transmission of the Qur'an by the archangel Gabriel to Muhammad.

sari:

Traditional dress of Hindu women, consisting of a long length of cloth (approximately five meters long). One end is wrapped around the waist, forming a skirt, and the other is draped over the shoulders and head.

shweshwe:

Cloth that originates in Europe, now produced in South Africa as well. Clothes made from this fabric is worn by many traditional South African Black women.

veld:

An Afrikaans word referring to the grassy undulating plateaus of South Africa.